



BOSTON COLLEGE

September 14, 2016

Dear Colleagues,

As we begin the new school year together, we write to give you an update on the progress of the University Strategic Planning Initiative (USPI).

As you know, our strategic planning began in December with the announcement of the 17-member Steering Committee to guide and advise our work. At that time, we laid out a timeline for the planning process, targeting a first draft to be presented to the Boston College Board of Trustees in March of 2017. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of many members of the University community, we are currently on track to meet that expectation, having completed the first major phase of the process: an assessment of key University areas.

Between February and May of 2016, 24 teams around the University completed in-depth assessments, taking an honest and critical look at how each area contributes to the mission of the University and identifying key challenges and opportunities in the coming years.

These teams included:

- Nine academic committees, formed to assess the eight schools that make up Boston College as well as the University Library system;
- Eight administrative committees, formed to assess eight of the most critical administrative departments; and
- Seven cross-divisional committees, formed to examine questions or issues that were too broad to be sufficiently addressed by any one school or department.

In May, Father Leahy, University senior administrators and the USPI Steering Committee met with the leads for each of these 24 teams, engaging in a set of robust and productive discussions about our collective vision for the future and how each area contributes to the overall mission of the University. We also discussed some of the many changes within American higher education since the launch of our last strategic plan in 2006, and looked ahead to how each of these areas will contribute to helping Boston College meet the challenges of the next decade as well.

Over the summer, the Steering Committee and a core team of senior administrators has reflected on this wealth of analysis and information, and has drawn out some key themes that we believe represent the areas of greatest opportunity for the University to advance and strengthen its mission over the next ten years. Not surprisingly, what we heard from the University community represents a re-commitment to our enduring vision, our sense of mission and our core values. There were, however, certain preliminary themes and principles that emerged as needing, perhaps, more intentional focus and attention in order to best address the challenges and opportunities identified as part of the assessment process.

Preliminary Themes:

- The centrality of undergraduate education and our firm and unwavering commitment to the transformative power of the liberal arts, with an emphasis on interdisciplinarity and on the development of analytical skills and mindfulness towards professional preparation and vocational discernment.
- The formation of students as fundamental to the University's purpose, with a recognition of the need to improve formation opportunities for our entire community, including faculty and staff, to deepen knowledge of and commitment to BC's mission.
- Our continued commitment to research and scholarship that serves the common good, with a new emphasis on integrated sciences and holistic, cross-disciplinary approaches to solving complex problems.
- A new emphasis on bringing coordination and intentionality to our long-standing movement toward becoming a truly global university.
- A reaffirmation of the importance of graduate and professional education, with a renewed emphasis on ensuring we commit our resources to top-quality programs that truly serve our students and society.
- Recognition of the importance of Boston College's warm and welcoming culture – among students, faculty and staff – and of the need to be intentional about ensuring that culture and sense of community remain strong amid tensions in American society around race, gender identity, socio-economic pressures and a polarized political environment.
- The need to be more aggressive in leveraging BC's unique position as:
 - An idyllic residential campus which is also part of the thriving greater Boston area
 - A tight-knit community with national and global connections
 - An intellectual crossroads where faith and culture can meet in dialogue

While these are not the only themes that arose, they represent ideas that presented themselves again and again across different conversations and in multiple contexts, and which resonated with the Steering Committee and with senior University leadership.

In early October, the two of us will be holding two "town hall" meetings on October 5th in Gasson 100, from 9:00 to 10:30 and 4:00 to 5:30, where you'll have a chance to hear directly from us and from some of the members of the Steering Committee, and to offer your thoughts, feedback and questions on the strategic planning process. We hope to see many of you at one of those events; if you're unable to make it in person, we'll also be soliciting your ideas and feedback on the USPI website. We look forward to hearing from you, and to working with you to make these themes into realities that will continue to improve the way that we, as a University community, serve our students and our society.

Best,



Michael Lochhead
Executive Vice President



David Quigley
Provost and Dean of Faculties