MIND
HEART
PLACE

ELEVATING MIND, HEART, AND PLACE

The Strategic Plan for the University of the South

2024–2030

Located on a 13,000-acre Domain on the Cumberland Plateau in Tennessee, the University of the South is a premier liberal arts college and seminary of the Episcopal Church that cultivates academic excellence, community values, and environmental stewardship and produces informed, self-aware, and participatory citizens for our democracy and servant-leaders for the world.

I. INTRODUCTION

The University of the South moves confidently into the coming decades based on a renewed educational approach that draws on our past and looks to the future. Our strategic plan builds upon a rich liberal arts and theological education tradition that explores enduring questions of humanity infused with practical engagement that prepares our graduates for lives of integrity, service, and leadership. At the University of the South, education has never been just about the pursuit of abstract knowledge; it has long sought to prepare students to be engaged citizens who meet society's needs. Such an educational model requires that students be outfitted with the knowledge, skills, and powers of discernment needed to address the challenges they will face in the world and the moral character to take on such responsibilities.

In keeping with its educational mission and tradition, the University of the South has developed this strategic plan with a clear focus on students. To that end, two underlying objectives animate our strategic plan:

- *providing a comprehensive curricular offering that will sustain our attractiveness to a larger number of high-caliber students; and,*
- *preparing students for lives of service and leadership so they will become active citizens contributing to democracy at home and the resolution of challenges around the world.*

Achieving these twin goals will elevate our standing in the increasingly competitive landscape of higher education.

The College of Arts and Sciences has the capacity to support a population of 1,750 undergraduate students on campus, and it should strive to achieve that enrollment goal through selective admission of more students and improved retention. Doing so will provide the financial base for further expansion of academic and co-curricular programming. At the same time, the College will strive to diversify its student body and provide a welcoming home to students from all places, backgrounds, faith traditions, and identities. To achieve this enrollment goal, the College must institute curricular and co-curricular programs that attract more students and foster a greater sense of belonging in order to improve the retention of students.

The School of Theology is similarly situated with the capacity and need to grow enrollment. The School of Theology aims to enroll 75 students in academic-year degree programs, 60 students in the summer Advanced Degrees Program, and 12 students in the low-residence Alternative Clergy Training Sewanee (ACTS) program.

The second animus for the strategic plan is to refine our curricular and co-curricular programs in order to meet our goal of preparing students to be engaged citizens and servant-leaders. We are fortunate to build on the strengths of exceptional faculty and staff who offer educational opportunities to students on a spectacular 13,000-acre campus that serves as a natural laboratory for academic inquiry.

The strategies articulated in this plan cohere, in large part, around the theme of building on our distinct institutional strength of relationship-rich educational experiences. This emphasis on relationships is underscored by the University's motto, Ecce Quam Bonum, taken from Psalm 133, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is when kindred dwell together in unity," and is an important factor that draws students to the University. Education takes many forms, but it always occurs in the context of the myriad relationships formed among students and between students and members of the faculty, staff, and community. At the University of the South, all members of the community have the opportunity to contribute to, and bear the responsibility for, students' formation.

Three Pillars

Our strategic plan is organized around three pillars: Mind, Heart, and Place.

Mind refers to our desire to renew and develop our curricula in the College of Arts and Sciences and School of Theology to ensure we are preparing our students with the requisite knowledge and skills to enjoy a meaningful life, to find rewarding work, and to serve others. At the core of our liberal arts tradition in the College and the residential education experience in the School of Theology is a model of exceptional faculty working in close collaboration with intellectually curious students. Increasingly, learning opportunities extend beyond the traditional classroom as we offer co-curricular programs that imbue classroom lessons with real-life experiences and a deeper sense of meaning. We do not plan to stray from that model; we seek to refine and augment our pedagogical approaches, subject matters, and engagement with the world to prepare students for success in a rapidly changing world. Such an evolution is necessary to ensure that the University of the South continues to offer an exceptional education that exposes students to the knowledge and skills that will help them to fulfill our vision of engaged citizens who lead lives of meaning and service.

Heart refers to our commitment to the holistic formation of students. The University's Purpose Statement calls on us to develop the "whole person" and has long animated the institution's approach to education. That model is consistent with our liberal arts and residential theological education and underscores our desire to foster empathy, leadership potential, and commitment to serve others. By training the whole person, the University of the South prepares students to become servant-leaders who actively participate in democracy and fulfill the responsibilities of global citizenship.

Place refers to both our physical location on 13,000 acres perched atop the Cumberland Plateau and the people who live in the community of Sewanee and surrounding areas. The University of the South

recognizes its responsibility to steward our local environment and to work in partnership with people in and around Sewanee to advance well-being. Our focus on this place we call "home" does not mean that the University of the South is parochial; rather, engagement in Sewanee and surrounding communities helps students develop empathy for others, learn from the external community, and hone skills to address challenges far beyond Sewanee.

Mind, Heart, and Place form a cohesive framework for an educational experience that links traditional academic study, character formation, and veneration of community. An education at the University of the South produces informed, self-aware, and participatory citizens for our democracy and servant-leaders for the world. This vision for the University of the South is informed by our historical approach to education, draws on many of our current strengths, and will prepare students to tackle future challenges.

Many of the initiatives outlined in our strategic plan pertain to more than one of the pillars because our approach to education brings together the Mind, Heart, and Place in the education of the whole person. Each initiative that relates to multiple pillars touches upon various facets of our educational approach, thereby broadening the impact on student development. In order to achieve the initiatives outlined in this strategic plan, we recognize the importance of raising additional resources, growing our endowment, and successfully implementing the operational priorities plan.

The Landscape of Higher Education: Challenges and Opportunities on the Horizon

The landscape of higher education is rapidly changing, which provides opportunities and challenges for the University of the South. We considered this looking both internally and externally. Institutions of higher education operate in the context of:

- *Declining perceived value of higher education.*
- *Changing demographics of college-aged students.*
- *Values changes among "Gen Z."*
- *Mental health challenges among college students.*

Although studies of the financial value of a college education show a strong return on investment, a study by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation indicates the perceived return on investment of a college degree continues to fall. Such shifting perceptions create twin pressures on institutions of higher education to increase discounting (lower students' "investment" in their degree) or to offer programs with clearer paths to professional careers. According to the National Student Clearinghouse, since 2020, one of the few types of academic credential that has enjoyed consistent growth in enrollment is non-degree certificate programs, many of which focus on professional skill development. Liberal arts colleges face a particular challenge in this changing context because they have traditionally focused on

more general educational models over narrowly conceived professional training. Nevertheless, many liberal arts colleges, including the University of the South, are augmenting their liberal arts approach with experiences and high-impact educational practices such as internships that deepen students' knowledge of a field of study by learning how to apply such knowledge in a practical setting. The University of the South has an opportunity to more deeply and intentionally develop its experiential educational programs to meet this challenge and demonstrate a sound return on investment.

The population of college-aged students is undergoing several changes that will provide challenges and opportunities for the University of the South. First, due to a downturn in the birth rate in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, the number of students bound for college after 2026 is expected to drop. Such forecasts of the number of students bound for college have been muddied by the COVID pandemic, during which an estimated 1.2 million students quit attending public high schools, and a declining perceived value of a college degree. Even prior to 2026, according to the National Student Clearinghouse, the number of students pursuing a baccalaureate degree at private nonprofit institutions declined by 3.2 percent during the period 2018-2023. Second, the youth in the United States are becoming more racially diverse. In 2018, the Census Bureau reported that non-Hispanic whites comprised a minority of the population under 18 years of age for the first time. In Southern states, the main pockets of growth of college-bound students after 2026 will be among Latinx and Asian students. The University of the South will need to continue its efforts to recruit a diverse student body and develop programs that foster an inclusive community to appeal to the changing population of college-bound students.

"Gen Z," which includes people born 1997-2012, have demonstrated significant values changes from prior generations. According to reports by Pew Research Center and Annie E. Casey Foundation, the values of Gen Z include deep concern about the environment and climate change; a penchant to actively address global challenges; an acceptance of diversity along racial, gender, and sexual orientation lines; and a desire for hands-on learning experiences. These shifts in values have implications for how institutions of higher education will need to adjust their curriculum, pedagogy, and co-curricular offerings to meet the expectations of Gen Z students. The University of the South has an opportunity to appeal to Gen Z students by elevating its environmental studies programs, aligning its operations with environmental values, and elaborating community engagement and its co-curricular programs.

According to national data collected by the Healthy Minds Survey, during the period between 2013 and 2021, college students' mental health changed significantly. Among college students, national rates of depression have increased by 134.6%, rates of anxiety increased by 109.5%, eating disorders by 95.6%, non-suicidal self-injury by 45.5%, and rates of suicidal ideation by 64%. The impact of worsening mental health among young people has implications for student persistence and academic success; though, until recently, the impact of mental health has largely been missing from the national dialogue about student success.[1] Strategies that prioritize early identification and intervention are critical, as is

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1   Lipson SK, Zhou S, Abelson S, Heinze J, Jirsa M, Morigney J, Patterson A, Singh M, Eisenberg D. Trends in college student mental health and help-seeking by race/ethnicity: Findings from the national healthy minds study, 2013-2021. J Affect Disord. 2022 June 1;306:138-147. doi: 10.1016/j.jad.2022.03.038. Epub 2022 Mar 18. PMID: 35307411; PMCID: PMC8995361.

access to high-quality treatment in a timely and responsive manner. Coinciding with the provision of mental health care, opportunities for student engagement, "second connections," and a greater sense of belonging through experiences like varsity athletics, student government, community-engaged service programs, and Greek-life organizations have proven to have a positive impact on retention and graduation.

Evidence of the changing landscape of higher education can be seen in recent closures of liberal arts colleges, including Birmingham-Southern College in Alabama, which has been a member of the Associated Colleges of the South, a consortium of premier liberal arts colleges in the South to which the University of the South belongs. Although enrollments at the University of the South are stable, they have declined by approximately 90 students engaged in study on campus from the levels that we enjoyed just prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to flourish in the competitive landscape of higher education, the University of the South will need to rely on its current strengths and develop in new ways to seize opportunities to attract future cohorts of students.

The Landscape of Episcopal Theological Education: Challenges and Opportunities on the Horizon

Theological education in the Episcopal Church has evolved significantly in the last 10 years. Under financial duress, some seminaries have closed their degree programs (Episcopal Divinity School) or left the Episcopal Church (Trinity School for Ministry), while others have stopped offering residential education (Church Divinity School of the Pacific, General Seminary, Bexley-Seabury). At the same time, local, unaccredited programs to train priests have multiplied. Only five residential seminaries remain.

The remaining residential seminaries face several challenges. There is a decreasing number of ordinands each year, meaning that there are fewer prospective students. Out of necessity, a significant fraction of these students intend to pursue non-stipendiary, bi-vocational ministry, so that they cannot easily quit the job or close the business that they will need to support themselves in ministry on the other side of their formation. These students will likely pursue local formation or online education. For those students who will serve in full-time ministry, theological education remains a highly price-sensitive market, in which only one Episcopal institution covers all expenses for its students. For seminaries to compete effectively for students, they must offer their programs at low or no cost to the student.

In this context, the School of Theology at the University of the South has some opportunities. A general shortage of priests, even relative to full-time, full-pay jobs, has made it difficult for dioceses to fill positions, and with half of all Episcopal priests within 10 years of retirement age, this shortage is unlikely to be abated soon. This means that our students are placed in good jobs well before graduation; it also means that we can responsibly maintain or expand our enrollment. Low-residence and online-only degree programs do not offer "full-service" preparation of priests, so the School of Theology can distin-

guish itself by leaning into its reputation for spiritual formation and a supportive community, alongside its reputation for academic excellence. The numbers of clergy trained in local formation programs of varying quality provide a potential market for high-quality continuing education, and canonical requirements for professional development of clergy mean that even seminary-trained clergy will need ongoing learning opportunities. A growing awareness of environmental concerns in the church suggests a receptive audience for the programming of the Center for Religion and Environment and for the MA in Religion and Environment.

Alongside these external opportunities, the School of Theology has significant internal strengths. The faculty pair scholarly excellence with a focus on student formation. A variety of field-education opportunities, ranging from urban to rural parishes of varying sizes, are within driving range. The School is one of only two Episcopal seminaries tied to a university (the other being Berkeley at Yale), and this means unparalleled library resources, cross-curricular opportunities, and diverse conversation partners are at seminarians' fingertips. Finally, the university connection links the School to All Saints' Chapel and to the neighboring St. Andrew's-Sewanee School, bringing unique opportunities for seminarians to learn and practice the skills of ministry in the settings of both higher education and secondary-school chaplaincies.

While theological education as a whole across the Episcopal Church faces a number of headwinds, opportunities remain for high-quality, well-resourced programs.

The Strategic Planning Process

The strategic planning process was led by a steering committee of 11 members of the faculty and administration mostly drawn from a standing Strategic Planning Committee of 24 members that includes elected faculty members, administrators, faculty representatives from other standing committees, and faculty and student trustees. This Strategic Planning Committee formed the main pool of persons to staff subcommittees of this strategic planning process, which were organized around the Mind, Heart, and Place pillars. To draw on expertise outside of the standing Strategic Planning Committee, the subcommittees enlisted additional faculty, staff, students, trustees, and regents to join them in their work. The complete memberships and charges of the committees and subcommittees involved in the strategic planning process may be found in Appendix A.

Organizational work on the strategic plan began in October 2023, during Vice-Chancellor Rob Pearigen's first months in office. In the Advent 2023 semester, the vice-chancellor worked with Acting Provost Scott Wilson and the Strategic Planning Committee to discuss a new framework for the strategic plan, focusing on three pillars. Vice-Chancellor Pearigen and Acting Provost Wilson hired Dawn Wiese, former vice president for student affairs and dean of students at Washington & Lee University, to serve as a facilitator for many of the on-campus conversations, especially those focusing on potentially divisive

topics. The Strategic Planning Committee also discussed potential initiatives that might be included under the three pillars. Throughout the fall, the acting provost made presentations to the Joint Faculties, Board of Regents, Student Government Association, open staff meetings, and the Board of Trustees to update them on the strategic plan as it began to take shape.

During the Easter Semester of 2024, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee hosted 54 facilitated conversations (focus groups, town hall events, and open fora) to discuss the strategic plan at various stages of the process. (See Appendix B for a list of the meetings held.) The committee disseminated Google forms to collect additional input following the focus group conversations held on April 2 and 9. Subcommittees organized around the Mind, Heart, and Place pillars met on a weekly basis to analyze background materials and, in some cases, to meet with people outside of the Strategic Planning Committee. Based on feedback from various stakeholders, the committee members wrote and circulated the draft report for further input. Beginning in early May, the Strategic Planning Committee began to seek endorsement of the plan from the Joint Faculties, the Staff Partnership Council, the Board of Regents, and the Board of Trustees.

II. OUR GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The University puts forward several strategies to meet five goals in pursuit of the vision of the University articulated above. The goals and strategies are closely interconnected, and no one goal or strategy should be viewed as prioritized over others.

Goal 1: Renew and Enhance the Curriculum

Strategy 1A: Create a First-Year Experience for All Students

RATIONALE: First-year programming has long been recognized by the American Association of Colleges and Universities as one of the most consequential high-impact practices (HIP) that colleges can adopt in their efforts to attract and retain students. Aimed specifically at newly arrived students, the First-Year Experience has the greatest potential of any HIP to develop cohesion among the first-year class and relationships with participating faculty and staff. Numerous academic studies have demonstrated that first-year programs can help students transition from high school to college and find a sense of belonging on campus, setting themselves up for success in college and enhancing feelings of community for everyone on campus. Expansion of First-Year Experience to include all students will also be particularly important in helping the University of the South attract and retain the next generation of college students who will be more racially and economically diverse than our current student body.

DESCRIPTION: The College will offer a universal, cohesive, first-year experience that builds on strengths of our campus, current first-year programs (Finding Your Place, PRE, international student orientation, orientation, athletics), and local resources, while ensuring equitable access for all students. The program will emphasize the transition to college, academic exploration, experiential learning, academic resilience, belonging, community, and placemaking. Such a program that includes all first-year College students will begin the process of developing relationships and fostering an inclusive community among students of all backgrounds.

Unlike a traditional first-year seminar based solely in the classroom, this initiative will entail a campus-wide collaboration that provides a holistic experience integrating curricular and co-curricular engagement through a combination of coursework, community-focused activities, orientation activities, environmental and outdoor opportunities on the Domain, early career exploration, and wellness.

Keys to a successful FYE will be a cross-campus partnership that ensures universal access to all students to achieve the following:

- *Early arrival for all first-year students.*
- *An experiential four-credit-hour academic course that integrates the liberal arts with big questions and contemporary challenges from the local to the global. Students will collaborate on a final project that will create a product beyond a paper or exam.*
- *A one-credit-hour "Sewanee 101" course designed to prepare students for success at the University of the South. This would include a more intensive period corresponding to the traditional orientation period but would be scaffolded and extended into the semester with onboarding activities woven throughout. Similar offerings that help students connect to offices and mentors and to progress in vocational and personal discernment at each step in their education would be offered in their second, third, and fourth years.*
- *Peer mentoring to support belonging and academic success. Peer mentors will engage in academic and co-curricular leadership training to prepare them to effectively support first-year students.*
- *Introduction to the Domain as an inclusive and multidimensional living and learning environment. The program will offer a diverse menu of options for students who have varying needs and preferences. Activities to include:*

  - *Arts activities.*
  - *Athletics.*
  - *Community engagement.*
  - *Cross-cultural engagement.*
  - *Outdoor activities.*

- *Cognizant of the differing interests and time commitments of students (e.g. athletes who will need time to practice before the semester starts), we envision offering a range of experiences with the goal of making sure that all students have the ability to participate in the First-Year Experience.*

SUPPORTING TACTICS:

   A. Identify and incentivize faculty and qualified staff to teach the four-credit-hour course, but more importantly incentivize departments to think creatively about developing FYE courses that could also count toward general education and/or major requirements.

   B. Identify and incentivize staff to teach the "Sewanee 101" course.

   C. Convene interested faculty and staff from the Office of Career Readiness and Student Success, duPont Library, Student Life, the Wellness Commons, the Sewanee Outing Program, the Office of Residential Life, and other relevant offices on campus to develop the curriculum of "Sewanee 101."

   D. Develop a peer mentoring program led by a staff or faculty member to identify and train older students to serve as peer mentors for the four-credit courses and "Sewanee 101" courses. This program could serve as an opportunity for students to gain valuable training in leadership.

   E. Bring together the Office of Civic Engagement, the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, the Sewanee Outing Program, the Dean of Students Office, the Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation Center, and community partners to help develop curricular and co-curricular programming that focuses on our local community and underscores our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Strategy 1B: Promote High-Impact Practices Across the Curriculum

RATIONALE: The University of the South stands out from larger colleges and universities because of its tightly connected community, where both students and a significant portion of faculty and staff live on or near campus. This makes the University particularly well-positioned to foster close relationships between students and members of the faculty and staff—a distinction that is a point of pride to all of our constituencies and that attracts prospective students. Additionally, many high-impact practices help students to utilize knowledge learned in classrooms in pragmatic settings, deepening problem-solving skills. To live up to this ideal and take full advantage of our strategic position, the University will support efforts and initiatives that bring students, faculty, staff, and community partners together on shared intellectual, creative, and/or academic exploration.

Faculty and students collaborate on scholarly or artistic projects, small classes allow faculty to assign collaborative work, and an increasing number of faculty are incorporating community-engaged learning into their courses. These high-impact practices support students from diverse backgrounds, foster academic excellence, engage with social and environmental justice, and build community and a sense of belonging. The University will expand the number of faculty and staff who participate in these programs to broaden the support for the programs and to alleviate the disproportionate burden that has fallen on faculty and staff who have contributed their time and skills. This will require resources and freedom to explore new ways of teaching and flexible definitions of where and how teaching, learning, and intellectual relationship-building happens.

DESCRIPTION: The University will support the expansion of high-impact practices that already exist in many programs at the University. High-impact practices (HIPs) are pedagogical approaches that have been shown to be more beneficial to all students than a traditional lecture course and which are especially effective for students from "demographic groups historically underserved by higher education." The American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) has identified 11 pedagogical practices that it defines as HIPs. Among these are First-Year Experiences, Capstone Courses and Projects, Undergraduate Research, Community-Based Learning, Global Learning, and Learning Communities. Not every individual faculty member or academic department will find ways to incorporate all HIPs into their work with students, but each faculty member should feel encouraged and supported in their efforts around even a single one.

HIPs to expand include:

A. *Capstone Courses and Projects.*
A capstone project is typically undertaken in the senior year and "integrates and applies" what a student has learned throughout their studies. It can take the form of a "research paper, performance, portfolio of 'best work,' or an exhibit of artwork." Capstone projects do not need to be undertaken within the confines of a structured course.

Departments already doing this work, or wanting to explore it, should be supported with adequate staffing as well as funds for the research or creative materials necessary for their students to produce the best possible work.

B. *Learning Communities.*
According to AAC&U, learning communities are when students take "two or more linked courses as a group and work closely with each other and their professors" to consider a "big question" from different disciplinary perspectives such as environmental and social justice and human rights. (See also Strategy 1C.) Ideally, linked courses would be offered in the same semester and would be indicated as being linked at the time of registration. The resultant learning community should be intellectually stimulating for both the students and the faculty who are working collaboratively across disciplines.

C. *Community-Engaged Learning.*
Through community-engaged learning, students are able to apply what they learn in the classroom to a real-world context, thus helping prepare students to be active citizens in their communities. They engage in problem-solving for which they see a real positive impact on their local and global communities, and become personally invested in the well-being and future of those communities. They meet, and work closely with, people of diverse backgrounds and perspectives. With the efforts of faculty and the Office of Civic Engagement (OCE), much progress has been made to intentionally support and encourage the integration of community-engaged learning into College courses.

D. *Mentored Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work*

The AAC&U simply uses the term "Undergraduate Research'' as the involvement of students with "actively contested questions, empirical observation, and cutting-edge technologies." Undergraduate research and creative work is not the sole purview of the sciences but can and does occur across the whole array of humanities, sciences, and social sciences.

Ultimately, however, it is not enough for students to simply do research. They must also build relationships with faculty. Relationship-building occurs when students work closely and collaboratively with faculty mentors on research projects or creative endeavors. Furthermore, when multiple students work on the same or similar projects, a sense of community and belonging develops. An effective model for mentored research, scholarship, and creative work was piloted by the Biology Department and named the [Life Sciences Research Fellowship](#), but could easily be expanded or replicated to be more inclusive of other disciplines and built into existing fellowships that we currently offer across the College.

This level of mentorship and close student-faculty relationships is important for all students, but can be especially valuable for underrepresented students, or those who are otherwise underrepresented within a discipline. They achieve a sense of belonging and gain access to professional networks that can, in turn, open doors and sustain a successful career.

E. *Global Learning*

With the Sewanee Pledge, more students are opting to study abroad—a high-impact practice that exposes them to different cultures and worldviews. However, rising costs of some of the most prestigious and impactful study-abroad programs have prevented College student participation. As we commit to offering high-impact practices to all students, it will be important to ensure that students can get the most out of their global learning experiences.

SUPPORTING TACTICS:

A. Encourage faculty to develop learning communities in the form of paired classes. Interdisciplinary team-teaching should be considered a value added at the level of promotion and tenure review, and mini-grants and summer stipends should be available to facilitate the design of new courses.

B. Provide resources to expand the opportunities to mentor undergraduate research including summer salaries for faculty, time during the academic year for faculty and students to work on projects together, and supplies, technology, computer software, travel funds, etc., for students' projects.

C. Explore integration of opportunities for engaged learning outside of the traditional academic calendar through the creation of a J-term or Maymester, which expand access to such opportunities, and provide sufficient funding for students to engage in those experiences.

D. Reconsider what constitutes "teaching" during the regular academic year potentially to offer teaching credits to faculty who offer large numbers of for-credit mentored research or community-

engagement experiences. Faculty should be offered access to workshops and other training opportunities to help them offer the best possible learning experiences for students.

E. Encourage students to engage with high-impact practices outside of the classroom by creating a co-curricular transcript that helps them see how all their work fits together as a broad educational experience to articulate that to potential employers.

F. Provide additional resources to financially disadvantaged College students to remove structural barriers to study abroad by paying for additional travel, visa, and/or immunization costs.

Strategy 1C: Create a Center for Project-Based Learning and Action

RATIONALE: To fulfill its vision of preparing students to become informed, self-aware, and participatory citizens for our democracy and servant-leaders for the world, the University must provide opportunities to connect classroom experiences with experiential learning. Across the College and School of Theology, many faculty at the University of the South engage students in high-impact, project-based learning and research that provides opportunities for students to build multiple disciplinary perspectives and tools and integrate curricular and co-curricular experiences. This interdisciplinary, engaged inquiry is essential for our graduates' ability to navigate the world and address its multifaceted cultural, economic, social, political, and environmental challenges.

DESCRIPTION: The University will create an interdisciplinary center that will bring together and enhance existing programs such as the Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation Center, the Roberson Project, the Office of Civic Engagement, the Office of Undergraduate Research, the Office of Global Citizenship, and Sewanee's Integrated Program in the Environment, through the provision of resources to support project-based learning across the University and—through the creation of a physical space on campus—enable synergetic learning. Through integration of research, curricular, and co-curricular learning, the center will marshal the liberal arts to address current and future challenges to society.

The center will have anchor offices that promote ongoing research, teaching across disciplinary lines, outreach projects, and public programming, including a speaker series, workshops and training, publications, and an active social media presence. The center will offer support to all faculty interested in project-based teaching and research that crosses traditional disciplinary boundaries. To encourage new collaborations, the center will support faculty fellows who are awarded course releases or summer stipends to initiate projects with elements of community engagement and/or research with students in local or global venues.

Leaning on the University of the South's tradition of relationship-rich education, this center will augment faculty and staff mentorship of students, including student fellows, who will be empowered to explore purpose and career paths through coursework, research, and engagement with local and global communities. The center will attract recognition, prospective students, and financial support.

SUPPORTING TACTICS:

A. The integration of five anchor offices:

    1. The University's Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation (TRHT) Center will partner with the Roberson Project to continue the University's reckoning with its past and to work on building a more equitable future for the University of the South. The center's work will also include efforts to attract a more diverse faculty and develop more diverse courses through some or all of the following ways:

        a. By hosting a DEI faculty fellows program.

        b. By working to expand existing curricular programming dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusion, such as in Women's and Gender Studies and African and African American Studies.

        c. By working with interested faculty in developing courses in Latinx and Asian American studies.

        d. By working with the Center for Teaching to host more sessions dedicated to diversifying the curriculum.

    2. The Sewanee Integrated Program in the Environment, under the new title of the Sewanee Environmental Institute (SEI), will be dedicated to tackling issues of environmental justice through education and action. We envision it will work closely with the Office of Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability, and the Center for Religion and Environment at the School of Theology.

    3. The Office of Civic Engagement will provide opportunities for students to participate in meaningful academic and co-curricular community-engagement programming, while also reflecting on their agency as citizens and developing empathy, gaining issue-based knowledge, and learning skills of collaboration and dialogue. Students at the School of Theology will participate in some of these efforts.

    4. The Office of Undergraduate Research will be established with office space and a faculty director. It will continue to facilitate summer and semester faculty-student research, but its placement in the center will elevate opportunities for synergies with other offices to promote community-based and global student research.

    5. The Office of Global Citizenship will bring a global lens to the center's project-based learning. This office will be important for bringing attention to the fact that current and future challenges have global dimensions, and that most students' study-away experiences include research, interdisciplinary learning, and community-engagement components that would integrate well with the center's mission. This office might also help our efforts to diversify our student's learning in the following ways:

        a. By working with Career Readiness to develop internships abroad, including in non-Western countries.

        b. By continuing to work with faculty to develop Sewanee-led study-abroad programs in non-European countries.

c. By helping our students find ways of studying non-European languages in addition to Chinese, which is taught in the college.

B. These anchor offices will work closely with the proposed Center for Data Analytics and the Digital Humanities. (See Strategy 1D.)

1. The Center for Data Analytics and Digital Humanities will support projects and research that require the use of digital tools and training available through the proposed Center for Project-Based Learning and Action.

2. A faculty or staff position in data analytics may also be housed in the center.

C. The Center for Project-Based Learning and Action will also coordinate with other offices including the Babson Center for Global Commerce, Career Readiness and Student Success, and the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

D. In addition to anchor offices, the center will have space for faculty fellows and student fellows.

1. Faculty fellows may receive course releases and/or summer stipends, and hold the position for multi year terms.

2. Fellows will help generate new ideas for student-faculty-community learning.

3. Fellows will work across disciplinary lines on project-based learning, team-teaching, and student mentoring.

4. Student fellows will be recruited, with some provided scholarships to engage in project-based work.

Strategy 1D: Expand Data Analytics and Digital Humanities Across the Curriculum

RATIONALE: Technology, data, and artificial intelligence (AI) are becoming increasingly important in our academic and everyday lives. They are transforming how we see the world around us, from our understanding of the impacts of policy to our visions of the ancient world. In this new landscape, students need to think critically and creatively in a world transformed by data and technology. At the same time, training in data analytics and expertise in digital technologies are becoming increasingly valuable skills for college graduates entering the workforce and are a major point of emphasis in recent university initiatives. The ability to use data analysis and digital forms of communication are critical for addressing global problems and becoming active citizens in a democracy.

DESCRIPTION: Data analytics and digital humanities are two distinct but related fields that have wide applicability across our curriculum. Data analytics integrates research tools and methods from statistics, computer science, and related fields that can be used to conduct research in various domains, including the social sciences and the humanities. Meanwhile, digital humanities involves the use of digital resources and technologies in humanities research, as well as critically analyzing such usage.

The University's successful DataLab shows the untapped potential for such programming on this campus. In providing students with a project-based learning program over the summer, DataLab allows

students to work with government and nonprofit partners in applying data analytics to real-world problems with social impacts. It is now time to promote data analytics and digital humanities throughout the school year and across our curriculum. In doing so, our students will gain practical training in digital technologies and develop critical understandings of the promise and limits of a digital future.

As a liberal arts institution, the College strives for all members of its community to think critically, inquire, and create in a world transformed by digital technology and data and by the rapid expansion of AI. This vision will be realized through a program and process that will:

A. Equip students, staff, and faculty across the arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences with digital and data-informed approaches.

B. Enhance digital and data-analytic approaches by building and enhancing domain knowledge and humanities-informed analysis.

C. Address pressing contemporary challenges through the use and critique of digital and data-informed approaches.

D. Facilitate the coherent, clear, and credible use of data and digital technology in scholarship and communication as well as the ethical use of technology and data.

E. Integrate data analytics and digital humanities in both the curriculum and co-curricular activities.

F. Support the use and understanding of data and AI on the part of students, faculty, and staff.

G. Enhance interdisciplinary collaboration across the sciences, social sciences, and humanities.

SUPPORTING TACTICS:
A. Create a Center for Data Analytics and the Digital Humanities where faculty, staff, and students can find resources to help them plan appropriate data and digital humanities projects in their classes, in capstone projects, and in co-curricular programming. The center will also be a space for conversation among faculty about the role of technology and data in general education, across the curriculum, and in society in general. We envision the following components being important in the creation of this center:
    1. The appointment of a faculty expert as director of the center with a staff made up of practitioners in data analytics and the digital humanities.
    2. The provision of the computing resources necessary for data-intensive projects.
    3. The creation of a program of student "data and technology fellows" who will tutor students and faculty in the fields of data analytics and the digital humanities and will work on projects generated by the center.
    4. Postgraduate fellowships for graduates of the University of the South to stay on and work for the center.

5. A faculty fellows program to prepare faculty to offer courses and assignments in support of this strategy, modeled after the programs offered through the Office of Civic Engagement and the Center for Speaking and Listening.

6. Coordination with the Library and Information Technology Services Division to provide guidance and potential staffing for the center.

7. Coordination with the School of Theology's Office of Contextual Education to provide assistance with its teaching on congregational data and neighborhood data.

B. Consider creation of an interdisciplinary data analytics major and/or minor.

C. Add appropriate data analytics or digital humanities classes as one of the possible choices in the G5 general education requirement.

D. Expand the DataLab program in the summer, and explore ways of continuing its research projects into the school year.

E. Develop courses in the curriculum on the ethics of digital technology.

F. Explore the creation of a summer program for high school students that introduces data-analytic techniques and opportunities at the University of the South.

Strategy 1E: Expand Business Offerings

RATIONALE: Evidence shows high demand for business education from prospective students and their families. While we know that liberal arts education provides students with a solid foundation for many career paths, the uncertainty of the current and future job market has led students and their families to seek out opportunities for gaining business skills and knowledge while at Sewanee. This can be seen in the popularity of the Wm. Polk Carey Pre-Business Program and the business minor, which has been the most popular minor at Sewanee since its inception, and which currently includes about 25% of both the senior and junior classes. Furthermore, the success of the Carey Fellowship program in converting applicants to enrolled students indicates that our efforts to draw more students to campus by investing in business programming can be successful.

The goal in expanding business offerings is to provide students with coursework in important business disciplines to enhance their major. We believe that the costs of creating a traditional business major at this time outweigh its potential benefits for the University. However, there remain several promising and cost-effective ways of increasing our business programming to attract more students to campus while keeping our historic commitment to a traditional liberal arts curriculum.

DESCRIPTION: Sewanee will continue to provide students with the value of a liberal arts education while expanding our business offerings throughout the curriculum with the aim of attracting more prospective students to the College. The University will do so in two ways:

A. By expanding our current business programming.
   1. Expand the size of the Carey Fellows program to attract more top students interested in business.
   2. Increase the number of tracks in the business minor to include areas such as Arts Leadership, Science Management, and Data Analytics.
   3. Transform the current tracks in the business minor into stand-alone minors, such as Accounting or Marketing.
   4. Selectively add business courses that would align with current departments and augment our curricular offerings.
   5. Improve marketing of Sewanee business offerings by offering a clearer narrative on our website and in our marketing materials about how our offerings prepare students for careers in business.

B. By expanding business-related programming within the Office of Career Readiness and Student Success.
   1. Expand our suite of marquee business-related internships.
   2. Diversify the types of internship opportunities we offer by concentrating on adding internships in consulting, entrepreneurship, and sustainability.
   3. Connect underrepresented minority students more thoughtfully with accomplished alumni and professionals from Black, Latinx, Asian, and Indigenous backgrounds, as well as first-generation college graduates.
   4. Create a series of low-credit-hour courses that build out of the Sewanee 101 course proposed as part of the First Year Experience and the one-credit courses proposed in the relationship-rich student initiative that will either introduce students to specific business fields or give them career-readiness skills specifically tailored to their careers. (See Strategies 1A and 2A.)

SUPPORTING TACTICS:
A. Expand the Carey Fellows program.
B. Expand business internship opportunities.
C. Consider hiring an additional faculty member in business to shore up current pinch points in business offerings and allow for expansion of courses, tracks, and business minors.
D. Arrange for alumni to mentor students from underrepresented groups.

Goal 2: Enhance Student Formation and Leadership Development

Strategy 2A: Foster a Relationship-Rich Student Experience
RATIONALE: Students need avenues to build community and ensure well-being throughout their entire academic career. Such endeavors foster holistic student development and recognize the inherent dignity of the whole person as befits a premier liberal arts college and an Episcopal seminary. A rela-

tionship-rich environment with a constellation of touch points and avenues creates a sense of belonging for students and impacts their retention, success, and degree attainment. These are also key ways in which we help students' self-discovery around identity and culture, urge their exploration of purpose and vocation, foster their active citizenship, and prepare students for success within and beyond their time at the University of the South.

DESCRIPTION: The University is committed to cultivating a diverse, inclusive academic environment that prioritizes the holistic development and well-being of students throughout their academic experience. To achieve this, we will build on existing strengths to implement a comprehensive framework of spaces, opportunities, and programming intentionally designed to foster relationship-rich community-building and a sense of belonging across diverse backgrounds and perspectives. These initiatives will empower students to engage meaningfully with one another, develop essential interpersonal skills and self-awareness, and cultivate a deep understanding of their role as active participants and leaders in civic life. We propose to foster a relationship-rich student experience through (1) increasing support for inclusive programming that fosters relationship-building with peers, faculty, staff, and mentors, (2) attending to the unique needs of our students who are international, first-generation, low-income, BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and athletes, and (3) ensuring that cross-cultural and equitable principles and values are included across all engaged-learning experiences to encourage students to strive for justice and peace and to respect the dignity of every human being, in alignment with Episcopal values and commitments.

SUPPORTING TACTICS:
  A. Support for Peer Relationships
      1. Create a constellation of trained and supported peer leaders for existing and new programs: (a) peer mentors in FYE, Orientation, PRE, Bonner and Canale, athletic teams, and Residential Life; (b) peer learning assistants in gateway courses; (c) student fellows in the proposed Center for Project-Based Learning and Action; and (d) peer mentors in affinity groups for students, using the model of the first-generation peer mentoring cohort.
      2. Deepen commitment to speciality houses through expanding their number and providing faculty/staff mentors as these spaces foster community and students' collaborative and leadership skills. Provide intentionally designed efforts for students in those spaces to reflect on a sense of purpose, meaning, and leadership.

  B. Support for Student-Staff Relationships
      1. Discern staff needs for supporting students with the recognition that staff relationships with students matter and that they are important members of a student's team of support.
      2. Provide compensation for staff who choose to lead initiatives with a mentoring component, including FYE one-credit courses, outreach trips, and affinity groups.

C. Support for Student-Faculty Relationships

1. Develop a series of one-credit courses that follow and build upon the FYE (described in Strategy 1A) in order to provide students continuous "touch points" on themes related to purpose, vocation, and engaged learning. These could include community-engaged learning experiences, Domain-based environmental learning and/or be embedded into a student's major.

2. Deepen support for faculty to learn about and integrate high-impact practices through funding current fellowships, including the Community-Engaged Learning Faculty Fellows and the Faculty Fellows for Purpose and Career. Expand this model to include other high-impact practices, including faculty fellowships in project-based learning, advising as teaching, and undergraduate research. Funding for encouraging interaction among faculty and student advising and mentoring groups will also be provided.

D. Support for Student-Mentor Relationships

1. Support and fund infrastructure and programming that makes engagement and mentorship possible with diverse alumni and community members. This includes student involvement with the local Indigenous community, the historic Black community in Sewanee, and partner organizations in the tri-county area.

2. Continue to support Bonner and Canale service interns, Outreach, short-term service, and AmeriCorps programs that work with and learn from local community members.

Strategy 2B: Strengthen Student Formation and Leadership Development

RATIONALE: Student formation and leadership development take as many shapes as there are students. Discovering one's sense of place and vocation in the world is intrinsically a personal journey. As an Episcopal university, the University of the South is "concerned with the common good and the contribution of the individual to it,"[2] which calls on the University to prepare students to address the world's greatest challenges and to be engaged citizens in a democratic society. Thus, as part of their liberal arts and theological educational experiences at the University of the South, students have many opportunities in and out of the classroom to find their purpose as they explore paths for their future and their engagement in the world. Leadership skills require engagement with people from a wide array of backgrounds and identities, so leadership development necessitates learning to communicate across diverse interests and perspectives and contributing to the reconciliation of those differences.

The University will build on, and increase the availability of, curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular elements, many of which are already successful, to empower students to explore their purpose, foster contemplation, and nurture the qualities necessary for leadership and service from wherever they are in life. The intentional alignment of student-formation and leadership-development components can deepen students' experiences and help them discover their potential as they prepare for lives rich with meaning and purpose.

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2 Colleges and Universities of the Anglican Communion (CUAC), "Identity and Character Declaration," *https://cuac.anglicancommunion.org/identity-and-character-declaration.aspx*.

DESCRIPTION: The University will enhance and expand already successful programs for both under-graduate and seminary students. This proposal focuses on deepening programming that will offer many opportunities for students to tackle big life questions; develop important skills such as communication, cross-cultural understanding, and conflict resolution; practice active citizenship; and explore their personal understanding of leadership. The University strives to develop and/or deepen programming that empowers students to reflect on their experiences and that fosters trust and confidence in their own perspectives and abilities. This approach will enable students to draw meaningful connections between their academic coursework, co-curricular experiences, service activities, and personal development milestones. Further, the University supports curricular and co-curricular programming that enables students to gain the citizenship skills and dispositions of collaboration, dialogue and deliberation, and working across lines of difference in decision-making. By being more intentional in this work, the University aims to deepen students' understanding of character formation, active citizenship, and leadership, equipping them with the insights and skills needed to navigate complex challenges and make meaningful contributions in their chosen fields, communities, and polities.

SUPPORTING TACTICS:
   A. Integrate aspects of student formation and leadership development into select academic initiatives.
      1. Include in a re-envisioned, inclusive FYE program modules related to student formation, dialogue across lines of difference, and leadership development as both initial exposure for new students and a common foundation upon which to build in subsequent years.
      2. Offer courses such as "Purpose and Pathways" (PSYC 390, offered Advent 2024), to help students develop a deeper understanding of their roles as citizens and leaders in society, by engaging these concepts through academic fields in which they are interested in pursuing study.
      3. Revitalize the Certificate in Civic and Global Leadership to provide all students with a focused academic emphasis in civic engagement in promotion of social justice, civil dialogue, collaborative decision-making, and leadership development.
      4. Ensure that faculty who wish to embed leadership components into curricular offerings or project-based learning opportunities have the resources and training for research, planning, and execution.

   B. Expand curricular and co-curricular programming that fosters active citizenship.
      1. Deepen commitment to the Dialogue Across Difference program to encourage students' skill development in deliberation.
      2. Promote co-curricular programs that urge active citizenship and electoral participation, such as those developed by Democratic Engagement, Debate Union, Student Government, and others.
      3. Capitalize on students' curricular and co-curricular community engagement to explore ethics and responsibility of citizenship.
      4. Urge curricular and co-curricular engagement with diverse communities to promote cross-cultural understanding and citizen awareness of various societal issues.

5. Explore programming options, such as the former "How, Then, Shall We Live?" series that meld lectures with cross-campus dialogue on crucial issues of our time.

C. Provide both undergraduates and seminarians the ability to tailor a multiyear leadership development experience through aggregating a rich array of opportunities.

1. Incorporate and/or deepen leadership-related objectives in programs such as Bonner Scholars, Canale Leaders, 213A Scholars, outreach student leaders, proctors, FYE mentors, chaplains, spiritual directors, student organization leaders, student athlete team captains, and in other roles so that students gain needed skills, competencies, self-awareness, empowerment, and reflection for their personal journeys on campus and in life beyond Sewanee. Training on guided reflections and other necessary resources should be provided to ensure faculty, staff, coaches, and others are prepared to guide this reflection.

2. Capitalize on our unique community as the only university with a liberal arts college and an Episcopal seminary. Build more bridges between the two cohorts of students through combined experiences in leadership training and mentorship opportunities; programs in the classroom and the chapel; and outreach and mission trips.

3. Develop a mechanism that provides all students with a clear understanding of the array of leadership development opportunities that are available to them and how to get involved in them.

4. Consider providing students with the ability to build a "co-curricular transcript" through which they can document many of their leadership development experiences. (See also Strategy 1B.)

5. Establish an Emerging Leaders or Fellows program for students interested in an intensive multi year program.

D. Expand access to Center for Leadership programming for students.

1. Offer Center for Leadership workshops and sessions that focus on leadership development, conflict resolution, inclusive leadership, and personal growth for College and School of Theology students. These programs equip students with the skills and mindset necessary to make meaningful contributions to society.

2. Develop leadership enrichment circles, which would offer short-term, cohort-based leadership development activities in small group settings, where students feel comfortable expressing themselves and building relationships.

E. Expand coaching and mentoring opportunities for students.

1. Expand our alumni leadership mentoring program in which current students can connect with alumni who can offer guidance, advice, and support in the areas of life purpose, career paths, and leadership.

2. Leverage the diverse and rich experiences of students in the School of Theology in order to mentor undergraduate students. This effort would contribute to fostering deeper connections between the College and the School of Theology and to building a relationship-rich experience for all students.

3. Establish a professional coaching program through which a small cohort of faculty and staff are provided with professional coaching training each year. These trained individuals will guide students in personal and leadership growth, help students develop self-awareness, set goals, and overcome obstacles, and complement our advising program and success coaches.

F. Provide students with opportunities and resources to demonstrate leadership through bringing change and solving problems.
   1. Building on the model of existing programs, such as the Idea Incubator and the Sustainability Fellowship Program, provide both undergraduates and seminarians with the resources, support, and consultation to refine their ideas, create an actionable plan, and engage through the appropriate channels to enable a project to come to fruition.

2C. Reinforce the value of our Episcopal heritage and identity that is open, generous, and thoughtful; invested in supporting communities of spiritual practice; works to advance diversity, equity and inclusion; and strives to be a force for global justice.

RATIONALE: The University of the South is distinctive among higher education institutions as one created and governed by the Episcopal Church, which presents opportunities to contribute to students' ethical formation and action. It includes a residential School of Theology; a strong University chaplaincy; and many bishops, clergy, and lay leaders who serve on its governing boards. Nonetheless, the nature of the University's Episcopal heritage and identity is complex and, to some degree, we lack a shared understanding of how the Episcopal Church adds value to the experiences of the diverse individuals who make up this institution and how the University serves as a resource to the church.

The Episcopal Church as a whole and the University share historic commitments to academic inquiry; the integration of faith and reason; the importance of received tradition (and the ability to challenge that tradition); a generous approach to religious difference; and respect for the dignity of the whole person—body, mind, and spirit. More recently, both have been reckoning with the more exclusionary, Eurocentric, and environmentally destructive aspects of our histories, and both have publicly committed to the pursuit of a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable future for the whole world. Moreover, there exist particular ways that the University and the church can be mutually supportive in pursuit of these shared objectives.

Students appreciate the University's connection to the Episcopal Church for diverse and overlapping reasons. The University draws some students interested in participating in the life of the Episcopal Church on campus. Others appreciate the freedom and support an Episcopal institution affords to explore their spirituality and/or live into a different religious or spiritual tradition. Others may not understand themselves as religious or spiritual, but appreciate the Episcopal Church's commitments to inclusion and free inquiry and its global connections. Each of these represents one aspect of the University's Episcopal heritage and identity that merits strengthening.

DESCRIPTION: We will strengthen the University of the South's relationship to the Episcopal Church by investing in initiatives in which the values and resources of the Church can offer distinctive benefits to our diverse students, faculty, and staff. Additionally, we propose investing in ways for the University to serve as a resource to the church so that, through the church, the expertise and best practices already present at the University can have greater global impact.

The University will invest in co-curricular and extracurricular infrastructure that supports students as they integrate the life of the mind with the life of the spirit, whether or not they identify as Episcopalian. We will build on existing programs that have been effective in building mutually supportive relationships among seminarians and college students. We will further invest in the University Choir as a distinguishing feature of the College in order to drive enrollment and strengthen the Department of Music. We will leverage the Episcopal Church's global connections in support of the learning and formation of students.

Building on the demonstrated excellence of many of the University's existing initiatives, we will create sustainable pathways to offer to the Episcopal Church the University's expertise in theological reflection, sustainability, and the intersection of religion and the environment, as well as historical research and best practices around racial reckoning and repair and Indigenous engagement.

SUPPORTING TACTICS:

A. Build upon foundational connections with Episcopal secondary schools to enhance student recruitment and enrollment.

B. Expand the University's choral music program to engage undergraduate students in multiple choirs, alongside the University Choir. Recruit singers through relationships with feeder high schools with strong choral programs across the country and, in partnership with the Office of Global Citizenship, around the world. Continue to model excellence not only in the sacred music tradition but also as a venue for engaged learning, leadership development, and a relationship-rich student experience.

C. Create a dedicated nonsectarian sacred space to support students and colleagues of diverse religious and spiritual identities as they foster relationships with one another and commit to their own spiritual practices on campus.

D. Build on the successful model of the Chaplains in Residence program, and create more mechanisms for seminarians to serve in existing departments (i.e. Civic Engagement, Career Readiness and Student Success, Wellness, All Saints' Chapel) under the supervision of colleagues already working in undergraduate-facing programs. In so doing, add value to the existing work of these departments while encouraging relationships among seminarians and college students.

E. Fund cross-cultural experiences for students at the School of Theology and utilize the relationships

held by the Office of Global Citizenship and the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to create new opportunities for the same.

F. Explore the development of 3-2 B.A./M.A. and 3-3 B.A./M.Div. programs with the College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Theology.

G. Develop the Center for Religion and Environment into a resource for students and for the church beyond Sewanee, expanding its programmatic offerings and enhancing connections to the Integrated Program in the Environment in the College.

H. Create a program of continuing education within the School of Theology, offering postgraduate courses and certificates, online and low-residence, for clergy continuing education.

I. Develop new educational programming for local parishes under the Education for Ministry umbrella.

J. Initiate new partnerships among the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; the Center for Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation; the Roberson Project; and the Indigenous Engagement Initiative and the Episcopal Church's Office of Ethnic Ministries as well as dioceses and parishes engaged in the work of historical reckoning, racial healing, and repair so that Sewanee can offer tangible support to those efforts.

K. Continue the expansion of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts at the School of Theology.
   1. Increase diversity among students, faculty, and staff.
   2. Increase the diversity of voices on campus with visiting lecturers and fellowships.
   3. Strengthen relationships with multicultural ministries within the denomination.
   4. Establish and strengthen relationships, including student exchange, with dioceses and theological colleges in the majority-world portions of the Anglican Communion.

Goal 3: Make the University and Its Domain a Model of Inclusive Community and Environmental Stewardship

Strategy 3A: Activate research and academic use of the Outer Domain[3]

RATIONALE: Humanity requires solutions to global environmental challenges. Tomorrow's leaders need to be prepared to step up at this critical moment to innovate solutions and rectify environmental injustice, which disproportionately affects some racial and lower-income groups. The University of the South has multiple environmental assets, including our large faculty with environmental expertise, the Domain, six majors, and a farm. As part of its work to cultivate engaged global citizens, the institution fosters diverse partnerships across our community and beyond to support students in their development as environmental leaders and professionals. Academic engagement on the Outer Domain and surrounding communities will provide entry points to understand environmental challenges; foster

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3 The University of the South's 13,000-acre landholding, called the "Domain," comprises the "Inner Domain" (approximately 2,600 acres of residential and commercial development area) and the "Outer Domain" (approximately 10,400 acres of undeveloped forest).

student relations with faculty, staff, and community partners; explore historical and contemporary environmental injustice; and cultivate a sense of responsibility for stewarding the environment.

DESCRIPTION: The University will develop the Sewanee Environmental Institute (SEI) with a mission to educate and inspire a new generation of environmental leaders, stewards, scholars, changemakers, and innovators who will create and advocate for solutions to global environmental challenges and environmental injustice. The Sewanee Environmental Institute will provide a [cohesive platform](#) to better integrate our strengths and create new opportunities to:

A. Attract and engage community- and environmentally-motivated students with diverse academic and professional interests.

B. Cultivate an interdisciplinary network of innovative leaders, scholars, and professionals.

C. Elevate the University of the South's profile as home to one of the nation's flagship programs in the environment.

SUPPORTING TACTICS:
A. Build interdisciplinary research collaborations, such as the Split Creek Observatory, the University Farm, and conservation partnerships, that will:
   1. Connect faculty, students, and classes across the College to the Domain.
   2. Serve as a place-based vehicle for educating and skill-building to address multidimensional global environmental challenges.
   3. Foster inter-institutional collaborations that model interdisciplinary research and raise our profile regionally and nationally.
   4. Link data science and data literacy to the Domain.
   5. Continue to connect prospective high school students to the Domain.

B. Elevate Environmental Arts and Humanities (EAH) to attract students with diverse environmental interests by (i) supporting a rotating EAH fellows program that would allow EAH faculty to engage more deeply with the major while supporting it by offering core courses, (ii) co-sponsoring symposia on emerging topics that bring scholars and practitioners to our campus and Domain for important conversations, (iii) strengthening environmental justice studies, and (iv) training students in the research and construction of narratives related to the environment and environmental injustice.

C. Offer a high-profile speaker series or annual symposia highlighting emerging topics and conversation around environmental justice, biological conservation, regeneration, and ecological restoration.

D. Support Domain Across the Curriculum (described in Strategy 3D) by innovating curricular and co-curricular collaborations with the Office of Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability (OESS), the Office of Civic Engagement (OCE), the Center for Religion and Environment (CRE), and the proposed Center for Project-Based Learning and Action.

E. Develop co-curricular and continuing education opportunities that leverage the Domain and the University's environmental expertise to offer our students and post-bac professionals (i) new tools, (ii) vocational inspiration, (iii) networking opportunities, and (iv) a way to articulate a specific set of skills and co-curricular experiences and practica to employers.

F. Expand the popular and high-yielding pre-college field studies summer program to attract more high school students with diverse environmental interests.

Strategy 3B: Promote vibrant sustainable and inclusive Village development

RATIONALE: Making Sewanee a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable community with more affordable housing options, safe transportation networks, and improved amenities will help attract prospective students and employees, even those who choose not to live in Sewanee. Such an approach to Village development will facilitate connections between the study of sustainability and our lived community. Purposeful development of the Village will foster the relationships that students have with faculty, staff, and community mentors, which are a hallmark of the student education at the University of the South.

DESCRIPTION: The Sewanee Village is a strategic asset to the University and an amenity to those who study, work, or reside in Sewanee. As such, it represents an important area of investment akin to residence halls, academic programs, and our suite of hospitality offerings such as the Sewanee Inn and the Course at Sewanee. Achieving greater critical mass of residency in and around the Village will catalyze more substantive and longer-lasting retail and commercial businesses to meet the needs of an expanding and diversifying community. As a result, a more thriving and enchanting community will emerge with a more genuine and richer sense of place.

SUPPORTING TACTICS:

A. Increase access to affordable employee housing in the Village of Sewanee to deepen relationships forged between students and faculty and staff with students. Continuing to invest in initiatives such as unique financial lending programs and employee-centric home construction efforts helps sustain the formation of a robust and active community that contributes to the mission of the University. A variety of housing types—single-family, apartment, townhome/condominium—will be offered to meet the varied needs and economic circumstances of a large employee body, and the desire to move from one housing type to another.

B. Incentivize retail and commercial investments to serve the growing and varied needs of our community to help offset any sense of isolation, and importantly, offer students and employees necessary services (e.g. groceries, childcare, dining, and personal care services) and third-space gathering alternatives.

C. Enhance placemaking to complement an enhanced presence of residents and businesses in the Village. The University will invest in projects dedicated to organizing the physical space in a manner that creates greater utility and access. Parking, wayfinding, biking and pedestrian

mobility, lighting, gathering spaces, and public art are all examples of initiatives that combine to provide a more cohesive and delightful experience to students, employees, residents, and visitors.

D. Create public space in the Village green to serve as a public gathering area as an enhancement to the downtown area, which will foster relations among community members and students.

E. Enhance safe and low-carbon transportation including expansion of bicycle lanes and use of electric vans for transportation of students and employees. Doing so will also help the University achieve stated environmental goals, foster a sense of inclusivity by helping those without cars to attend to their material needs, and encourage a healthy lifestyle.

Strategy 3C: Model sustainable operations

RATIONALE: One of the world's greatest challenges is climate change, and students and many citizens are particularly concerned about climate change and how to mitigate it. The University of the South with its natural forest and excellent environmental studies program is particularly well-situated to model and train students in environmental sustainability. Elevating the academic programming related to sustainability, especially by connecting classroom and project-based learning with practical experience offered by aligning University operations with sustainability goals, will:

A. help attract students to the University,

B. contribute to the formation of students as engaged citizens,

C. offer students practical experience in the field of sustainability, and

D. elevate the University's image as an institution that addresses global problems.

DESCRIPTION: The University will align its operations with environmental sustainability goals in pursuit of zero carbon emissions. Pursuit of carbon neutrality will offer hands-on experiences to learn about and contribute to sustainable operations and provide opportunities to engage in conversations about citizenship and the ethics of sustainable living.

SUPPORTING TACTICS:
A. Adopt and implement an updated and revised version of the Climate Accountability Plan with a goal to achieve carbon neutrality as an institution by 2030.

B. Give deep consideration to the marketing of carbon offsets to generate resources for investing in improved campus infrastructure that reduces our energy use and greenhouse gas emissions.

C. Encourage academic engagement with carbon sequestration and accounting efforts so that students deepen their understanding of various aspects of carbon reduction efforts.

D. Offer student research and internship opportunities to understand sustainability practices.

E. Foster dialogue about environmental ethics and citizenship at the University.

Strategy 3D: Implement a Domain Across the Curriculum Initiative

RATIONALE: One of the touchstone experiences for University of the South students is their inter-action with the natural environment, history, and communities of Sewanee and neighboring counties. The University is fortunate to be able to deepen student engagement with coursework, research, and extracurricular activities that connect students to this place, along with its people, affectionately known as the Domain. Students who engage with community and place feel a high degree of belonging, which helps raise retention and graduation rates and fosters great loyalty among our alumni. The Domain enriches the educational experience by offering students extraordinary opportunities to enjoy the natural beauty of the plateau, learn experientially about stewardship of resources and the natural world, and help build inclusive and just communities, all of which contribute to a holistic formation of students as global citizens and environmental leaders.

DESCRIPTION: The goal of Domain Across the Curriculum is to elevate and augment the extraordinary place-based experiential learning opportunities that truly distinguish an education at the University of the South. Every department in the College, the School of Theology, and the School of Letters will develop a course, a set of courses, and/or experiences that foster student engagement with our place, including its physical geography, history, and social fabric, broadly defined. Many academic units already have offerings related to the region, including community-engaged learning courses. This initiative encourages all academic units to develop courses that use our location as a living laboratory and a model for creating community, in which students can learn about natural phenomena, social formations, and artistic products related to Sewanee and the surrounding region. Additionally, exploring the Domain and surrounding communities will compel students to confront the history of race relations and the displacement of Indigenous groups and its legacies. From these place-based experiences and explorations, students can acquire knowledge and hone skills that can be applied beyond the region and the United States.

Supporting Tactics:
A. Engage in dialogue about the place of Sewanee, the natural environment, history, social structure, culture, and surrounding communities so that students develop a nuanced understanding of Sewanee and are equipped with place-building skills to apply in other locales.

B. Offer professional development in place-based education to assist faculty in the development of plans for integrating Sewanee and surrounding communities into their classes.

C. Facilitate access to Domain resources via databases managed by the Library and Information Technology Systems Division or on the Office of Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability website so that colleagues may easily learn about and engage more deeply with our story.

D. Integrate Domain Across the Curriculum in a universal first-year experience (see Strategy 1A) that communicates our shared narrative about the history, natural environment, and people of our place. Ensure that every department in the College and seminary as well as the School of Letters develops a course or courses that engage students with the Domain.

E. Create a Domain-Engaged Fellows program that provides resources to develop a course or line of research that deeply integrates the Domain, including the University Farm, and/or surrounding community or to encourage interdisciplinary team teaching and project-based collaborations focused on place.

F. Strengthen connections between the College and the Center for Religion and Environment and remove structural barriers such as calendar discrepancies that make it difficult for School of Theology students to take advantage of courses offered by the College.

G. Explore novel investment strategies in which the University and our students apply their learning to planning and decisions that intentionally build community, enhance regional economic development and prosperity, and foster student engagement with real-world problems in our region.

H. Leverage existing collaborations between local community organizations (e.g. South Cumberland Community Fund, Housing Sewanee, tourism boards) and the Office of Civic Engagement to support integration of sustainable development goals into regional planning.

I. Work with the Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation Center to engage with local communities to understand local social structures and inequities and consider ways to reconcile the legacy of historical injustices.

Goal 4: Enhance University Buildings and Grounds

Strategy 4A: Complete a New Campus Master Plan
RATIONALE: A campus master plan is essential for decision-making about the extraordinary buildings, grounds, and Domain of the University. While some new or renovated facility projects are in motion, many questions remain about other facilities, and an overall plan and prioritization of projects must be completed to determine the best use of future resources.

Strategy 4B: Improve Residential Life Facilities
RATIONALE: An important consideration of prospective students is the quality of residence halls on campus. Residence halls are much more than a place to live; they are sites of social connection and co-curricular activities that foster community. Physical improvements to the residence halls will attract prospective students and increase overall student satisfaction with life on campus. As a result, admission and retention of students will improve.

DESCRIPTION: The University will undertake renovations on select residence halls to improve their visual appeal, functionality, and social spaces.

SUPPORTING TACTICS:
   A. Renovate up to three residence halls including McCrady, Hunter, and Gorgas.

   B. As enrollment growth increases, the University will consider adding another residence hall that follows best practices in design.

Strategy 4C: Enhance and Expand Athletic Facilities

RATIONALE: More than 30% of the College's students play varsity sports, and athletics contributes in significant ways to student leadership and character formation. Quality athletic facilities are a major consideration of prospective student-athletes in their decision on where to enroll in college. Additionally, coaches make an important contribution to student formation and leadership development, and athletic teams foster a sense of belonging that helps athletes achieve high levels of retention and graduation.

DESCRIPTION: To attract more and better student-athletes, the University of the South will enhance its existing athletic facilities and expand the number of facilities as needed. Expansion of athletic facilities will help to alleviate competition for the use of the same field by different athletic teams. Currently, some teams must share practice fields with other teams, which leads to scheduling of practices early in the morning, throughout the day, and during dinner hours.

SUPPORTING TACTICS:
   A. Complete improvements to the Fowler Center.
   B. Replace the turfs at Puett Field and Harris Stadium and the Coughlan Track.
   C. As needed, build a third turf field to relieve congestion on the use of Puett Field and build a new stadium at the site of Harris Stadium.

Goal 5: Grow the Endowment and Generate New Sources of Revenue

Strategy 5A: Initiate Fundraising Campaigns to Grow the Endowment

The size of Sewanee's endowment is respectable but falls well short of our aspirant and competitor institutions, especially those that meet the full financial need of their students. In order to generate greater earnings and provide better funding for scholarships and financial aid; faculty support including compensation, professional development, and scholarship; strategic program development; and operational needs, the University must initiate an ambitious fundraising campaign centered on endowment growth.

Strategy 5B: Generate New Net-Positive Revenue

The tuition-reliant model of funding private collegiate education is obsolete. While donor support helps close the gap in operational costs and endowment earnings provide additional revenue, Sewanee

must, like most private colleges and universities, explore and develop new, net-positive revenue-generating activities. Such activities might utilize current and new assets associated with auxiliary services, summer programs, conference services, facility utilization, property management and development, and other potential sources.

Appendix A: Strategic Planning Committee Structure, Membership, and Charges

The University of the South has a standing Strategic Planning Committee of 24 members including elected faculty members, administrators, faculty representatives from other standing committees, and faculty and student trustees. This Strategic Planning Committee formed the main pool of persons to staff the steering committee and subcommittees of this strategic planning process. Below are the memberships of the steering committee and the three subcommittees with asterisks (*) indicating membership on the standing Strategic Planning Committee.

Steering Committee:
CHAIR:
Scott Wilson, *Acting Provost**

MEMBERSHIP:
Sibby Anderson-Thompkins, *Vice Provost for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*
Deborah McGrath, *Professor of Biology and Associate Dean for the Sewanee Integrated Program in the Environment*
Amy Patterson, *Professor of Politics and Director of the Office of Civic Engagement*
Rob Pearigen, *Vice–Chancellor**
Kevin Reynolds, *Associate Provost for Library and Information Technology Services**
Nicholas Roberts, *Professor of History**
Betsy Sandlin, *Interim Dean of the College**
David Shipps, *Vice President for Economic Development**
Jim Turrell, *Dean of the School of Theology**

Mind Subcommittee
CHAIR:
Nicholas Roberts, *Professor of History**

MEMBERSHIP:
Rob Bachman, *Professor of Chemistry**
Brian Cole, *Regent*
Michael Edge, *Student Trustee**
Lucia Garcia-Santana, *Professor of Spanish**
Rayid Ghani, *Regent*
Elise Kikis, *Professor of Biology**
Jennifer Matthews, *Professor of Theater*

Alison Miller, *Professor of Art History**

Alan Ramirez, *Vice President for Admission and Financial Aid*

Betsy Sandlin, *Interim Dean of the College**

Pratham Singhal, *Student Trustee**

Katherine Theyson, *Professor of Economics*

Jim Turrell, *Dean of the School of Theology**

Frances Webster, *Regent*

Charge: *The committee will consider additions and revisions to the College's and the School of Theology's curriculum that will achieve at least one of the following goals:*

1. Renew the curriculum to appeal to and meet the needs of future cohorts of students;
2. Improve the quality of learning experiences for students, including expansion of high-impact practices, within the structure of existing fields of study or programs;
3. Draw together curricular and co-curricular programming to enhance the relationship between the two;
4. Strengthen areas of institutional distinctiveness.

Heart Subcommittee

CHAIR:

Kevin Reynolds, *Associate Provost for Library and Information Technology Services**

MEMBERSHIP:

Sibby Anderson-Thompkins, *Vice Provost for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

Mishoe Brennecke, *Professor of Art History**

Julie Curd, *Regent*

Andrea del Balso, *Office of Global Citizenship*

Julia Gatta, Professor of Pastoral Theology, School of Theology*

Peter Gray, *Chaplain**

Kim Heitzenrater, *Integrated Advising and Career Readiness**

Erica Howard, *Dean of Students*

Chris McDonough, *Professor of Classics**

Sara McIntyre, *Office of Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability**

Katy Morgan, *Professor of Psychology*

Amy Patterson, *Professor of Politics and Director of the Office of Civic Engagement*

Kris Paul, *Student Trustee**

John Shackelford, *Director of Athletics**

Jennifer Bulkeley Staats, *Trustee*

Deborah Vaughn, *Vice President for University Relations*

Charge: The committee will consider the following potential strategies along with others that may emerge during the planning process:

1. Enhance leadership co-curricular programming and curricula, including those offered in the Office of Integrated Advising & Career Readiness, the Office of Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability, the Office of Civic Engagement, and the Office of Global Citizenship;
2. Expand advising and engaged learning opportunities on and off the Domain;
3. Establish the University of the South as a model of social and environmental justice, civic engagement, and community involvement
   a. Build upon the progress of the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; the Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation Campus Center;, the Roberson Project; and Indigenous communities initiatives;
   b. Reinforce the University's Climate Accountability Plan;
   c. Promote spiritual reflection on sustainable practices and sense of place and purpose;
4. Enhance athletics and its capacity to promote student success and leadership;
5. Enhance the holistic health and well-being of the University community;
6. Reinforce the University's Episcopal heritage, identity, relationships, and spiritual life on campus.

Place Subcommittee
CHAIR:
Scott Wilson, *Acting Provost**

MEMBERSHIP:
Roe Buckley, *Regent*
Kristen Cecala, *Professor of Biology*
Mallory Dimmitt, *Trustee*
Kevin Fouts, *Office of Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability*
Martin Knoll, *Professor of Geology*
Marcel Lettre, *Regent*
Deborah McGrath, *Professor of Biology and Associate Dean for the Sewanee Integrated Program in the Environment*
Parker Oliver, *Vice President for Marketing and Communications*
Tom Powell, *Professor of Forestry*
John Shackelford, *Director of Athletics**
David Shipps, *Vice President for Economic Development**
John Whaling, *Advancement*
Doug Williams, *Treasurer*

Charge: The committee will consider ways to make Sewanee and the surrounding region a vibrant place to study, research, live, and reflect. The committee will weigh existing recommendations and additional opportunities related to the following goals:

1. Improve environmental stewardship of the Outer Domain;
2. Develop sustainable and affordable housing and appealing amenities in the Inner Domain;
3. Elevate the Domain as a place for research, study, reflection, and recreation.

Appendix B: 2024 Events Related to the Strategic Planning Process

Faculty	Staff	College Students	School of Theology Students
Open Town Hall Meetings (3 total): January 25, February 13, February 21			
Open Faculty Focus Group Sessions (10 total): January 23 AM January 23 PM January 24 January 26 February 12 AM February 12 PM February 13 February 14 February 21 February 22	Staff Focus Group Sessions (9 total): January 24 January 25 January 26 February 12 February 14 February 15 February 19 February 19 February 20 February 22	Open Student Focus Group Sessions (6 total): January 23 January 25 February 13 February 14 AM February 14 PM February 19	SOT Student Focus Group Session (1): February 21
Non-Tenure Faculty Focus Group Sessions (3 total): January 24 February 15 February 22		Info Session with Student Government Association (1): February 19	
Faculty and Staff Focus Group Conversations on Specific Draft Initiatives (16 total): April 2, 2 focus groups on four initiatives April 9, 2 focus groups on four initiatives Joint Faculty Meetings: April 16, May 2		Informal Conversations with Students (3 total): April 8 AM April 8 PM April 9 Open Student Town Hall (1): April 8	

Board of Regents Investment Management Committee Session (1), February 19

Full Board of Regents (1), March 18

Board of Trustees' Growth and Development Committee (1), April 11