
INTRODUCTION

Columbia College Chicago is a college for creatives. As a liberal arts college serving those with a creative passion, we prepare our students for **success** by providing an education that is defined by opportunities to explore creative success – and failure – while still in school.

2022 marks both the end of Columbia College Chicago’s previous strategic plan and the beginnings of a new era in higher education, significantly informed by the hardships and opportunities of the COVID-19 pandemic. Higher education has been facing challenges in enrollment, pricing, and staffing for years; these challenges have been exacerbated by the pandemic and by ever-increasing pressures to innovate instructional content and methodology to reflect rapid societal and cultural changes while at the same time managing costs. In this critical moment we engaged in a planning process that centered around four operational imperatives: building our enrollment, improving our first-year retention rate, improving our graduation rate, and fostering career engagement between alumni, students and our internal and external communities.

Our future will be defined by our success in this moment. We need to work together to ensure students who opt to enroll at Columbia College Chicago have the kind of rich educational experience they seek, and that they persist to graduation. We need to position our students to be successful upon graduation: prepared for a wide range of creative opportunities with sound theoretical and practical grounding in their discipline, tangible skills, an adaptable mindset, and the technical mastery to be able to thrive in the next iteration of creative workforce.

Informed by this context, we launch this 2022-2027 strategic plan with continued commitment to our mission to educate students who will communicate creatively and shape the public’s perceptions of issues and events and author the culture of their times. We will continue to strive for excellence, diversity, equity and inclusion. As we work together to achieve our enrollment, retention, graduation and career engagement goals, we have identified and prioritized action steps within four strategic themes:

- **Creatives’ Curriculum:** We commit to providing our students with the core competencies associated with a 21st Century liberal arts education, so that our students graduate confident in their ability to navigate whatever path they travel in pursuit of their creative interests. Both in the Core and beyond, we will deliver a curriculum that is nimble, responsive to current creative trends and infused with DEI values.
- **Student Growth and Student Success:** We commit to an agile and integrated plan that is rooted in the College’s diversity, equity, inclusion, and access values that is designed to nurture the growth, well-being, and success of all students, both within the classrooms and beyond.
- **Sustainable Engagement:** The College commits to a definition of community engagement that is linked to creative industries, grounded in Chicago’s creative practice, and honors our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and access. We align our engagement efforts with our core academic mission and programs recognizing that engagement affords the college the opportunity to tell our unique story, share our assets as a collective of diverse practitioners and innovative thinkers, and support our students’ development as creative professionals.
- **Building a Supportive Operational Context:** We will provide a respectful and supportive operational context that supports our students, faculty and staff, while advancing the interests of Columbia College Chicago and being faithful stewards of its legacy and future through sound business policies and structures. We want Columbia College Chicago to be a preferred employer, and to create a collaborative community atmosphere that welcomes diverse students, faculty and staff and allows them to thrive.

With this plan, we commit to action that is collaborative, fueled by imagination, excitement and urgency, supported by directed investment and ensured through accountability.

We thank our students, faculty, staff, alumni and broader community for sharing their input and vision into this planning process. Together we will strengthen our community, collaborate creatively, and inspire each other with inclusive, innovative and forward-looking curriculum, to ensure our community allows us all – across all disciplines – to have fulfilling careers and to be creative social agents.

Strategic Planning Steering Committee Membership

Co-Chairs: Marcella David, Senior Vice President and Provost * Professor Carmelo Esterrich

Members: Nate Bakkum * Paul Catanese * Jo Cates * Madhurima Chakraborty * Peter Cook * Steve Corey * Paige Cunningham * Douglas Eck * Joahua Fisher * Peter Fitzpatrick * Eric Freedman * Erik Friedman * Reese Givens * Allison Grant Williams * Michael Joseph * Ann Kalayil * Kathie Koch * Lambrini Lukidis * Brian Marth * Suzanne McBride * Jessica Meharry * Rocky Monroe * Niki Nolan * Rosita Sands * Craig Siglele * Jerry Tarrer * Diana Vallera * Susan Van Veen * Thelma Vickroy * Sharon Wilson-Taylor