Mission Statement

Immaculata University is a Catholic, comprehensive, coeducational institution of higher education sponsored by the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Its programs, rooted in academic rigor, ethical integrity and Christian core values, encourage a commitment to lifelong learning and professional excellence. With belief in the dignity and potential of all men and women, Immaculata integrates students into a community of service and empowers them to assume meaningful roles in a diverse and changing world. Contributing to the development of the whole person of any faith, Immaculata affirms liberal education as an integrative process in the formation of a truly educated person who is value-oriented and committed to truth, service, justice, and peace.

Priority

Immaculata University will cultivate a new era of academic excellence, innovation and creative risk-taking in the Catholic and IHM tradition.

Strategies

I. Articulate our mission, promote our identity, and unify our brand.
II. Ensure the highest standards of academic excellence, integrate cutting-edge technology, and provide career-oriented liberal education.
III. Foster a thriving campus environment and an engaged university community.
IV. Achieve a healthy enrollment.
V. Ensure financial stability.
VI. Enhance organizational culture.
Strategic Initiatives

Strategy I – Articulate our mission, promote our identity, and unify our brand.
To achieve this strategy we will pursue the following initiatives:
1) Engage in a University-wide dialogue about mission, vision and identity, consider how they are reflected in the current mission and vision statements, and update the statements as appropriate.
2) Develop a “mission-based” University brand, clarifying the value of an Immaculata degree and unifying the brand across all programs and colleges.

Strategy II – Ensure the highest standards of academic excellence, integrate cutting-edge technology, and provide career-oriented liberal education.
To achieve this strategy we will pursue the following initiatives:
1) Deliver a graduate education responsive to the marketplace.
2) Deliver an undergraduate education infused with the combination of liberal arts and career preparation.
3) Ensure that all academic programs are of the highest quality and relevant to the marketplace
4) Explore and expand partnerships to broaden and enhance academic and other opportunities.
5) Continue to leverage emergent technology trends in higher education and invest in technology initiatives.
6) Consider restructuring the academic organization to maximize flexibility, cross-program collaboration, and responsiveness to market demand and competitive challenges.
7) Develop an innovation incubator to encourage creative risk taking and bring entrepreneurial educational concepts to life.
8) Integrate an international perspective into the curriculum that provides greater opportunities to experience and develop global perspectives in the classroom as well as through multi-cultural co-curricular activities.
9) Establish a Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence to support innovation in the classroom.

Strategy III – Foster a thriving campus environment and an engaged university community.
To achieve this strategy we will pursue the following initiatives:
1) Increase opportunities for a campus life that provides a greater variety of appealing events and activities to engage and excite students.
2) Improve the facilities, spaces and services needed to support the university community.
3) Enhance our existing strong programs in athletics and recreation.
Strategy IV – Achieve healthy enrollment.
To achieve this strategy we will pursue the following initiatives:
1) Strengthen the enrollment by creating and implementing a strategic enrollment management plan for undergraduate students.
2) Strengthen the enrollment by creating and implementing a strategic enrollment management plan for graduate students.
3) Implement a marketing strategy to establish a unique reputation in the marketplace, differentiating the IU educational experience from our competitors.

To achieve this strategy we will pursue the following initiatives:
1) Align fiscal resources with institutional priorities.
2) Strengthen campus-wide culture of data-based decision-making, using market and internal data and analytical tools.
3) Reassess the long-term Campus Master Plan.
4) Develop a long-term facilities financial plan to provide the physical spaces that will support a vibrant campus environment.
5) Implement a comprehensive fundraising campaign.
6) Review and update our technology strategic plan annually.

Strategy VI - Enhance organizational culture.
To achieve this strategy we will pursue the following initiatives:
1) Improve communication across the University.
2) Promote innovative thinking and solutions through a culture of healthy communication, effective collaboration, and openness to ideas.
3) Move toward more competitive compensation as our financial situation allows.
4) Assess faculty workload and its impact on institutional effectiveness.
5) Enhance operational effectiveness and service to students and other customers.
6) Recruit a diverse faculty, staff and administration to more closely reflect the diversity of our student body and to serve as role models for students of diverse backgrounds.
Background

Immaculata University (IU) was founded in 1920 as Villa Maria College by the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM), and was renamed Immaculata College in 1929. On 375 acres of IHM land overlooking historic Chester County, Immaculata was the first Catholic college for women in the Philadelphia area. The institution has adapted to the changing needs of the community and has evolved and grown steadily throughout most of its existence. Immaculata created its first coeducational program, evening division continuing education, in 1969. The first Immaculata master's degree program was introduced in 1983, followed by doctoral programs in 1991. Innovation has been a key tenet of the IU ethos, which is exemplified by the introduction of an accelerated undergraduate degree program, a new model of delivery for working adults at the time, in 1995. Enrollment growth in response to Immaculata’s new programs and delivery options led the College to reshape its internal structure in 2000, reorganizing into a three-college structure comprised of the Women’s College, the College of LifeLong Learning, and the College of Graduate Studies, which led to achieving university status in 2002. In 2003 the University made the seminal decision to welcome men into its traditional undergraduate college and renamed it the College of Undergraduate Studies. As a result of many well-calculated decisions and hard work, IU was one of the top ten fastest growing universities in the country from 2000 to 2010.

Today, Immaculata University is a private Catholic, comprehensive institution of higher education offering more than 60 majors, minors and certificate programs, and its distinguished faculty serves a population of approximately 4,000 women and men. Recent enrollment declines in some areas have resulted in financial challenges. Throughout all the change, growth, and challenges, the University has maintained its commitment to an education grounded in the charism of the IHM Sisters and the Catholic intellectual tradition. The University environment is characterized by a spirit of friendliness and warm, personal relations among all members of the community. Its programs, rooted in academic rigor, ethical integrity and Christian core values, encourage a commitment to critical thinking, lifelong learning, and professional preparation. It is with a deep commitment to the IHM charism and an appreciation of the dynamic and challenging nature of the higher education landscape that we have embarked upon this planning initiative, through which the University seeks to overcome its short-term challenges and position IU for continued long-term stability and success.

Process

Immaculata launched the current strategic planning initiative in the spring of 2013 with the desire to develop a shared new vision and strategic agenda for the future. All areas of the institution – students, faculty, staff, trustees, administration, and alumni – actively contributed input. Through individual and small group interviews, Immaculata collected more than 250 strategic questions to consider in the process of designing the University’s future. The president appointed a broadly representative committee of 25 members of the University community, called the Strategic Agenda
Planning Committee (SAPC), to lead the planning process. The SAPC organized the strategic questions into five categories, developed charges for each category, and then divided into five sub-groups to assess the internal and external environment and formulate strategic considerations for the University’s future.

The SAPC sub-groups worked tirelessly from May through September, 2013 to develop strategic white papers, which include their analyses and strategic considerations in the context of their charge. Three times during this period the sub-groups met with the Immaculata community in open campus meetings to test and revise their thinking on the institutional questions they were considering. The sub-groups also met with the Board of Trustees in September, 2013 with the same goals in mind. During the remainder of the fall, with the president’s leadership, the SAPC developed this strategic agenda from the white papers and utilized a financial planning model to test our vision from a financial perspective.

The SAPC assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the institution as well as the opportunities and threats extant in the external environment and, based on an appreciation for and understanding of the complex environment in which Immaculata operates, developed a vision for the future of the University. The strategies outlined in this strategic agenda are designed to build upon Immaculata’s many strengths and to take advantage of opportunities identified in the marketplace while preparing the institution to overcome internal challenges and respond to external threats.

Next Steps
Through operational planning, we will develop a detailed list of tasks, required capital and operating expenditures, revenue sources, priorities, responsible parties, and timelines to deliver on our priority to foster a new era of academic excellence, innovation and creative risk-taking in the Catholic and IHM tradition.

The Operational Planning Team (OPT), on behalf of the Strategic Planning and Budget Committee (SPBC), will develop the tasks required for the implementation of this agenda. The OPT will also create evaluation systems to assess our progress towards reaching the strategies and strategic initiatives. The SPBC will periodically scan the environment, assess strategic questions, chart the progress of strategies and strategic initiatives, and develop approaches for updating the vision and operational plan. The president will report regularly to the internal and external campus community.