

# ***VISION 2020***

## ***A STRATEGIC PLAN***

### ***FOR FURMAN UNIVERSITY***

#### **PART I: CULTURE AND IDENTITY**

##### **A. Encouraging the Growth of Mind and Spirit**

###### **1. Academics**

(a) ***Reaffirming Furman's Commitment to Academic Excellence.*** Furman will remain committed to the defining characteristics of its excellent and rigorous academic program. It will reaffirm and reinvigorate its commitment to ongoing enhancement of Furman's intellectual climate. The commitment to academic excellence will include:

- A robust commitment to deepening Furman's program of engaged learning. Engaged learning at Furman is a textured concept, with many levels of meaning. Engaged learning may mean intense *engagement* by an individual student in a particular field, in which the design and execution of a project are fostered by the student's own initiative and intellectual curiosity. Engaged learning may mean collaborative research side-by-side with a faculty member. Students benefit from such engagement by experiencing the challenges and the payoffs inherent in immersive, focused concentration on one signature project. Engaged learning, in this sense, fosters discipline, persistence, creativity, concentration, problem-solving, and self-reliance. Engaged learning may also carry meanings connoting *connection and action*. Furman encourages the expression of the ideas and ideals of its students through connection to the "real world," and through *action* as well as *thought*, Furman encourages students to translate theory and values into actual hands-on experiences, including research opportunities, internships, civic engagement and public service, creative output in music, theatre arts, and the visual arts, and study away. This translation of ideas and ideals into action recognizes that an education is incomplete if confined to the campus and the classroom alone. Finally, Engaged learning may carry a meaning relating to *community-building*. This relationship includes both the strengthening of our internal community and the lengthening of our community to include our neighbors in Greenville, and our shared humanity as citizens of the nation and the world.

- Reaffirmation of Furman’s commitment to maintaining faculty compensation levels that are nationally competitive, as set forth in the Furman Strategic Plan adopted in 2001 and reaffirmed in 2007. Vision 2020 thus reaffirms Furman’s commitment to “Provide faculty compensation that is competitive with regional peers, as specified in *Furman 2001*.” This commitment reaffirms Furman’s ongoing effort to recruit, support, and retain a diverse and highly qualified faculty committed to teaching excellence, professional engagement, and scholarship. Programs and policies to enhance the quality of the faculty shall be supported. These will include resources for improving teaching and professional development, as well as benefits that support the work experience.
- A restoration of programs and support levels that were reduced in the aftermath of the budget constraints imposed by the economic downturn of 2008 as increased resources are identified and deployed to support Furman’s academic mission, as appropriate. All such restoration, however, shall be undertaken strategically and efficiently, with an ongoing eye toward deployment of resources in a manner calculated to provide the maximum positive programmatic impact for the expenditure. (See § D. 1 for discussion of faculty support resources.)
- A reaffirmation of Furman’s commitment to ensuring that staff compensation is competitive with appropriate peers in recognition that all aspects of Furman’s mission are dependent on attracting and retaining highly qualified staff. Additionally, Furman also reaffirms the value of staff professional development as a means of enhancing personal and institutional success, and therefore will provide for staff development programs.
- Continued emphasis on Furman’s strong commitment to internationalizing its programs, including greater recruitment of international students, continued enhancement of the Asian Studies program, and the overall enhancement of Furman’s unique study abroad program, which is staffed almost entirely by Furman faculty.
- Continued emphasis on small classes, and building meaningful relationships among faculty and students.
- Continued support for Furman’s many programs that support high-profile speakers and panels on campus, reflecting the diversity of the marketplace of ideas and Furman’s commitment to robust yet civilized discourse. Continued enhancement of opportunities for collaborative research between students and faculty.
- The encouragement of strong mentoring and advising relationships between students and faculty, including additional training for faculty members in the evolving nature of mentoring and advising.

**(b) *Encouraging Ambitious and Decentralized Strategic Planning and Improvement at the Academic Department Level.*** The pursuit of excellence for individual academic

departments and academic centers at Furman will be decentralized. All academic departments and centers will be invited to develop their own individualized strategic plans provided they are in alignment with the core academic values that define the University's academic program as a whole. These plans will be ambitious, appropriate in scale for Furman, and presented with expected benefits and realistic projections of costs.

- (c) ***Creating a New Administrative Process and Financial Structure for Approving, Prioritizing, and Strategically Funding Academic Improvements.*** The administrative process for prioritizing and sequencing the approval and funding of strategic plan initiatives presented through the decentralized strategic planning initiatives of individual departments will be iterative and transparent. Funding for such decentralized strategic planning initiatives will be derived primarily from the newly created Strategic Improvement Fund.<sup>1</sup>
- (d) ***Ensuring Continuing Assessment of Broader Educational Goals.*** While Furman will encourage a decentralized approach to strategic improvement among its academic departments, the University must also remain attentive to ongoing assessment of the curricular standards that have been adopted campus-wide. This responsibility rests principally within the province of the faculty, with the support of the administration. In the near-term, Furman will evaluate the success of the freshman seminar program, with an open-minded willingness to make such adjustments in the program as may seem prudent. So, too, will Furman continuously evaluate proposals for new themes to emphasize across curricular lines.
- (e) ***Rationalizing the Process for Managing the Growth and Scale of Academic Programs.*** Furman must have a rational strategic process for making the decisions that all universities continually face in determining what programs to expand, what programs to contract, what programs to add, or even what programs to eliminate. The University cannot say "yes" to every new proposed program. Yet the University must remain nimble and adaptive, with the flexibility to add programs that are consistent with its character and values, that meet societal needs, and that provide the University with strategic advantages. When a new department or program is proposed, among the principal factors to be considered in weighing the propriety of starting such a program are:
- The extent to which the program is consistent with Furman's mission, character, and values.
  - The academic rigor and quality of the proposed new program, including any relevant accreditation or regulatory standards.

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<sup>1</sup> The proposed Strategic Improvement Fund is discussed in greater detail in Part II, § B.2 of this Strategic Plan.

- The extent to which there is a societal need and significant demand for participation in the program.
- The extent to which the program will have a positive, neutral, or dilutive impact on existing programs.
- The extent to which the new program is operationally revenue-enhancing, revenue-neutral, or an expense, and the potential that the program could attract substantial philanthropic, foundation, or other external support.
- The magnitude of initial start-up costs along with the expected impact on the annual budget after implementation.

## 2. The Student Experience

(a) ***Educating the Whole Student.*** The phrase “student experience” is not used here as something distinct from the academic experience of the student, but as including the whole of that academic experience, and then extending beyond the curriculum and classroom to the entirety of the programs and experiences that encourage positive growth in a student’s intellect, character, and physical well-being. The education of the “whole student” will be an integrated effort that begins with the academic curriculum and then extends well beyond it. As a manifestation of these values, Furman will undertake a comprehensive effort to ensure that all appropriate efforts are made with regard to its academic and non-academic programs to ensure the highest possible student retention levels.

(b) ***The Task Force on the Student Experience.*** Furman will undertake a comprehensive effort to enhance the quality of the student experience. The responsibility for coordinating the drafting of a detailed plan for specific improvements to the programmatic elements of the enhanced student experience shall be the responsibility of the Task Force on the Student Experience, which was formed at the beginning of the 2010-11 academic year and has now been incorporated into the strategic planning process as an integral part of that process. The Task Force on the Student Experience has divided its work into three stages, beginning with the adoption of a “Statement of Guiding Principles,” moving to a comprehensive inventory of all student-experience programming at Furman, and ending with a concrete list of proposals for additional investments in student experience resources and programming. The work of the Task Force will continue throughout 2011 as an integral part of the strategic planning process. The guiding principles thus far identified by the Task Force include:

- ***Furman Fosters Growth of Both Mind and Spirit.*** Furman encourages intellectual development, which includes exposure to a broad range of intellectual disciplines in the classic traditions of liberal education, and the encouragement of particularized depth and excellence in at least one specialized area of expertise. Furman also encourages its students to seek lives of moral and/or spiritual depth, recognizing that these values always remain matters grounded in individual freedom.

- ***Furman Encourages Reflective Introspection.*** Furman students are encouraged to ask themselves such fundamental questions as: Who am I? What do I believe? What do I care about? What are my passions? What are my dreams and aspirations? What is my place in the world? In the words of Furman’s *Character and Values Statement*: “The university seeks to nurture their development into mature, integrated persons by encouraging all students to develop a mature understanding of their own identities, to establish meaningful personal goals, and to understand their own faith and outlook.”
  - ***Furman Challenges Students to Learn for the Purpose of Advancing the Human Condition.*** Furman aspires to go beyond simply educating students *about* the human condition. Furman encourages students to go beyond the acquisition of knowledge to the application of knowledge in the service of *advancing* the condition of humankind. In the words of Furman’s *Character and Values Statement*: “The university recognizes its responsibility both inside and outside the classroom to encourage students to confront the problems of contemporary society and to exercise moral judgment in the use of knowledge. To this end, Furman fosters in its students a sense of social justice and encourages them to exercise their civic responsibility in creating a fair and equitable order. Students are educated to solve human problems rather than to use their knowledge as a means of gaining further advantage over those who are disadvantaged.”
  - ***Furman Encourages Habits of Civility in Public Discourse.*** Furman aspires to be a model for higher education and society in demonstrating that open and passionate debate may be conducted in an atmosphere that embraces respect for the essential dignity of every person, a willingness to listen to opposing views, intellectual honesty, and the avoidance of gratuitous personal attacks.
- (c) ***Expand and Endow Programs that Foster Character Growth.*** Furman will seek to expand and permanently endow many of its existing programs that support students, faculty, and staff in pursuit of lives of meaning, commitment, leadership, and ethical integrity.
- (d) ***Foster Greater Community Spirit.*** Furman will adopt programs that foster additional community spirit, including events, traditions, and rituals that enhance social and community life. Attendance at performance venues, athletic events, and community-wide social events promote shared experiences and enhance the quality of community life. These shared experiences also provide a valuable opportunity for students, faculty, and staff to interact.
- (e) ***Implement the Student Life Master Plan for Facilities.*** The enhancement of the student experience also has a facilities and physical landscape dimension. The administration and Board of Trustees shall be guided in their decisions regarding physical improvements to the campus by the Student Life Master Plan, which will be developed and refined to be in alignment with the guiding values and programmatic initiatives that emerge from the Student Experience Task Force. The

Student Life Master Plan includes the renovation and reconfiguration of residence facilities to meet the needs of modern students and provide appropriate civic space to enhance the engaged living program, as well as a plan to transform the University Center into a more vibrant social venue for students, part of a broader campus push to enhance the sense of community and spirit of the University. Among the options to be considered in the renovation of student housing is a move to a “Residential College” or “Freshman Village” design that will integrate housing with academic spaces, such as seminar rooms, and civic and recreational spaces. The Student Life Master Plan also includes formal and informal recreational venues for students outside of the residence halls. The first iteration of the Student Life Master Plan is an Attachment linked to this Report.

- (f) ***Enhancement of Counseling, Career Mentoring, Advising, and Academic Assistance Capacities.*** Furman will continue to add capacity to its counseling, mentoring, advising, and academic assistance services. This includes ensuring that mental and psychological counseling services will be strongly resourced. Furman will also invest in the broader life and career mentoring and advising resources it makes available for students, and will look for ways to proactively engage students in counseling, mentoring, and advising conversations through approaches that meet the needs and generational culture of the current student body. In particular, Furman will continue to execute the Office of Career Services Strategic Plan, which emphasizes expanding employer networks, engaging faculty, alumni, and parent resources, and enhancing student readiness for employment and graduate school.
- (g) ***Furman Will Remain Committed to Remaining 100% Residential.***<sup>2</sup> The commitment to remain fully residential enhances the student experience by building a sense of community and shared experience, and broadly promotes the safety, security, and well-being of the student body. The housing stock that is currently dedicated principally to freshmen and sophomores in the South Housing and Lakeside areas will be renovated, beginning with the South Housing area. The renovations will adopt a “Freshman Village” or “Residential College” model in which housing will be integrated with academic teaching spaces, communal study and social spaces, and indoor and outdoor recreational spaces, so as to advance the integrated values and goals for the student experience at Furman. The Student Life Master Plan includes changes that will modernize Furman’s student housing and integrate housing with civic and academic spaces.
- (h) ***Investment in Athletics and Related Sports and Recreational Programs.*** Furman will invest in its athletic programs, club sports, intramural sports programs, and other physical recreational programs. All of these programs contribute to the health and well-being of students, and help build community and positive relationships. Furman’s

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<sup>2</sup> The phrase “100% residential” reflects Furman’s current policy that all full-time students be housed on campus, which includes The Vinings apartment complex, in their first four years. There are a small number of exemptions granted annually for specifically limited circumstances, so that in any given year the actual on-campus student population is typically around 97%,

Division I athletic program occupies an important place in Furman's history and will hold a special place in Furman's future. Furman has the opportunity to be a national exemplar of how a strong athletic program may be compatible with academic excellence. In 2010 the athletic program ranked #3 in the nation in overall graduation rate. Furman will strive to maintain this exclusive ranking and work to ensure that student athletes are integrated fully and meaningfully into the full student experience. Furman will aspire to be a national exemplar of "how to do athletics right," combining competitive success with the intellectual and character growth of the student athlete. Such a program brings many benefits, including building spirit and community within the student body, staff, and faculty, providing valuable connections to the surrounding Greenville community, and enhancing Furman's national recognition, thereby helping to drive admissions, providing upward mobility for many student athletes, enhancing diversity, and providing a valuable ongoing connection between the University and many of its most loyal alumni and donors.

## **B. Admissions and Financial Aid**

### **1. Admissions Policy**

- (a) ***Admitting to Mission.*** Furman will "admit to mission" by seeking to attract students who are hungry to participate in a university committed to engaging the mind and spirit.
- (b) ***Adopting a Holistic Approach to Admissions.*** The admissions process will be holistic and not focused exclusively on standardized test scores, grade point averages, and Advanced Placement courses. The qualities that Furman seeks in its students are manifold. Some applicants will distinguish themselves through qualities such as leadership or commitment to public service; others through creativity, entrepreneurial energy, spirituality, or simply being "well-rounded." Some students will have specialized skills in music, art, theatre, athletics, or any of the scores of academic disciplines that Furman offers. Furman will develop effective and dependable processes by which a student's potential for success can be assessed.
- (c) ***Test-Optional.*** The Furman faculty has previously authorized test-optional approaches to admissions. Furman will boldly proclaim the affirmative qualities it seeks in students, such as intellectual curiosity and passion for engaged learning, emphasizing that these qualities are not revealed in standardized tests and that Furman offers the alternative of test-optional admissions.
- (d) ***Substantially Increasing Quality Applications.*** Furman will invest in a substantial and transformative dedication of resources, energy, and creativity toward marketing and admissions recruiting, with a goal of substantially increasing quality applications for enrollment annually.

- (e) **Marketing.** Furman will dedicate substantial new resources to marketing.<sup>3</sup> The centerpiece of this effort will be a new emphasis on Furman’s commitment to the education of the whole student, including both the distinctive features of Furman’s excellent academic program and the increased investment in the entirety of the student experience at Furman. The marketing and enrollment effort will boldly proclaim Furman’s holistic approach to admissions, including the option of not submitting a standardized test score and the goal of providing every Furman applicant the option of an individual admissions interview, with a strong encouragement for every serious applicant to participate in such an interview. The overarching goal of these efforts is the recruitment of an engaged and diverse student body.
- (f) **Admission Interviews.** All applicants to Furman will be encouraged to interview through the Furman Admission Network (FAN) as part of Furman’s commitment to a more holistic approach to admissions.

## 2. Financial Aid Policy

- (a) **Awarding to Mission.** Furman will “award to mission,” creating financial aid policies calculated to enhance access to education and the recruitment of a diverse and highly engaged student body.
- (b) **Redesigning Tuition Pricing and Financial Aid Policies.** Furman will undertake a complete redesign of its tuition pricing and financial aid policies. Structures that enforce budgetary discipline on the unfunded portion of the financial aid budget will be implemented.
- (c) **Scholarships Targeted to Mission.** Furman will create new scholarship initiatives that multiply the availability and award levels of scholarships for students exhibiting exceptional promise in specific disciplines or exceptional commitment to values that are central to the University’s mission.

## C. Commitment to Meaningful Diversity and Equality

### 1. Meaningful Diversity

- (a) **Commitment to Meaningful Diversity and Equality.** Furman embraces diversity and demands equality as implicit values and as explicit practices in all of its endeavors. Meaningful diversity embraces a broad and inclusive definition of “diversity” and extends beyond mere numbers and percentages. A diverse Furman requires meaningful communication, support, and shared experience among people of different identities and life experiences. Furman is committed to removing obstacles to attaining diversity and equal treatment in the recruitment, retention, and advancement of students, faculty, and staff from underrepresented groups. Furman

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<sup>3</sup> While marketing is discussed here in reference to the specific arena of admissions, a more robust marketing effort to raise Furman’s national and international profile and develop Furman’s external relationships is important to all aspects of Furman’s operations.

will adopt the following “Vision Statement” and “Diversity Statement” developed by the University’s Committee on Diversity as part of this Strategic Planning process:

***Diversity Vision***

Furman University embraces diversity as an implicit value and as an explicit practice in all of its endeavors. In keeping with its educational mission and the ideals of its founding, the University seeks to build a community that upholds the inherent worth of individuals in an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust, and civility.

***Diversity Statement***

Enhancing the University’s commitment to diversity expands the intellectual engagement of its members. Recognizing and respecting the inherent worth of each individual and respecting differences among groups, the University aspires to create a community of people representing a multiplicity of identities including, but not limited to, gender, race, religion, spiritual belief, sexual orientation, geographic origin, socioeconomic background, ideology, world view, and varied abilities. Furman aspires to integrate the value of diversity into the fabric of campus life: curricular, co-curricular, and administrative. Furthermore, Furman is committed to attaining diversity in the recruitment, retention, and advancement of students, faculty, and staff from underrepresented groups. Most importantly, Furman expects all members of its community to honor the values implicit in this vision and to demonstrate a genuine willingness to move from an awareness and tolerance of difference toward understanding and acceptance.

***(b) Moving from Aspiration to Reality.*** In keeping with its educational mission and the ideals of its founding, Furman seeks to build a community that upholds the inherent worth of individuals. The University is committed to scrutinizing its practices and abolishing those that undermine the values of diversity and equality, and is committed to expanding those that cultivate an environment that encourages the success of students, staff, and faculty. In recognition of that commitment, Furman shall:

- Conduct a study of gender equity across the university, including promotion, service work, salary, merit designation, job satisfaction, and support.
- Engage in a re-visioning of the student experience—in the classrooms, residential facilities, and dining hall—that fosters honest and open dialogue about race and equality, beyond talking points and self-selective attendance at CLP events, for example.
- Conduct a study to determine if there are practices in the institutional culture and structure which may make access to the University unduly difficult for lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered members of Furman’s faculty, students, and staff.
- Convene a Task Force on Civility and Public Discourse charged with undertaking a reconsideration of the community’s approach to controversial or

polarizing subjects and events, recognizing the University's commitments to freedom of speech and to fostering a community grounded in respect for the human dignity of all its members.

- Create a task force to explore ways, benefits, and costs of implementing various programs for supporting our working-class students more effectively and to encourage dialogue about class across the Furman community.
- The Furman administration will annually report to the Board of Trustees, faculty, and Furman community on achievements in diversity among students, faculty, and staff.

#### **D. Engagement with the Community**

*(a) The Values Served by Engagement.* Furman will substantially enhance its programmatic and physical presence in its surrounding communities. The relationship between Furman and the surrounding community ought not be articulated as relations between “town and gown,” as this phrasing accents separateness, as if the University and the community are neighboring countries. The better imagery is to conceive of Furman as an integral part of a complex and vibrant community, a place in which members of the Furman family live, work, worship, teach, vote, and participate in the entire civic life of the community, and a place where Furman as an institution contributes to the rich array of political, business, religious, educational, and civic entities that combine to make a vibrant society. Greenville, the Upstate, and all of South Carolina benefit from a prosperous and successful Furman, and Furman benefits from a prosperous and successful Greenville, Upstate, and South Carolina. In future years Furman will not consider its ventures into the community by asking “What is in it for Furman?” but by asking “Is this program or project one in which the needs of the community align well with Furman’s skills and resources in helping to meet those needs?” It is, of course, important that Furman remain focused on its core mission. Furman’s core mission, however, includes earnest participation in society, including the communities close at hand.

*(b) Engagement Strategies.* The strategies to be explored include:

- *Physical Presence in Greenville.* Furman will consider the establishment of physical programmatic facilities within the community, consistent with Furman’s academic and service mission. Such facilities project Furman’s academic, cultural, and service capacities into the community.
- *Enhanced Service and Interdisciplinary Programming.* Furman’s strong commitment to public service, as evidenced by such programs as Bridges to a Brighter Future and the Heller Service Corps, will be encouraged and expanded. Furman will continue its commitment to its ROTC program and the strong tradition of service to the nation the program has historically represented. Furman will also consider further linking its existing academic expertise in such

interdisciplinary initiatives as Poverty Studies, Sustainability, Asian Studies, Women's/Gender/Sexuality Studies, and Latin American Studies, as an external resource to the greater Greenville community.

- ***Enhanced Partnerships.*** Furman will be proactive in seeking to establish constructive partnerships with business, cultural, and civic organizations in a manner consistent with Furman's resources and mission.
- ***Furman as a "Convener."*** Furman may play a constructive role as a "convener" of community-wide efforts to address a wide variety of issues concerning education, commerce, culture, sustainability, and other arenas in which Furman may not be a direct provider of community service, but may play an important role in facilitating and supporting coordination in addressing issues of community concern.
- ***Increasing Internship and Community-Based Learning Opportunities.*** Furman has a strong commitment to internships as one of the manifestations of its approach to engaged learning. Furman will work creatively with community groups to further enhance internships and provide additional support for community-based learning opportunities in the area.
- ***Community-Focused Programs on the Furman Campus.*** Furman will encourage programs that invite a broader cross-section of the community to the campus for programs and events, including the Riley Institute and Shi Center. Furman will complete funding for and construction of the Herring Center for Continuing Education, which will house Furman's extensive continuing education programs.

## **PART II: FINANCE, FACILITIES, AND ADMINISTRATION**

### **A. The Link Between Mission and Resources**

*Without money, there is no mission. Without mission, there is no money. Furman needs an inspiring and altruistic articulation of its identity and mission, which will drive admissions and financial contributions. Through a blend of stronger admissions and enrollment management practices and invigorated fundraising, all driven by the appeal of the mission, more resources will be available to reinvest in strategic improvements aligned with the mission.*

The simple statement above encapsulates the relationship between Part I and Part II of this Report. Part I sought to articulate themes that form an inspiring and altruistic mission. Part II seeks to translate those themes into operational processes and practices that link finance, facilities, and administration.

### **B. Budgetary Strategy**

Furman will change its business model and budgetary practices through the adoption of four new principles and practices involving enrollment management, the creation of a strategic improvement fund, a change in the use of annual fund contributions, and the enhancement of the reserve fund.

#### **1. Enrollment Management Strategy**

- (a) *Enrollment Management Net Revenue Targets.*** Enrollment management practices, involving the management of tuition rates, financial aid discount rates, and student body size, will transition over a five-year period to significantly increase net tuition revenue. This revenue will be divided between contributions to the Reserve Fund and reinvested in strategic quality enhancements through the creation of a new Strategic Improvement Fund.
- (b) *New Financial Aid Structures.*** A more disciplined financial aid system will be implemented in which controls will be put in place to prevent overspending the unfunded financial aid budget (that portion of the financial aid budget not backed by endowment or annual gift resources). Simultaneously, the entire approach to need-based and merit-based financial aid will be revamped through an “award to mission” strategy, so that aid is repurposed and repackaged to the end of attracting a diverse and engaged student body.
- (c) *Student Body Size.*** One critical variable in the enrollment management picture is the size of the student body. At some universities, a strategic plan may include a hard “target number” for increasing the student body size. But modest upward increases in the size of the student body, accompanied by appropriate commensurate increases in

faculty and staff positions (to maintain, for example, the student/faculty ratio at strong levels), will put Furman in a stronger financial position and generate resources that may be reinvested in quality enhancements. There are two critical variables that will need to be tracked as Furman engages in an ongoing effort to arrive at an “optimal” future student body size:

- ***The Admissions Market and Application Numbers.*** Perhaps the most critical variable in enrollment management is the admissions market itself, including the number of quality applicants. Furman will not increase the student body size at the expense of quality. Thus a principle variable is “what the market will bear.” As marketing efforts and application numbers increase, Furman will be able to modestly increase student body size, while maintaining the goal of attracting a vibrant, engaged, and diverse student body.
- ***Housing Stock.*** Furman is committed to a policy of remaining 100% residential. Thus housing stock capacity acts as a hard upper ceiling on student body size. That ceiling is not itself an absolute, however, because it may be influenced by the spillover capacity at The Vinings (which Furman treats as an extension of campus housing), as well as by the changes, upward or downward, in existing capacity in Furman’s current residential housing stock as that stock is remodeled, particularly in the new “Freshman Village” or “Residential College” models being considered for South Housing.

## **2. Creation of a Strategic Improvement Fund**

A Strategic Improvement Fund, consisting of a blend of a share of the additional net revenue resources generated through new enrollment management strategies and contributions from new approaches to annual fund budgeting, will be created. A rational and transparent process will invite proposals for strategic improvements, to be prioritized and funded through a University-wide committee consisting of the President’s Cabinet and additional faculty, staff, student, and alumni appointments, to make annual strategic improvement expenditure recommendations for the annual budget submitted to the Board of Trustees for review and approval.

## **3. Changing Annual Fund Contributions**

Annual fund contributions to Furman will not be included in the underlying operating budget resources, but will be segregated and principally earmarked for the newly created Strategic Improvement Fund, with the annual fund contributions to the Strategic Improvement Fund reserved for non-recurring strategic improvements only.

## **4. Reserve Fund**

Furman will increase its allocation to the Reserve Fund as contingency and buffer for future economic contingencies, with a near-term goal of creating a fund of approximately 1.5% of budget.

## **C. Facilities and Landscape**

### **1. The Physical Landscape**

The Furman community takes great pride in the physical beauty of the campus. The campus landscape is uplifting to all who learn and work on the campus, and is often an important factor in decisions by applicants to attend Furman. Furman will remain committed to maintaining the beauty of its landscape. Special attention will be placed on the health of the landscape, especially the trees and lake that grace the campus.

### **2. Sustainability**

The pursuit of sustainability is an important global imperative. We have a moral obligation to be good stewards of the earth for future generations. The universities of the world are appropriate leaders in encouraging the pursuit of scientific advances, and wise political and cultural policies, in the collective quest to ensure a sustainable planet. Furman is justly proud of all that it has done in the pursuit of sustainability in our management of our University and as an educational and service goal, including our leadership and ongoing pursuit of the goals set forth in the national President's Climate Commitment. The Shi Center is, in substance and symbol, a recognition of these ongoing efforts.<sup>4</sup> As the political and business leaders in the greater Greenville area continue to place a high priority on sustainability, Furman will be well-positioned to contribute to the prosperity and quality of life in the community by partnering with local business, political, and civic organizations to advance the community's broader sustainability goals. Furman's ongoing commitment to sustainable practices in the management of its own landscape and facilities will remain a governing imperative.

### **3. Enhancement of the Student Experience**

The Student Life Master Plan includes the enhancement of residential quads, student recreational spaces, and social venues designed to align the upgrade of facilities and landscape with the overall goals of enhancing the student experience at Furman.

### **4. Information Technology**

Furman's "virtual landscape" will be as impressive as its physical landscape. Furman is a learned community in which the flow of information and connectivity to the global community is central to daily operations. Furman will undertake a comprehensive effort to upgrade the Information Technology infrastructure of the University. A first iteration of a new Strategic Plan for Information Technology is an attachment linked to this Report.

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<sup>4</sup> While this section of this Report deals with matters germane to Furman's management of its facilities and landscape, the programmatic efforts of the Shi Center of course extend well beyond that domain, and include curricular, service, and community-centered programming.

## 5. Deferred Maintenance

Furman will direct additional budgetary resources to deferred maintenance.

### D. Administrative Practices

#### 1. Furman as a Community

A powerful element of Furman's identity is its sense of community, often articulated through the phrase "Furman Family." Furman must follow "best practices" as an employer and a non-profit business. At the same time, those practices must always be informed by the values of humanity, dignity and support for all those who comprise the community. Provision of child-care facilities, flexible scheduling options, appropriate salary and benefit structures, and fair working environments are among the types of administrative practices to be continually followed and enhanced as manifestations of these values.

#### 2. Fostering a Culture of Excellence

Furman will foster a culture of excellence within the workplace, encouraging and supporting managerial and human resources practices that include meaningful assessment, accountability, merit-based compensation adjustments, other work-quality incentives, and training and development opportunities for talented employees.

#### 3. Administrative Reorganization

*(a) University-Wide Organizational Assessment.* Furman will engage in ongoing assessment and refinement of its administrative organization and structure, to improve efficiency and enhance transparency. All administrative departments within the University will undertake their own internal strategic planning processes, including reorganization plans, consistent with the larger strategic goals of the University and the values of efficiency and transparency.

*(b) Presidential Cabinet Governance Structure.* A first iteration of these reorganization efforts is presented in an attachment linked to this Report. A principal feature of the administrative reorganization is a move to a "Presidential Cabinet" form of central administrative governance in which the position of Provost and the position of Vice President for Enrollment have been eliminated, with a cabinet chaired by the President charged with collective and collaborative administrative leadership. In its present form the Cabinet consists of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean (the Chief Academic Officer of the University), the Vice President for Finance and Administration, the Vice President for Development, the Vice President for Student Life, the Vice President for Marketing and Public Relations, the Vice President and Director of Athletics, the Associate Vice President for Admission, and the Associate Vice President for Financial Aid, all of whom are direct reports to the

President. The Cabinet shall also include a member of the faculty appointed by the President in consultation with the Faculty Chair.

- (c) ***Commitment to Academic Freedom and Shared Governance.*** Furman reaffirms its longstanding commitment to principles of academic freedom and shared governance as guiding principles in the administration of the University.

## **PART III: IMPLEMENTATION**

### **A. Decentralized Planning Within Centralized Values and Leadership**

This Strategic Plan invites a future ongoing decentralized process of strategic planning within individual University departments and units. This is not to be understood as a scattered or disorganized process—a process that would be the antithesis of a true “strategy.” Rather, it recognizes the rich variety of programs that exist at Furman, and the widely differing needs and aspirations of various programs. These individualized strategic planning efforts, however, must all be guided by the larger policies and principles set forth in this Strategic Plan. Individual departments at Furman will have the freedom to adopt their own specific strategies in their ongoing quest for excellence, within the framework of the guiding values and principles articulated in this Strategic Plan. With regard to Furman’s academic mission, for example, individual academic departments—or, when appropriate, groupings of departments working collaboratively—are invited to set priorities and goals consistent with the principles set forth in this Strategic Plan. The University Administration and Trustees will in turn work iteratively and collaboratively with the departments to identify resources and set specific timetables for execution of those plans.

### **B. A Process-Oriented Approach to Future Prioritizing**

This Strategic Plan encourages decentralized creativity and ambition in an ongoing effort to strive for excellence. The Strategic Plan calls for the creation of a Strategic Improvement Fund, from which the resources for future quality investments shall be drawn. Inevitably, however, a robust University culture of creativity and ambition will generate more demand for resources than will be available at any given future moment in the University’s history. There will likely be more proposals for strategic improvement in any given year than there are resources available to invest in such improvement. This Strategic Plan adopts a process-oriented solution to the allocation of resources. Rather than attempt to predict and project where resources will be deployed, and in what sequence, over the course of the next decade, this Strategic Plan calls for a coherent process of ongoing decision-making.

### **C. Fostering a Culture of Ongoing Strategic Planning**

In sum, this Strategic Plan is designed as a foundational document articulating the governing values and principles that will guide Furman through the decade 2011 to 2020. It is not a laundry list of specific projects and programs presented in the form of a mechanistic presentation of “to do” goals to be checked off as achieved, as they happen to present themselves in 2011. No snapshot of Furman’s most pressing needs and priorities in October of 2011 can reliably predict or direct decisions two, five, or nine years hence. Rather, this Strategic Plan is intended as a framework to channel discretion and guide the University community as it engages in an *ongoing* process of strategic and tactical deliberation and judgment in coming years. This Strategic Plan is the product of a broadly participatory and open discussion of “who we are” and “what we seek to be.” In candidly connecting money and mission, this Strategic Plan acts as a covenant in which the University has set its direction for where it wants to go. The next decade will be an evolving and dynamic effort to design the specific plans and direct the specific resources required to get there.

#### **D. Furman’s Commitment to Healthy Deliberative Processes**

These ongoing future processes will be collaborative and transparent, utilizing the existing deliberative structures of the University and reflecting Furman’s strong and healthy traditions of shared governance. When appropriate, specific task forces or ad hoc committees will be appointed to study and propose solutions to specific challenges facing the University. Such recommendations will in turn be presented to the appropriate governance structures of the University for consideration, approval, and implementation.

#### **E. Moving Forward Immediately—A Running Start**

As this Strategic Plan was in the process of presentation to the Furman faculty and Board of Trustees in October 2011, many implementation processes had already begun, reflecting the strong community consensus that the planning process had revealed about certain key elements of Furman’s identity and future aspirations. These include, for example, the work of the Task Force on the Student Experience, the first stages of execution of the Student Life Master Plan, the execution of a Strategic Plan for Information Services, and the convening of a Campus Climate Task Force. Similarly, implementation of new processes and policies contemplated by this Strategic Plan in areas such as budgetary policies, admissions, and financial aid policies had already begun in 2011. So, too, the Strategic Plan’s emphasis on strong engagement with the Greenville community was manifest, as the Plan was being adopted, in numerous exploratory discussions and negotiations with potential partnering entities in the community.

The implementation of the aspirations set forth in Vision 2020 has a running start. This process will continue, throughout all units of the University, guided by an open and collaborative approach to central leadership, in keeping with what the strategic planning process has revealed as the authentic values and aspirations of the Furman community.

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