

Light Our Way 2028

Lawrence University Strategic Plan 2023 - 2028

Introduction

Since its founding in 1847, Lawrence University has been a beacon – a collaborative, best-in-class intellectual and creative community where students, faculty, staff, alumni, and other constituents pursue excellence and integrity in all endeavors. From its first day of classes on November 12, 1849, the university has educated both women and men in the liberal arts and sciences, making it one of the first co-educational institutions in the United States – a commitment honored through the 1964 merger with Milwaukee-Downer College for Women, which continues to have a revered historic presence in LU campus culture.

In 1874, the Lawrence Conservatory of Music was founded. Today, it enjoys a national reputation for excellence and is a distinguishing factor in the university's top-tier curriculum. Lawrence offers more than 1,500 students, from 49 states and 38 countries, 55 areas of study towards four bachelor's degree programs across the liberal arts and sciences and the conservatory. With three campus locations – 88 acres in Appleton along the banks of the Fox River, 441 acres in picturesque Door County, and an extension in London's exciting West End – the LU of today likely exceeds even the dreams of its founder, philanthropist Amos A. Lawrence.

In 2021, Lawrence welcomed its 17th president, Laurie A. Carter, the second woman and first person of color to lead the institution. Recognizing the unprecedented challenges facing higher education, e.g., ramifications of COVID-19 and the looming national enrollment cliff, President Carter has called on Lawrentians to commit to a renewed vision for the future: *Light Our Way 2028*. This strategic plan provides a roadmap for Lawrence that honors its first 176 years while boldly designing its mid-21st century future.

Motto

LU's motto is: *Light! More light!* with the response *Veritas est lux*. LU's co-founder and first principal, the Rev. William Harkness Sampson, selected the motto (from Goethe) and designed the Lawrence shield upon which these words appear.

Mission

Lawrence University of Wisconsin, through its undergraduate residential college and Conservatory of Music, educates students in the liberal arts and sciences. The university is devoted to excellence and integrity in all of its activities and committed to the development of intellect and talent, the pursuit of knowledge and understanding, the cultivation of sound judgment, and respect for the perspectives of others. Lawrence prepares students for lives of achievement, responsible and meaningful citizenship, lifelong learning, and personal fulfillment. As a diverse learning community of scholars and artists, the university actively fosters a transformative process that emphasizes engaged learning, supported by an environment of rich educational opportunities in a residential campus setting.

Lawrentians live this mission every day – serving students who seek the light of knowledge and understanding. Moreover, this mission informs institutional values of being a more diverse, welcoming, and sustainable community.

Values

LU's values are reflected and upheld in all endeavors by the full university community. These values are rooted in Lawrence's past, informed by its present, and focused on its future.

Belonging: LU works diligently to create an environment that welcomes individuals of all backgrounds and beliefs to contribute to and to benefit from a Lawrence education.

Integrity: LU encourages a trusting and open environment by fostering academic integrity, personal responsibility, and honest behavior in all members of its community.

Respect: LU believes that all members of its community have the right to live, learn, and work without discrimination or intolerance in an environment free from sexual violence.

Sustainability: LU commits to reinforcing a culture of sustainability through which its residential campus, green initiatives, and coursework integrate to champion sustainable initiatives.

Vision

The vision for Lawrence is rooted in the aims of the liberal arts and sciences education. Per former LU president Richard Warch: “to participate in a liberal education is a privilege and a challenge; to be liberally educated is to be transformed. Open and free inquiry, a devotion to excellence, the development of character, the mastery of competencies, the ability to think critically, the excitement and rewards of learning – these are the aims and principles of a liberal arts education.” This ethos is concurrently Lawrence’s legacy and vision for the future.

Purpose of Strategic Planning

Amplifying LU’s reputation and brand, enhancing its academic offering, increasing enrollments, improving retention rates, and renovating and enlarging the physical plant – against unprecedented higher education headwinds – will challenge Lawrence to set and realize ambitious goals.

- To create a curated, coherent, and cohesive academic experience, anchored in the liberal arts, that prepares students for success after graduation.
- To create a vibrant student experience that promotes wellness, a developmental approach to student learning, and engagement opportunities that build a sense of belonging and pride and contributes to an inclusive community.
- To design and implement business and administrative models that ensure the long-term sustainability of the university.
- To maintain a workplace culture that nurtures a sense of belonging, encourages collaboration, promotes health and well-being, and ensures an equitable climate in which all voices can be heard.

The strategic plan frames how Lawrence will meet challenges and capitalize on opportunities through 2028. LU will thrive by focusing on strengths, honoring traditions while embracing change, and being diligent and accountable stewards of resources.

Process of Strategic Planning

Light Our Way 2028 is the culmination of 15 months of campus-wide collaboration to gather insights, ideas, and recommendations from students, faculty, staff, and trustees. A Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) of 20 students, faculty, and staff members initiated the process. LU's strategic planning partners, Keeling & Associates, LLC, provided sector-wide knowledge and forecasting as well as facilitation of discussions. The important work completed earlier by the Guiding Coalitions, i.e., 1) Institutional Long-Term Visioning, 2) Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Antiracism, 3) Full Speed to Full Need, and 4) Athletics along with key indicators provided by the Strategic Equitable Enrollment Management team, informed the efforts of the SPC. The SPC reviewed existing data and held more than 35 visioning sessions with LU constituents to ensure broad community representation to collect a plurality of thoughts, perspectives, and ideas. The Committee distilled this information into the goals and objectives that will guide the university's future with emphasis on:

- Strengthening Lawrence's distinctive institutional identity as a liberal arts college and conservatory of music.
- Improving intentional communication for and among all sections of the University.
- Striving for a high-level sense of belonging by embedding inclusivity, diversity, equity, and antiracism into the mindset, systems, and structures of the university.
- Making assessment an essential part of LU's community of practice.

With a belief in shared governance – wherein all constituencies have a valid and appreciated role – the Lawrence University Board of Trustees has been engaged throughout the process, working with President Carter, senior staff, and Keeling & Associates to support a forward-looking vision for the university. Through its approval of this document in May 2023, the Board has committed its members and the full university community to working assiduously to achieve goals and objectives as stated herein.

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Goal 1: Curriculum

Lawrence will create an academic experience, anchored in the liberal arts, that prepares students for success after graduation.

OBJECTIVE 1: Lawrence will transform the academic advising process so that students are guided, supported, and can develop a growing sense of their ownership of and agency in their education.

Activity 1: Develop and implement training and handbooks for academic advisors ensuring they are equipped to support all students.

Activity 2: Develop and implement procedures for assessment of effective advising and develop policies for equitable allocation of our advising resources.

Activity 3: Develop student learning outcomes for advising.

METRIC	TARGET	YEAR COMPLETION
New faculty advisor training	100% completion	Year 1, 2, 3
Faculty feel supported in advisor role (survey)	90% target	Year 2,3
Eligible Students declare a major by beginning of junior year	95% target	Year 1, 2, 3
Students have advisor in their major by beginning of junior year	100% target	Year 2, 3
Development of Learning Outcomes and assessment plan	100% completion	Year 2
Assessment of Learning Outcomes	Benchmark	Year 3

OBJECTIVE 2: Lawrence will develop a First-Year Studies program that regularly reimagines the shared learning experience in the first year for new generations of Lawrentians.

Activity 1: Conduct internal and external consultations to determine the specific learning outcomes.

Activity 2: Create the new curriculum and the structures to support it.

Activity 3: Provide training to faculty (and staff), fully market to prospective students, and notify alumni.

METRIC	TARGET	YEAR COMPLETION
Development of the Curriculum and Learning Outcomes	100% completion	Year 1
Training for Instructional Faculty	100% completion of first cohort	Year 1
Training for Instructional Faculty	100% completion of second cohort	Year 2
Assessment of Learning Outcomes	Benchmarks	Year 2
Assessment of Learning Outcomes	Benchmarks	Year 3

OBJECTIVE 3: Lawrence will reform the General Education curriculum to ensure that we provide a strong academic foundation and sequenced pathways that contribute to the rich development of the whole student from First-Year Studies to the Senior Experience.

Activity 1: Conduct internal and external consultations to determine specific learning outcomes.

Activity 2: Create the new curriculum and the structures to support it.

Activity 3: Provide training for faculty and staff (in conjunction with Curriculum Goal – Objectives 1 and 2), fully market to prospective students.

METRIC	TARGET	YEAR COMPLETION
Development of Learning Outcomes	100% completion	Year 1
Development of Curriculum (new courses)	100% completed	Year 2
Faculty/Staff development on new curriculum	100% completion of first cohort	Year 2
Faculty/Staff development on new curriculum	100% completion of second cohort	Year 3
NSSE survey – sense of preparedness for life after graduation, learning, and belonging	Benchmark	Year 4
Assessment of Learning Outcomes	Benchmark	Year 3

OBJECTIVE 4: Lawrence will institutionalize the theme of life after Lawrence throughout the student journey intentionally so that each experience a student has prepares them for their lives after graduation.

Activity 1: Actively incorporate career discernment, exploration, and preparation into the curriculum, both in the classroom and through out-of-class experiences.

Activity 2: Actively engage with alumni and partners within the greater Fox Valley community and beyond.

METRIC	TARGET	YEAR COMPLETION
Career Center sessions with FYS classes	100% completion	Year 2
Internship experiences	15% increase	Year 2
Career Center sessions on life skills in conjunction with Student Life	100% completion	Year 2
Avg. Salary for students after graduation	15% increase	Year 3
Postgraduate placement one year after graduation	15% increase	Year 3
Collaborations with alumni for internships and job opportunities	15% improvement	Year 2

OBJECTIVE 5: Lawrence will institute a regular, rigorous process of academic program review to ensure that the University offers academic programs that are of consistently high quality, respond to students’ changing aspirations and goals, and engage students in the transformative process of learning.

Activity 1: Develop the process for review of the current academic programs

Activity 2: Create a holistic mechanism of analysis for the creation of new majors.

METRIC	TARGET	YEAR COMPLETION
Develop review process	100% completion	Year 1
1/4 of total number of existing programs reviewed annually	1/4 per year 100% over 4 years	Year 2-5
Market data analysis to track new possible majors	100% completion	Year 2
Admissions applications	15% increase in interest in new programs	Year 3, 4

Goal 2: Student Experience

Lawrence will create a vibrant student experience that promotes wellness, a developmental approach to student learning, and engagement opportunities that build a sense of belonging and pride and contribute to an inclusive community.

OBJECTIVE 1: Lawrence will implement a comprehensive student-experience advising program that complements academic advising and unites the network of faculty and staff who guide a student’s personal and academic progress.

Activity 1: Audit campus-wide advising from both the faculty/staff and student perspectives.

Activity 2: Create and implement trainings and handbooks for faculty and staff so that all are equipped with the tools to support this aspect of the student’s journey both in and outside of the classroom, in conjunction with Curriculum – Objective 1 – Activity 1.

METRIC	TARGET	YEAR COMPLETION
Audit, trainings, and handbooks	100% completion	Year 1
Trainings and those trained	50-75% increase	Year 2,3
NSSE survey – sense of preparedness for life after graduation, learning, and belonging	50% improvement	Year 3-5
Employee Performance Evaluation – efficiency and effectiveness	50% improvement	Year 2,3

OBJECTIVE 2: Through a robust program of co- and extra-curricular experiences, Lawrence will support students’ development of belonging, community, inclusion, and well-being.

Activity 1: Develop a robust and coherent First-Year Experience program with the intention of creating the sense of belonging in the beginning of a student’s journey and the aim to develop a sense of the larger purpose of the student’s experience as a member of the community, not only as a part of a cohort or major. This FYE will integrate the co-curricular and the curricular experiences.

Activity 2: Student Life and Career Center to jointly develop affinity group programming (e.g., first generation students), beginning during the students’ first term and with consistent touch points throughout a student’s time at Lawrence.

Activity 3: Create and implement strong residential education programming that focuses on the out of classroom development that occurs in living communities for each class of students, including programming for group housing and faculty/staff programs in the residence halls.

Activity 4: Audit and invest in athletics (e.g., physical plant and program-level financial support) as the roster sizes expand.

METRIC	TARGET	YEAR COMPLETION
FYE programming development	100% completion	Year 1
FYE programming implementation	100% completion	Year 2
Select affinity group programming	100% completion	Year 2
Residential Education programming development	100% completion	Year 1

METRIC	TARGET	YEAR COMPLETION
Residential Education programming implementation	100% completion	Year 2
Athletics spending audit	100% completion	Year 2
Athletics roster sizes	20-100% increase, depending on program	Years 1-5
NSSE survey – sense of belonging, connection, and preparedness for life after graduation for students	20% improvement 40% improvement	Year 3 Years 3-5
Student Welfare Reporting: Code of Conduct reports, bias incident reports, student concern webforms	Benchmark 20% improvement	Year 2 Year 3

OBJECTIVE 3: Lawrence will elevate holistic wellness within the student experience.

Activity 1: Implement strategies for self-care – mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health.

Activity 2: Create programming focused on life skill development for our students that helps them responsibly prioritize their choices, set boundaries on their own activities, and gain resilience.

METRIC	TARGET	YEAR COMPLETION
Mental Health Counseling check-ins	10% reduction	Year 3
Third-Party mental health hotline use	Benchmark	Year 1
Create Life skills programming in conjunction with Career Center	100% completion	Year 1
Life skills sessions in conjunction with the Career Center	100% improvement	Year 2
NSSE survey – sense of belonging, connection, health, and preparedness for life after graduation for students	25% improvement 50% improvement	Year 3 Year 4
Student Welfare reporting: Early Alerts cases, Interventions, and Suspensions	25% improvement 50% improvement	Year 3 Year 4

OBJECTIVE 4: Lawrence will create opportunities, places, and structures for students to engage in healthy civil discourse, while developing a broader sense of community across the University.

Activity 1: Develop and implement trainings and workshops by both internal facilitators and external experts on how to have conversations across differences that are continuously offered.

Activity 2: Intentionally invite multiple speakers with different perspectives on singular issues who can provide real-world examples of healthy civil discourse.

METRIC	TARGET	YEAR COMPLETION
Trainings and workshops development	100% completion	Year 1
Trainings and workshops and those trained	100% improvement	Year 2
Campus Climate survey – sense of belonging and connection	25% improvement 50% improvement	Year 3 Year 4
NSSE survey – improved learning, sense of belonging and connection, preparedness for life after graduation for students	25% improvement 50% improvement	Year 3 Year 4
Bias Incident Reports	25% reduction	Year 3

Goal 3: Institutional Sustainability

Lawrence will design and implement business and administrative models that ensure the long-term sustainability of the University.

OBJECTIVE 1: Lawrence will create and implement an enrollment management plan that supports long-term institutional sustainability.

Activity 1: Analyze and determine our optimal size to accomplish our mission and be financially sustainable.

Activity 2: Assess our current and additional recruitment strategies to implement the appropriate strategies that position us for the future.

METRIC	TARGET	YEAR COMPLETION
Quality Applications	50% increase	Year 2
Net Student Revenue	20% increase	Year 5
Acceptance Rate	10% reduction	Year 3
Overall Graduation Rate (4,5,and 6 year)	5% increase	Year 5
Overall Retention and Persistence Rates	10% increase	Year 4

OBJECTIVE 2: Lawrence will successfully steward its resources and investment in the physical and technological infrastructure to ensure that the environment in which our students live and learn and employees work supports their success, instills prides, and supports a bright future for Lawrence.

Activity1: Create a campus master plan that includes managing deferred maintenance.

- Future forecasting for additional academic space, residential space, athletics space

Activity 2: Create and implement a strategy to update our technological opportunities both in the classroom and in co-curricular spaces.

Activity 3: Create and implement an institutional data-sharing strategy for increased transparency for employees and more efficient and effective decision-making.

- Auditing our current data collection/analysis platforms for functionality, compatibility, and ease of user-interface
- Implementing best practices for employee data-sharing.

METRIC	TARGET	YEAR COMPLETION
Campus Master Plan	100% completion	Year 3
Information Technology Services audit	100% completion	Year 2
Implementation of data collection/analysis platforms across campus	100% completion	Year 3
Campus Climate survey – improved collaboration, improved sense of pride, improved sense of belonging	25% improvement	Year 3
Overall Retention and Persistence Rates	10% increase	Year 4

OBJECTIVE 3: Lawrence will use its financial resources responsibly, while creatively considering alternative financial opportunities.

Activity1: Create and implement a plan to balance our institutional finances.

Activity 2: Create and implement a process to analyze potential revenue streams.

METRIC	TARGET	YEAR COMPLETION
Financial modeling for balancing the budget creation	100% completion	Year 1
Monitoring of financial modeling for balancing the budget creation	100% completion at least annually	Years 2-5
Create an analysis process for potential auxiliary revenue streams	100% completion	Year 1
Auxiliary Revenue	20-40% increase	Year 2-5
Overall Retention and Persistence Rates	10% increase	Year 4

OBJECTIVE 4: Lawrence will be an accountable steward of the planet’s resources.

Activity1: Complete the Björklunden Net Zero project.

Activity 2: Create the plan for the Second Nature Campus Climate Commitment.

METRIC	TARGET	YEAR COMPLETION
The Björklunden Net Zero project	100% completion	Year 3
Plan development for Second Nature Campus Climate Commitment	100% completion	Year 3

Goal 4: Workplace Culture

Lawrence’s workplace culture will nurture a sense of belonging, encourage collaboration, promote health and well-being, and ensure an equitable climate in which all voices can be heard. (Metrics are for each activity)

OBJECTIVE 1: Lawrence will develop a practice of appreciation for the individual so that our people feel valued and understand that their work is meaningful.

Activity 1: Develop and implement practices that create more equitable flexibility for people.

- Design schedules so that vacations are possible and not a burden to take and upon return.
- Opportunities for professional development and benefits (classes, vacations, etc.) must be equitable and practicable.

METRIC	TARGET	YEAR COMPLETION
Unused vacation time	20% reduction	Year 2
Campus Climate survey – improved sense of belonging and connection to the team/institution	25% improvement	Year 3
Bias Incident Reports	25% reduction	Year 3

Activity 2: Make a practice of holding regular community gatherings, of various sizes, sometimes with an agenda, sometimes just for the sake of gathering. Make conversation possible.

- Offer campus-wide recognition/appreciation (Service Awards Luncheon, shout outs in LU Insider and at meetings, social gatherings, Welcome Back Reception, web stories, etc.).
- Develop a practice on the community and departmental levels of setting priorities and following through on what has been decided.

METRIC	TARGET	YEAR COMPLETION
Employee recognition	20% increase	Year 2
Campus Climate survey – improved recognition and reward for good work, improved collaboration	25% improvement	Year 3
Bias Incident Reports	25% reduction	Year 3

Activity 3: Develop a plan for compensating faculty and staff for (currently) unpaid work.

METRIC	TARGET	YEAR COMPLETION
Labor Budget	50% completion of reaching at least market median for each position inclusive of currently unpaid work	Year 5
Campus Climate survey – improved sense of belonging	25% improvement	Year 3
Bias Incident Reports	25% reduction	Year 3

Activity 4: Review current practices for equity across campus/job positions and for fit with priorities so that there is clarity about on what to say “no.”

METRIC	TARGET	YEAR COMPLETION
Job equity audit	100% completion	Year 1
Employee performance evaluations – competencies and job goals	25% improvement	Year 3
Campus Climate survey – sense of belonging, collaboration, and effectiveness	25% improvement	Year 3
Bias Incident Reports	25% reduction	Year 3

OBJECTIVE 2: Lawrence will prioritize development of the individual and community in the workplace so that our people are continuing their growth, are modeling the lifelong learning, and feel equipped to demonstrate and articulate their connection to each other and our mission.

Activity 1: Develop and document onboarding practices that both train the new employee and introduce them to the larger community.

- Develop, document, and communicate the duties connected with each office, so that new employees understand their role and value in the larger LU community. These descriptions need to make explicit connections to the larger mission of the University.
(See Workplace Culture Objective 3, Activity 2)
- Develop and put into practice targeted training materials for new employee’s duties, so that new members of the community immediately experience the learning and developing environment that is the LU community.
- Intentionally include new employees in regular community conversations so that they have ample opportunities to build a sense of their own belonging here.

METRIC	TARGET	YEAR COMPLETION
Targeted training materials	100% completion	Year 1
New employee trainings	100% completion	Year 2
Performance evaluations for new employees – understanding of institution, individual connection to the institution, sense of belonging, and collaboration	25% improvement	Year 3
Campus Climate survey – efficiency, effectiveness	25% improvement	Year 3

Activity 2: Develop, document, and communicate clear criteria for assessment of each position, as well as paths to promotion and/or further professional development, so that community members have a clear understanding of how and why their work here is valued, and how and why their development will be rewarded.

- Develop and then communicate metrics for measuring success, and how success will be recognized and rewarded.
- Develop and advertise through a clear, accessible online guide a rich variety of opportunities for professional development, taking full advantage of the University’s learning environment – all available trainings and fundings for trainings.
- Recognize the importance and value of necessary work and connect the value of professional development to the employee, and not the position.

METRIC	TARGET	YEAR COMPLETION
Development and communication of success metrics	100% completion	Year 1
Employee performance evaluations – sense of belonging and connection to institution	25% improvement	Year 2
Professional development training offerings and attendance	50% increase	Year 2
Campus Climate survey - efficiency	25% improvement	Year 3

OBJECTIVE 3: Lawrence will develop policies and practices that support clear, effective, and timely communication throughout the organization.

Activity 1: Develop an accessible (searchable and available) organizational chart, with accurate and regularly updated contact information to identify the appropriate person/ office for various situations/needs, so that the process of answering a question or solving a problem does not contribute to the Lawrence Busy.

METRIC	TARGET	YEAR COMPLETION
Accessible organizational chart system	100% completion	Year 1
Campus Climate survey – efficiency, understanding of institution and individual connection	25% improvement	Year 2

Activity 2: Develop, document, and communicate the duties connected with each office, rather than specific individuals. These descriptions need to make explicit connections to the larger mission of the University.

METRIC	TARGET	YEAR COMPLETION
Development, documentation, and communication of project	100% completion	Year 1
Campus Climate survey – efficiency	25% improvement	Year 3
Employee performance evaluations – understanding of institution and individual connection	25% improvement	Year 2

Activity 3: Develop community standards for communication, train all employees in those standards, and maintain them.

- Conducting an internal communications audit. Determining how to use the different communication mechanisms more effectively we have (email, Microsoft teams, teams chat, LU Insider, etc.)
- Ensuring everyone understands how to operate our internal systems (work order filing, scheduling rooms, etc.), so that each member of our community develops a sense of ownership of and responsibility for our resources.
- Develop, implement, and publicize a standardized, accessible and searchable system for archived minutes of meetings.

METRIC	TARGET	YEAR COMPLETION
Internal communication audit	100% completion	Year 1
Campus Climate survey – efficiency, data-sharing practices, and access	25% improvement	Year 3