



UNITED
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
OF THE TWIN CITIES

2021 STRATEGIC PLAN

Resulting from the Lilly Endowment's
Pathways for Tomorrow Grant Initiative Phase 1 Grant Award
Assessing | Visioning | Grant Planning

Compiled by





UNITED
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
OF THE TWIN CITIES

Table of Contents

3	United's Foci
4	The Big Picture
5	United's Vision
6	Opportunities- Strengths to protect
8	Challenges- Obstacles to moving strategically forward
11	Strategic Plan
12	Strategic Plan – Mission, Values, & Goals
13	Strategic Plan – Building Systems & Infrastructure
16	Strategic Plan – Staffing & Organizational Structure
17	Strategic Plan – Educational Opportunities
18	Strategic Plan – Marketing & Communication
19	Strategic Plan – Confront Biases & Inequities
20	Strategic Plan Task Timeline



UNITED
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
OF THE TWIN CITIES

FOCI

Social Transformation

Theology and the Arts

Interreligious Engagement

Public Theology



UNITED

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
OF THE TWIN CITIES

THE BIG PICTURE

TRANSFORMATIONAL IMPACT

United is on the forefront of social change for such a time as this.

As a progressive, ecumenical seminary rooted in the liberal Protestant tradition, United has been on the forefront of social change and radically ethical leadership both inside and outside of formal ministry settings since its founding almost 60 years ago. In the national calls for racial justice and the unprecedented pain of a pandemic, United students, alums, and faculty have been creative, ethical, compassionate leaders doing the necessary work of leading worship in new ways, coordinating public forums and global days of prayer, working to transform society, tending to hurting communities, serving as spiritual healers, and more.

MINISTERING TO ALL

We are educating leaders in all areas of church and society.

Our current United students are aiming their vocational goals at congregational ministry, chaplaincy settings, non-profit organizations, arts management, public policy work, academic, social services, and more. Through our unique curriculum, they are incorporating our four foci of social transformation, arts and theology, interreligious engagement, and public theology into their work as advocates for justice, equity, inclusion, and love for all.

EXTRAVAGANT WELCOME

We are home to a beautiful interfaith and diverse student body.

United students represent more than 20 faith traditions and religious identities. Along with a strong contingent of students from mainline Protestant traditions like the United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church, and Presbyterian Church USA, our community includes, among others, Unitarians, Buddhists, Quakers, Baptists, Catholics, Baha'i, Muslims, and those who claim no religious tradition at all. United's radical hospitality and spiritual diversity welcomes a range of ages, genders, races, and life experiences.

EXPANDING OUR MISSION ACROSS THE GLOBE

Via distance learning and experiential education.

United's significant investment in state of the art distance learning technology allows students to follow their calling without uprooting their lives, while expanding United's mission and impact beyond the Twin Cities. Distance learners report a strong interactive experience and feel present in the classroom. In addition, United's robust experiential (contextual) education programming immerses students in a variety of settings, allowing them to develop professional skills to make a broad impact in their vocation.



UNITED

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
OF THE TWIN CITIES

VISION

Summary Identity Statement

United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities is an ecumenical graduate school located in a vibrant urban setting. United is a progressive Christian seminary grounded in the liberal Protestant tradition and committed to interreligious engagement. United explores the teachings of Jesus and other prophetic traditions, which we believe call for the deep inclusion and liberation of all people. Rooted in the United Church of Christ, the seminary was formed in 1962, with the merger of the Mission House Seminary of Plymouth, Wisconsin, and Yankton School of Theology, South Dakota.

MISSION

United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities fosters intellectual, spiritual, and personal growth to educate innovative and compassionate leaders for the transformation of faith communities and society.

VISION

United is recognized as a generous and welcoming seminary where all – trailblazers and traditionalists, questioners, and yearning spirits – explore the boundless possibilities of a loving and beloved community.

United hopes to become known and embraced in the Twin Cities as an institution on the front lines of social justice issues in the community.

VALUES

United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities values:

- ...rigorous academic study as an expression of the human spirit.
- ...lifelong learning that nurtures the journey of spiritual seekers from all walks of life.
- ...challenging conversations and bold partnerships for societal transformation.
- ...a culture of creativity where integration of the arts and theology is fundamental.
- ...promoting a just, peaceful and sustainable world through stewardship and courageous action.
- ...its heritage as a seminary of the United Church of Christ and other faith traditions as the foundation for genuine dialogue and profound spiritual experience.



UNITED

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
OF THE TWIN CITIES

OPPORTUNITIES - STRENGTHS TO PROTECT

Theological Education that is Relevant

United recognizes that effective spiritual leadership requires more than theological understanding. Many seminaries focus on preparing students for Christian ordination in parish ministry; United also values the importance of public witness and equipping students to be innovative and compassionate leaders in non-traditional contexts. As one faculty member stated, “The urgency of the world is what we’re preparing [students] for.” Students mentioned choosing to enroll at United for this very reason and alums highlighted the importance of this training in their current ministries. In a listening group, one alum said, “United understands that students are not solely called to, preach and teach within the walls of our institution, but to take our witness into the public square.”

The Beloved Community

United has a history of being a welcoming and diverse community, striving to create a space where everyone has both a voice and a seat at the table. This diversity is recognized in multiple facets and includes but is not limited to gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, ability, and religion. This representation enriches the conversation in classrooms and has equipped students to carry these conversations forward into their communities beyond graduation. One board member commented on the seminary’s capacity to “recognize that each person has a story to tell and honors [the] sacred gift of each person and what it is they may bring to the collective conversation.”

Inspiring Leadership

The seminary has seen consistent turnover in presidential leadership over the last few years. Despite her role being designated as Interim, President Marshall has been an invigorating hire for the institution. In multiple listening groups, various constituencies, (e.g., students, faculty, staff, and board members) mentioned their restored hope for United with Rev. Dr. Molly T. Marshall at the helm. United’s new president has energy and insight into the challenges the institution is facing, and she is dedicated to moving United’s culture from a story of lament to a story of hope. She and the board are working closely to enhance all aspects of the seminary.

Inspiring Faculty & Staff

United Seminary’s staff and faculty are small in number but mighty. Faculty members are innovative, forward-thinking, and adaptable. In multiple listening groups, students, staff, board members, and alums offered high praise for the faculty, recognizing the increased workload they have been carrying. Students reference the faculty’s ability to facilitate difficult conversations, both in and outside of the classroom, and felt they could come to their professors with comments, questions, or even critiques and feel heard. Beyond the appreciation others offered for the faculty, they accept each other and there is a healthy rapport among them.



UNITED

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF THE TWIN CITIES

The love for United, sincere work ethic, and impassioned dedication of the staff, some of whom have been part of United's community for more than a decade, has helped United through multiple transitions and remained deeply committed to the institution and its students.

Community Presence of Alums

With a large population of alums serving in the Twin Cities, United is well poised to tap into its network of graduates for ideas about what community leaders, faith leaders, and nonprofits are looking for in terms of vocational support. Despite significant feelings of grief over the many losses the seminary has felt in recent years, alums spoke highly of their experience at United and were hopeful for what lies ahead. Alums currently serve as an integral component of recruitment to United and some alums in listening groups claimed the honor of being the biggest supporters of the seminary.

Location, Location, Location

The Twin Cities have become the epicenter of racial unrest in the United States, specifically as a response to the murder of George Floyd, which sparked the worldwide movement Black Lives Matter movement. In its call for proposals, the Lilly Foundation specifically mentions George Floyd by name, as well as racial unrest. Because of United's geographic location, its alums' influence in the Twin Cities, and its strong focus on social justice and social transformation, the seminary is already working as an agent for change.

Poised to Pivot

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has been devastating on so many levels, a silver lining for higher education is the opportunity to reimagine pre-existing structures and practices. While many institutions were forced to quickly adapt to the new reality of the pandemic without resources or preparation, United had already begun this process of reflection and re-examination about educational delivery when it moved to its new campus. As the institution emerges from the pandemic, opportunities to continue this process persist.

Campus Designed with Innovation in Mind

United has a history of evolving to meet the changing needs of theology, ministry, and seminary education and the new campus reflects that awareness. The location of United's new campus is more accessible for both commuters and those who learn remotely. The space is flexible and designed for collaboration and is located among emerging arts and non-profit organizations with socially conscious missions.



UNITED

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
OF THE TWIN CITIES

CHALLENGES - OBSTACLES TO MOVING STRATEGICALLY FORWARD

Financial Fragility

With a significant decrease in annual giving, major gifts, and legacy funding, large draws on endowment have happened annually. Recently, the Association of Theological Schools' (ATS) Commission on Accrediting issued a warning to United of the Twin Cities, effective February 22, 2021, for being at risk of not meeting two of ATS' Standards of Accreditation: Standard 10.3, "The school has sufficient and stable financial resources to achieve its mission with educational quality and financial sustainability;" and Standard 10.5, "The school protects and preserves any endowed funds, including utilizing prudent endowment draws." The determination is based on the school's financial statements ending June 30, 2020. Although there is momentum behind the aggressive push for financial stability, the feelings of fear and doom related to it have been pervasive and are only recently pivoting toward a more hopeful and expectant future.

Multiple Identities

United is experiencing challenges with clarifying a uniform identity. None of the listening group participants articulated a vision that was equally shared among all constituent groups nor does there appear to be any significant, shared goals toward which all parties are working. Additionally, theological education and the spiritual formation that occurs alongside it tell a unique story in the landscape of higher education. It does not appear that there is an agreed-upon message to tell nor that there is an agreed-upon target demographic to receive the intentional marketing.

Institutional Capacity

The numerous institutional transitions of United have created a nimble structure and ease to pivot. However, the challenge therein is in the ability to institutionalize programs and ideas sustainably. Staff, faculty, and students raved about the brilliance of ideas, but many added the caveat that these ideas were not typically long-lasting because of the lack of capacity, lack of funding and strained resources. One staff member said, "There are all these ideas but not enough people. We're growing, but there's not enough staff. Where's the tipping point?" Additionally, faculty are underpaid compared with their colleagues at comparable institutions, and there is concern surrounding retention of highly qualified faculty. Inadequate salary combined with overstretched and increasing expectation could lead to burnout and/or resignations.

Lack of Connection, Trust, and Morale

- **Interreligious Identity and Expectations**

United has a history of being deeply ecumenical and visible in interreligious dialogue and activism. Some current students were recruited under the presumption that United is a primarily interreligious institution. That is not necessarily the case. United's core full-time faculty identify as Christian and were primarily trained in Judeo-Christian theological perspectives; however, United's new faculty and program director of Interreligious Chaplaincy practices her ancestral religion in addition to being an ordained UCC Minister. Furthermore, each of United's faculty



UNITED

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF THE TWIN CITIES

who do identify as Christian represent a variety of perspectives and traditions within Christianity, showcasing the complexity and nuances within a particular religious framework. Nonetheless, some students who anticipate a rigorously diverse religious curriculum express dissatisfaction with their experiences. United's faculty are working to clearly articulate what should be reasonably expected by students in our curriculum and instruction, even as we seek to expand our offerings to students in diverse religious traditions. Recently, non-Christian students have articulated their awareness that they were coming to a Christian seminary.

- **When to Listen and When to Speak**

Although students appreciate diversity, and many chose to pursue an education at United because of its diverse student body, students and faculty articulated the classroom tension experienced as a result. Several listening group participants specifically noted frequent microaggressions occurring in the classroom and the exhaustion it causes marginalized students. For many adult learners who experience social privilege in their daily life, the classroom experience at United is a new paradigm.

- **Fractured Sense of Community**

Over the last few years, the United community has experienced a handful of challenging situations that, combined, have created fractures in the community. There was a downsizing of several staff members, intermittent departures of faculty members, an administrative team that enabled corporate values to subsume theological sensibilities, and a physical move from the campus United had inhabited for decades to its new location.

COVID-19 Pandemic

The global pandemic that has rocked life as we know it has also crippled institutions. Financial challenges, a missing sense of community, and the inability to connect with other students by gathering in person have all negatively impacted the seminary. As students and faculty begin to emerge from this year, lives have been changed, loved ones have been lost and the general rhythms of daily life have been altered. Although students understand the necessity of COVID-19 restrictions, they still expressed frustration with their educational experience not living up to its potential. There was a general feeling of missing the sense of community that brick and mortar, in-person theological education and formation can provide.

Lack of Opportunities for Alums

Although there is a significant number of alums living in the Twin Cities, and hundreds of others who could access educational content remotely, it appears that United is missing the mark on providing systematic opportunities for alum connection, continuing education, and equipping alums to be on the front line of recruiting. Previous administration considered this to be a strategic move and intentionally limited offerings. While opportunities may exist, they have not been effectively communicated in a way that staff, faculty, and administration can easily name.

Lack of Alignment



UNITED

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
OF THE TWIN CITIES

United is lacking alignment between contextual and spiritual training and its academic programming. Students and faculty articulated a disconnect between the academic piece of a student’s formation and the personal and spiritual evolution that, when aligned, have the ability to nurture the formation of the whole person. One United student said, “There are no robust offerings for spiritual formation at this seminary. Academic spaces have been that for me, along with ad hoc peer conversation. Those of us who want to do that are making it happen.”



UNITED

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
OF THE TWIN CITIES

STRATEGIC PLAN

Summary

The 2021 strategic plan for United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities was assembled as a result of the Lilly Endowment's Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative Phase 1 grant award for assessing, planning, and grant program creation. Ministry Architects met with United's faculty, staff, students, administration, alumni, and board of trustees, as well as constituent churches and collaborative ministry partners to gather input and collect ideas about how to move United strategically forward.

These areas of concentration emerged: mission/values/goals, building systems and infrastructure, staffing and organizational structure, educational opportunities, leadership development, marketing and communication, confront racial bias and inequity, and embrace context.

The following pages detail the strategic actions that United's board will engage to equip United to thrive into its next season of theological education in the Twin Cities and the world.

STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Update United's vision, mission, and values and effectively communicate its identity
2. Create sustainability in United's foundational systems
3. Ensure United's employees are aware of their responsibilities, sufficiently resourced, and thriving in their positions
4. Enhance educational opportunities for United's students
5. Increase United's community presence and tell United's story to its constituents
6. Achieve equity within the institution



UNITED
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
OF THE TWIN CITIES

STRATEGIC PLAN – MISSION, VALUES, & GOALS

STRATEGIC GOAL #1: Update United's vision, mission, and values and effectively communicate its identity

TASKS ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED

- **Retain and Expand the Identity:** In a collaborative process between United's Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, and donors, clarified the seminary's interreligious commitment within its progressive Christian identity

TASKS TO ACCOMPLISH THE GOAL

- **Clarifying:** Clarify United's mission, values, and goals, ensuring that they accurately reflect the current realities and ethos of the institution
- **Sharing the Vision:** Upon completion of the vision summit, with clarity surrounding the concept for the Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative and the general strategic plan for the seminary, create a plan for sharing the vision through internal and external marketing and implement it



UNITED

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
OF THE TWIN CITIES

STRATEGIC PLAN – BUILDING SYSTEMS & INFRASTRUCTURE

STRATEGIC GOAL #2: Create sustainability in United's foundational systems

Create financial viability for United

TASKS ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED

- **Project a 5-year budget** that takes into consideration FTE growth and faculty capacity

TASKS TO ACCOMPLISH THE GOAL

Create an Aggressive Financial Plan including:

- **Develop a 5-year Aspirational Budget:** To prepare for the expected increase in enrollment as well as desired programmatic improvements and other costs (i.e. technology, facility, and/or curriculum development)
- **Attend to Operational Efficiencies:** To align revenue and expenses to reduce deficit spending, engage the Vice President for Finance and Administration to create a plan for more effective processes for budgeting, monitoring, and reporting financial performance
- **Engage in Endowment Campaign:** Engage in a large-scale endowment campaign to strengthen the financial health, replace recent draw on endowment, and ensure the financial viability of United
- **Strengthen Donor Relations:** Create a plan to repair the fiduciary relationship with previous and existing donors, telling the story of the newly created strategic plan and a bright future for United
- **Consider Other Models:** Revisit and restart United's Innovation Task Force to create and incubate a plan for innovative models to financially equip United
- **Focus on Advancement:** To garner 20 new monthly givers to grow the annual fund by 10% per year, as well as to increase endowment by 3 million over 5 years, continue to follow the new plan for advancement outlined in the HLC report wherein Vice President for Advancement assisted by the Donor Engagement Officer and the Interim President, consider pursuing the following:
 - Cultivate legacy giving and update current records in preparation for 60th Anniversary Campaign
 - Leverage matching gift for Fall 2021
 - Strengthen giving societies and implement new ones (Fall 2021)
 - Promote more generous trustee giving
 - Develop the social capital of alums by increasing distributed information and asking for their connectivity with potential donors
 - Increase number of key churches that make United a budgetary line item



UNITED

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF THE TWIN CITIES

- Renew relationships with the philanthropic community of the Twin Cities through the Donor Engagement Officer
- Reinvigorate relationships with family foundations
- Procure funding for two new faculty chairs at \$1.75 million to \$2 million each as part of the 60th Anniversary Campaign
- **Board of Trustees:** With input from the Board of Trustees Chair and the Interim President, create a plan to develop board capacity through a focus on work of committees and recruitment of new trustees. The bylaws permit a maximum of 36 trustees
- **Increase Fiduciary and Strategic Competence of the Board of Trustees:** The Chair of the Board Affairs Committee leads a review of committee responsibilities and gives attention to governance performance
- **Monitor the Endowment:** To honor donor intent and build greater long-term endowment funds, gain an accurate understanding of which funds are donor-restricted, led by CFO
- **Process for Draws on Endowment:** The Finance Committee of the board will create a process to document more closely board decision-making about prudent endowment draws

Improve United system for student success attending to student success from admission to commencement

TASKS ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED

-

TASKS TO ACCOMPLISH THE GOAL

- **Existing Recruitment and Student Success Plan:** Continue to execute the recruitment plan and plan for student success including the following:
 - **By fall 2023**, 250+ students resulting in net tuition revenue of not less than \$1,656,958 per year being directed straight to the bottom line has been achieved
 - **By fall 2024**, 270+ students, resulting in net tuition revenue of not less than \$1,825,352 per year being directed straight to the bottom line has been achieved
 - **By fall 2025**, 275+ students, resulting in net tuition revenue of not less than \$1,880,000 per year being directed straight to the bottom line has been achieved
 - Determine and achieve the ideal number of enrolled students for long-term economic sustainability (2022-2025)
 - Implement and refine a group student advising plan in partnership with faculty and Director of Student Success: offer initial academic counseling that gives clear guidance of program expectations and works with faculty on best practices to strengthen subsequent advising
 - Building on the success of the software update that has made the student experience more user friendly and given faculty better access to student records, create a more constructive and integrated system of academic counseling

Focus on foundational structures



UNITED

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
OF THE TWIN CITIES

TASKS ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED

-

TASKS TO ACCOMPLISH THE GOAL

- **Recruit 5-6 new board members** to join the current Board of Trustees
- **Review all insurance** coverage for United and ensure that it is sufficient
- **Update job descriptions** of all board and committee positions, including annual goals or benchmarks
- **Provide clarity** for the seminary community regarding shared governance
- **Create an annual directory** of current students and employees

Improve United system for employee success to ensure a healthy eco-system in which staff and faculty thrive

TASKS ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED

-

TASKS TO ACCOMPLISH THE GOAL

- **Control Document Development:** Create foundational documents to shore up the standard operating procedures of the seminary system including:
 - **Org Chart:** Create an Organizational Chart to define reporting structure for staff, faculty, seminary committees, and task forces, including program and strategic plan alignment
 - **Evaluate Committee Structure:** Review the current committee structure for efficacy, and alignment with the current direction and/or strategic plan of the seminary
 - **Updated Descriptions:** Create written, results-based descriptions for the board and all committees
 - **Updated Job Descriptions:** Create written, results-based job descriptions for board members and all committee chairs and committee members
 - **Foundational Documents and Policies: Create and/or update:**
 - Updating by-laws
 - Conflict of interest policy
 - Whistle blower policy
 - Trustee commitment letter



STRATEGIC PLAN – STAFFING & ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STRATEGIC GOAL #3: Ensure United employees are aware of their responsibilities, sufficiently resourced, and thriving in their positions

TASKS ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED

-

TASKS TO ACCOMPLISH THE GOAL

- **Cultivate a culture of trust and professional excellence**
- **Committee Expectations:** Explore the expectations for staff and faculty committee assignments; implement and widely communicate a plan for alignment among the expectations of staff, faculty, Board of Trustees, and administration
- **Recruitment & Admissions:** Once the strategic plan and updated mission, vision, and values of United are clarified, align recruiting and admission standards accordingly
- **Faculty Additions:** To maintain United's value of full-time faculty teaching the majority of courses and adjunct faculty teaching the minority of courses and to maintain an average of 18 students per course, create a plan to add one full-time faculty position each year for the next four years



STRATEGIC PLAN - EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

STRATEGIC GOAL #4: Enhance educational opportunities for United's students

TASKS ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED

-

TASKS TO ACCOMPLISH THE GOAL

- **Foster Inclusion:** To increase student retention, create a plan to cultivate a culture of radical inclusion for those with differing belief systems
- **Renew Chapel:** To provide worship rituals that will enrich the identity of students in vocational formation, create a plan to renew chapel services that reflect the diverse traditions among United students
- **Align programmatic and denominational gaps** to move students seamlessly toward ordination. The academic advising ordination guide sheet has been updated; with oversight/assistance of Rev. Karen Hutt, develop a parallel one for APC (chaplaincy) certification; disseminate during group advising, include appendix in academic catalog, post on Student Resources page in Canvas, and share in Orientation online course (November should be complete)
 - Include assignment in Intro to Personal and Spiritual Formation which assesses student knowledge of their vocational preparation requirements
 - Continue to utilize a Development Plan assigned in Intro to Personal and Spiritual Formation to help students plan for preparation for ordination or licensure, but eliminate or modify the Development Plans as a tool requiring administrative oversight
 - Include a self-assessment and external (mentor) assessment of vocational aptitudes, skills, and goals in Internship course
- **Provide Opportunities for Continuing Education:** To strengthen United's public presence in the community and recruit students for the DMin students in Public Theology or Social Transformation, create and implement a plan for new, revenue-positive continuing education opportunities
- **Collaboration:** Create a comprehensive plan for student formation in the following ways:
 - Further develop the role of VP for Student and Community Engagement
 - Consider hiring a faculty member who integrates spiritual formation, academics, and contextual education
 - Implement a plan to foster alignment of chapel services with academic, formative, and spiritual components of the student as a whole person



UNITED

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
OF THE TWIN CITIES

STRATEGIC PLAN – MARKETING & COMMUNICATION

STRATEGIC GOAL #5: Increase community presence and tell United's story to its constituents

TASKS ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED

-

TASKS TO ACCOMPLISH THE GOAL

- **Social Media Marketing:** Develop an expanded social media plan to increase online presence to increase storytelling
 - Create marketing videos
 - Create a Why United campaign
 - Interview current students and alumni asking them “why United?”
 - Interview faculty and staff asking them “why United?”
 - Interview church partners asking them “why United?”
- **Constituent Churches and Agencies:** Create a plan to utilize partner agencies for marketing
 - Ask students speak with churches to share their story
 - Ask partner agencies to create shared social media campaigns (e.g. Instagram takeover for the day)
- **Implement the Strategy:** Based on market research devoted specifically to theological education, create a marketing and communication strategy and executable plan that speaks directly to potential seminary students as the target demographic
- **Internal Marketing Plan:** Create a process to ensure the mission, vision, and identity of United are communicated throughout the community
- **Alums Connection:** Create a plan to intentionally connect with United alums to ensure they are aware of potential opportunities



STRATEGIC PLAN – CONFRONT BIASES & INEQUITIES

STRATEGIC GOAL #6: Achieve equity within the institution

Racial equity

TASKS ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED

-

TASKS TO ACCOMPLISH THE GOAL

- **Evaluate Inequity:** Review all realms of Inequity that will include all areas of diversity
- **Representative Language:** Revise and update language in United’s diversity and anti-discrimination policies
- **Intentional Staffing:**
 - **Plan:** Create a staffing plan for seminary staff and faculty that provides an equitable opportunity to BIPOC candidates to expand the lens through which theological education and formation are seen
- **Employee Process:** Create a process for employee satisfaction, retention, and success that includes exit interviews upon faculty/staff upon departure
- **Institutional Support & Equity Building:**
 - **Reconsider Program:** Under the umbrella of the social justice program, consider a Leadership Toward Racial Justice and Black Religious Leadership Programs
 - **Institutional Support:** Consider ways to invest in faculty and staff of color. (e.g. stipends available to develop new course or initiative and/or a version of that available to any faculty to develop anti-racist curriculum)
 - **Institutionalize CARJ:** Revitalize United’s Committee Advocating for Racial Justice, creating institutional practices for all staff, faculty, and departments to consider at every level of operation

Other forms of inequity and inclusion

TASKS ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED

-

TASKS TO ACCOMPLISH THE GOAL

- **Learning Outcomes:** Revisit learning outcomes and plan to create and implement intentional anti-racist objectives, resulting in clarity surrounding anti-racist formation as a key component
- **Interview Underserved Constituency Groups:** Create a process for ongoing, intentional conversation with communities typically underserved by theological education, including examining the results of the recent CARJ survey which will yield institutional recommendations



TIMELINE FOR ACCOMPLISHING STRATEGIC PLAN

Tasks spanning 2021-2025

- **2021-2023** Develop the social capital of alums by increasing distributed information and asking for their connectivity with potential donors
- **2021-2023** Renew relationships with the philanthropic community of the Twin Cities through the Donor Engagement Officer
- **2022-2025** Relationships with family foundations have been reinvigorated
- **2022-2025** The ideal number of enrolled students for long-term economic sustainability has been determined
- **Existing Recruitment and Student Success Plan:** Continue to execute the recruitment plan and plan for student success including the following:
 - **By fall 2023**, 250+ students resulting in net tuition revenue of not less than \$1,656,958 per year being directed straight to the bottom line has been achieved
 - **By fall 2024**, 270+ students, resulting in net tuition revenue of not less than \$1,825,352 per year being directed straight to the bottom line has been achieved
 - **By fall 2025**, 275+ students, resulting in net tuition revenue of not less than \$1,880,000 per year being directed straight to the bottom line has been achieved
- **2021-2025** Building on the success of the software update that has made the student experience more user friendly and given faculty better access to student records, a more constructive and integrated system of academic counseling has been created and implemented

August 2021:

- A plan has been created to add one full-time faculty position each year for the next four years to maintain United's value of full-time faculty teaching the majority of courses and adjunct faculty teaching the minority of courses and to maintain an average of 18 students per course
- To provide worship rituals that will enrich the identity of students in vocational formation, a plan has been created to renew chapel services that reflect the diverse traditions among United students
- Cultivation of legacy giving has continued and current records are being updated in preparation for 60th Anniversary Campaign
- More generous trustee giving has been promoted at the Board of Trustees August retreat
- A group student advising plan in partnership with faculty and Director of Student Success has been designed and implemented that will offer initial academic counseling that gives clear guidance of program expectations and works with faculty on best practices to strengthen subsequent advising

September 2021:

- United's mission, values, and goals, have been clarified, ensuring that they accurately reflect the current realities and ethos of the institution
- A plan for sharing the vision through internal and external marketing has been created



UNITED

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF THE TWIN CITIES

- With input from the Board of Trustees Chair and the Interim President, a plan has been drafted to develop board capacity through a focus on work of committees and recruitment of new trustees. Intentional recruitment of the Board members understanding that the bylaws state up to 36
- A plan has been created to intentionally connect with United alums to ensure they are aware of potential opportunities
- Cultivation of legacy giving has continued and current records are being updated in preparation for 60th Anniversary Campaign

October 2021:

- A plan for sharing the vision through internal and external marketing has been implemented
- A plan has been drafted to repair the fiduciary relationship with previous and existing donors, telling the story of the newly created strategic plan and a bright future for United
- With input from the Board of Trustees Chair and the Interim President, a plan has been implemented to develop board capacity through a focus on work of committees and recruitment of new trustees. Intentional recruitment of the Board members understanding that the bylaws state up to 36
- A process to document more closely board decision-making about prudent endowment draws has been drafted
- United's recruiting and admission standards have been aligned with the revised mission, vision, values, and strategic plan
- Cultivation of legacy giving has continued and current records are being updated in preparation for 60th Anniversary Campaign
- A plan for strengthening giving societies and implementing new ones has been drafted

November 2021:

- A 5-year aspirational budget has been prepared for the expected increase in enrollment as well as desired programmatic improvements and other costs (i.e. technology, facility, and/or curriculum development)
- A plan has been implemented to repair the fiduciary relationship with previous and existing donors, telling the story of the newly created strategic plan and a bright future for United
- The Chair of the Board Affairs Committee has created a process for review of committee responsibilities that gives attention to governance performance
- A process to document more closely board decision-making about prudent endowment draws has been approved by the board of trustees
- Cultivation of legacy giving has continued and current records are being updated in preparation for 60th Anniversary Campaign
- Key conversations with potential donors have occurred and a matching gift has been leveraged
- A plan for strengthening giving societies and implementing new ones has been implemented
- Update the academic advising ordination guide sheet; with oversight/assistance of Rev. Karen Hutt, develop a parallel one for APC (chaplaincy) certification; disseminate during group advising, include appendix in academic catalog, post on Student Resources page in Canvas, and share in Orientation online course (November should be complete)



UNITED

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
OF THE TWIN CITIES

December 2021

- The Vice President for Finance and Administration has drafted a plan for more effective processes for budgeting, monitoring, and reporting financial performance, aligning revenue and expenses to reduce deficit spending
- A process to document more closely board decision-making about prudent endowment draws has been implemented
- Cultivation of legacy giving has continued and current records have been updated in preparation for 60th Anniversary Campaign
- A matching gift has been attained as a result of conversations with key donors regarding the matching gift
- A plan for procuring funding for two new faculty chairs at \$1.75 million to \$2 million each as part of the 60th Anniversary Campaign has been drafted

January 2022

- A large-scale endowment campaign to strengthen the financial health, replace recent draw on endowment, and ensure the financial viability of United has begun
- The Chair of the Board Affairs Committee has created a process for review of committee responsibilities that gives attention to governance performance
- All insurance coverage for United has been reviewed to ensure that it is sufficient
- A plan for clarity regarding the communication of shared governance to the seminary community has been drafted
- A plan to increase the number of key churches that make United a budgetary line item has been drafted
- A plan for procuring funding for two new faculty chairs at \$1.75 million to \$2 million each as part of the 60th Anniversary Campaign has been implemented
- A self-assessment and external (mentor) assessment of vocational aptitudes, skills, and goals in Internship course has been developed

February 2022

- The board of trustees has approved a plan for more effective processes for budgeting, monitoring, and reporting financial performance, aligning revenue and expenses to reduce deficit spending.
- United's Innovation Task Force has been revisited and reengaged to create and incubate a plan for innovative models to financially equip United
- A plan for clarity regarding the communication of shared governance to the seminary community has been implemented
- A plan to increase the number of key churches that make United a budgetary line item has been implemented
- A social media plan to increase online presence to increase storytelling has been expanded or developed to include things like the following:
 - Create marketing videos
 - Create a Why United campaign
 - Interview current students and alumni asking them why United?



UNITED

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF THE TWIN CITIES

- Interview faculty and staff asking them why United
- Interview church partners asking them why United?

March 2022

- The Vice President for Finance and Administration has implemented a plan to align revenue and expenses to reduce deficit spending by creating a more effective processes for budgeting, monitoring, and reporting financial performance
- Current job descriptions of all board and committee positions have been collected
- The current committee structure has been reviewed for efficacy, and alignment with the current direction and/or strategic plan of the seminary
- A self-assessment and external (mentor) assessment of vocational aptitudes, skills, and goals in Internship course has been implemented
- To honor donor intent and build greater long-term endowment funds, an accurate understanding of which funds are donor-restricted has been gained

April 2022

- Current job descriptions of all committee positions have been edited or created, including annual goals or benchmarks
- A team has been assembled to create and/or update United's board of trustees' foundational documents and policies (i.e. updating by-laws, creating a conflict of interest policy, whistleblower policy, and trustee commitment letter)

May 2022

- Current job descriptions of all board positions have been edited or created, including annual goals or benchmarks
- A plan for new, revenue-positive continuing education opportunities to strengthen United's public presence in the community and recruit students for the DMin students in Public Theology or Social Transformation has been created

June 2022

- A plan to utilize partner agencies for marketing has been created wherein United will
 - Ask students to speak with churches to share their story
 - Ask partner agencies to create shared social media campaigns (e.g. Instagram takeover for the day)
- A marketing and communication strategy and executable plan that speaks directly to potential seminary students as the target demographic has been drafted based on market research devoted specifically to theological education
- A plan has been drafted to develop the role of VP for Student and Community Engagement

July 2022

- A plan has been implemented to develop the role of VP for Student and Community Engagement