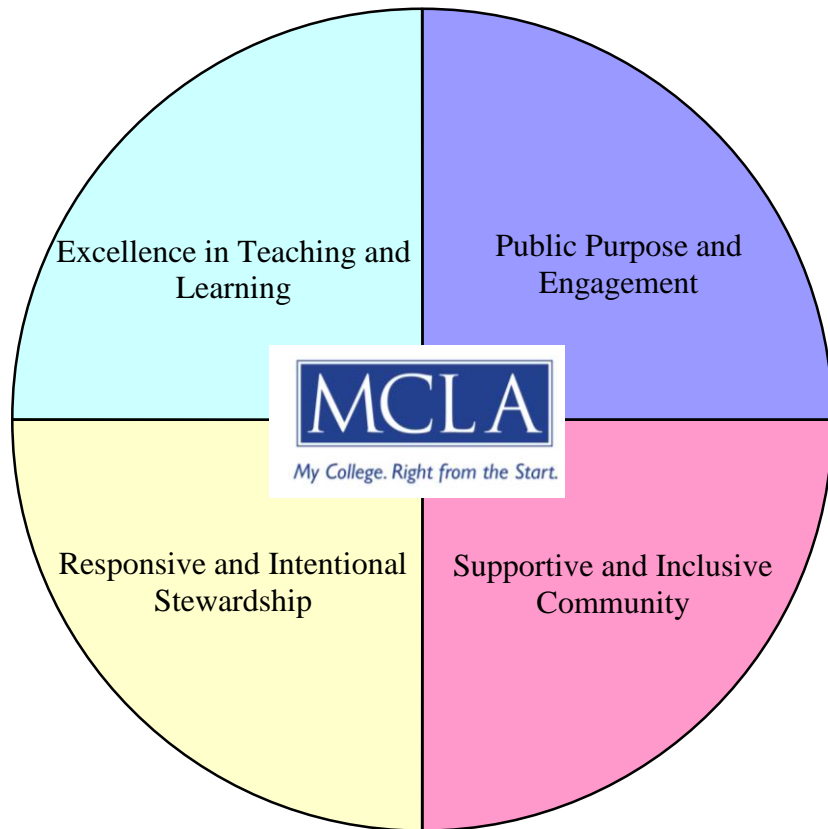




Strategic Plan



Strategic Plan Overview

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA), the Commonwealth's designated public liberal arts college, provides a transformative education in a rich and inclusive living learning environment. With a focus on academic excellence and a commitment to innovation and experiential learning, MCLA prepares students to become successful and engaged global citizens.

Goals

Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Engage students through a dynamic and transformative liberal arts education that encourages excellence, innovation, and student success in academic and co-curricular programs.

Supportive and Inclusive Community

Embrace and sustain the diverse communities that support MCLA's educational, cultural, and social environment.

Responsive and Intentional Stewardship

Secure MCLA's future through the innovative, strategic, and informed development of our human, ecological, and financial resources.

Public Purpose and Engagement

Promote and ensure access to MCLA's programs and resources and prepare students for personal and professional success over a lifetime of learning and citizenship.

Introduction

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) offers an extraordinary educational experience in a student-focused living and learning community. With an excellent academic curriculum and dynamic co-curricular programs, MCLA provides students with the skills and experiences they need to succeed in college and beyond as lifelong learners and engaged citizens.

Guided by its 2005 strategic plan, MCLA has made significant advances in fulfilling its mission as the Commonwealth's public liberal arts college. Building on this progress, the campus community, under the leadership of President Mary Grant, engaged in a systematic renewal of the plan that will elevate our accomplishments and articulate the goals that will guide the next stage of MCLA's development.

President Grant and her senior staff convened a **Strategic Planning Task Force** to advance and support the planning process during the 2010-2011 academic year. The Task Force met six times over the course of the planning process, and members were also actively involved in campus-wide input sessions and meetings. See *Appendix* for a list of Task Force members.

The planning process was designed to be transparent and inclusive and to engage the entire campus community:

- A campus-wide meeting in February 2011 gave over 150 participants the opportunity to consider MCLA's strengths, challenges, and opportunities facing the College, and to identify characteristics of the desired future for the institution .
- Nine input sessions—three each for faculty, staff, and students—were held in February and March 2011 and provided valuable and informative guidance to the plan.
- The annual campus Strategic Planning Retreat in May 2011 provided a venue to share information from the input sessions with the campus community and offered an opportunity for participants to comment on the evolving plan framework.
- Senior staff summarized the campus community feedback and aspirations into a planning document anchored by four goals.
- The plan will be shared at a campus-wide meeting in September/October (TBD) 2011, which will allow participants to again share their comments regarding implementation of the plan.

The plan articulates MCLA's mission, with four goals for moving forward, and strategies for implementing each of those goals. As implementation begins, every department across the campus will engage in the development of action plans keyed to the strategies.

As the 2005 strategic plan served as an important roadmap for moving forward, this plan sets the trajectory and provides the foundation for the next five years in the life of the institution. Like all plans, its implementation will depend on the active participation and support of every member of the MCLA community. MCLA has made significant progress since adopting the 2005 strategic plan, and it is now poised to build on the many accomplishments of that plan and move toward our collective vision of excellence.

Goals and Strategies

Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Engage students through a dynamic and transformative liberal arts education that encourages excellence, innovation, and student success in academic and co-curricular programs.

Strategies in Support of Goal

1. **Offer high quality, innovative programs and services that enhance intellectual discovery and social conscience as central to the experience and application of the liberal arts.**
 - Advance and strengthen the Core Curriculum and current academic programs.
 - Create additional programs, majors, advanced degrees, and delivery models to further the mission of MCLA, and to meet the educational needs of the County.
 - Support a culture of assessment that embraces continuous improvement and ongoing enhancement of all programs and High Impact Experiences, such as internships, service learning, undergraduate research, study away, and public lectures.
 - Encourage intentional collaboration and interdisciplinary partnerships, both internally and across departments, and externally, through means such as course exchanges, regional four college connections, and national/international programs.
 - Continue to cultivate external partnerships to ensure the ongoing viability of a broad range of service learning and internship opportunities for students.
 - Create welcoming, resource-rich physical and virtual environments that inspire study, teaching, learning, and research.
 - Continue to strengthen academic support units in their efforts to advance teaching, research, and life-long learning through campus wide collaboration.

2. Strengthen MCLA's rich co-curricular environment and leverage it to further enhance student learning and experience.

- Expect all students to participate in experiential learning, civic and co-curricular leadership, as well as specific High Impact Experiences.
- Prepare students for a lifetime of learning.
- Involve all members of the College community, including alumni, in the support and mentorship of students.
- Advance student engagement with faculty, staff, alumni, and the community to extend learning beyond the classroom.
- Develop and recruit passionate educators to teach, coach, direct, and motivate students.
- Recruit and support students who aspire to innovate, evolve, create, and experiment.

3. Invest in faculty, staff, and student development.

- Continue to develop a culture where creative, engaged, and innovative work is expected and valued.
- Support, celebrate, and promote the professional achievements of faculty, staff, and students.
- Continue to create and promote robust and supportive lifelong learning and professional development programs for faculty and staff, including scholar exchange programs and similar activities.
- Expand and enhance access to educational resources such as laboratories, instructional technology, cultural venues, and other academic resources that allow students to maximize their educational experience.
- Continue to promote and acquire appropriate technology for teaching and learning to enhance students' educational experiences.

4. Utilize integrated and innovative communication strategies to promote the value of MCLA as an institution of excellence.

- Build significant awareness about the mission of MCLA as the Commonwealth's public liberal arts college and showcase the institution's success in providing access to high quality education and student experiences that produce engaged and productive graduates.
- Emphasize High Impact Experiences and challenging academic programs as central to MCLA's distinctiveness.
- Promote the value of MCLA's involvement as one of a select group of members of the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC).
- Enhance internal communication to ensure that all members of the MCLA community understand and can articulate the institution's mission, accomplishments and strengths, and the opportunities available to students, faculty, and staff.

5. Create an environment of excellence to enhance student success and retention.

- Set annual goals as appropriate for student retention as well as progress benchmarks for 4-year and 6-year graduation.
- Expand advising initiatives to ensure all students receive proactive attention to issues that might impact their academic progress and success, including but not limited to, intentional advising, data mining to inform advising, and intentional incorporation of peer advisors into early identification efforts.
- Build and encourage strong faculty-student connections. Ensure that the infrastructure and systems are in place to provide dynamic advising, counseling, and other student services.
- Align campus activities, resources, and services to support students' achievement and persistence to graduation.
- Within the Center for Student Success and Engagement design support programs related to student success, including intentional programming to provide "undeclared" students with structured educational experiences that will serve as a catalyst for their movement into majors; continue to build peer tutoring and related academic enrichment options; and design and implement additional programs as indicated by student needs and interest.
- Engage campus resources to gather and use a variety of data to inform decision-making linked to student progress, retention and success.

Supportive and Inclusive Community

Embrace and sustain the diverse communities that support MCLA's educational, cultural, and social environment.

Strategies in Support of Goal

- 1. Provide students with a community-centered public liberal arts education that enhances their MCLA experience and prepares them to be successful global citizens.**
 - Continue to enhance the First Year Experience and develop programs and expectations across all four years to help students develop academically and prepare for successful lives and careers post-college.
 - Support students' developmental needs throughout their college career, including programs aimed at integrating and involving first year, transfer, and adult students.
 - Encourage students to pursue new academic challenges and leadership roles in the campus community.
 - Develop programs to build class and institutional loyalty among students and promote an "alumni in training" culture among students.

- 2. Create a culture that will attract, orient, engage, honor, and retain MCLA faculty and staff.**
 - Develop and nurture the traditions and culture that support individuals and groups, including such programs as convocations, sports events, arts and cultural presentations, and social events.
 - Encourage divisions and departments to provide opportunities for meaningful interaction among colleagues and peers.
 - Consider ways to broaden and enhance recognition of faculty and staff accomplishments across the campus and within the wider community.

- 3. Capitalize on the talents and expertise of faculty, staff, and students to develop and implement programs that build community.**
 - Expect faculty, staff, and students to use their talents and expertise to build community.
 - Build on existing programs to provide opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to engage in meaningful dialogue.
 - Support and encourage faculty, staff, and students to lead innovative activities that promote community.

4. Continue to build a diverse campus community across all dimensions.

- Embed an institutional commitment to diversity and cultural competence in the strategic plan and action plans.
- Emphasize diversity in employee recruitment.
- As MCLA and society become increasingly diverse, ensure that appropriate support services are in place for all members of the MCLA community.

Responsive and Intentional Stewardship

Secure MCLA's future through the innovative, strategic, and informed development of our human, ecological, and financial resources.

Strategies in Support of Goal

- 1. Create a culture of stewardship as an MCLA value that inspires us to give back and help strengthen and sustain the institution.**
 - Leverage students' commitment to the MCLA community and help them make the connection between their educational experience and their role as stewards.
 - Encourage faculty and staff to feel ownership of MCLA as an institution and embrace their role as stewards and caretakers of its legacy.
 - Strengthen the workforce through professional development opportunities and training.

- 2. Work toward environmental sustainability.**
 - Promote environmental responsibility as a core institutional value, and enhance and expand the campus sustainability committee ("Green Team").
 - Embed an institutional commitment to sustainability in the campus master plan, strategic plan, and action plans.
 - Incorporate sustainability within academic and co-curricular programs.
 - Work with local partners to create the "Berkshire Compact for the Environment," an environmental equivalent of the Berkshire Compact for Education.

- 3. Strengthen sustainable financial investment and philanthropic practices.**
 - Manage resources strategically to maximize our commitment to affordability.
 - Ensure that financial practices and investments are deliberate and focused on retaining the best faculty and staff and physical plant resources.
 - Engage alumni as key stewards of the institution by fostering experiential (mentoring) involvement as well as cultivating financial support.
 - Continue to advocate for increased support for public higher education, engaging key partners in these efforts.
 - Expand efforts to steward all funders and connect all stakeholders to the work of the College.

Public Purpose and Engagement

Promote and ensure access to MCLA's programs and resources and prepare students for personal and professional success over a lifetime of learning and citizenship.

Strategies in Support of Goal

1. Demonstrate the connection between liberal arts education and future success.

- Champion MCLA's mission and role as the Commonwealth's public liberal arts college and its essential role providing access and opportunity.
- Strengthen student learning about civic engagement, civic action, and the public good.
- Provide opportunities for informed conversations about pressing issues.
- Model open mindedness and civil discourse.
- Educate students about the relationship between the liberal arts, their experiences at MCLA, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

2. Ensure broad access to educational opportunities for all students to succeed and graduate.

- Continue to build awareness of the educational opportunities at MCLA and the benefits of a liberal arts education.
- Make sure all students are aware of their responsibility to set and achieve high educational aspirations, and of the support systems that exist to assist and guide them.
- Develop internship opportunities that engage students.
- Expand multicultural and diversity awareness programs.
- Enhance outreach to North Adams and surrounding communities and engage them with MCLA's educational and cultural offerings.

3. Promote MCLA as an innovative thought leader, convener, and partner.

- Expand MCLA's role as a convener around topics that advance the public good.
- Continue to encourage and support faculty and staff interactions with community and civic initiatives and programs.

4. Maintain access to MCLA's educational offerings.

- Ensure the seamless transition from community colleges to MCLA.

- Enhance financial aid and scholarship opportunities for students.
- Expand dual enrollment opportunities for students.

5. Encourage a spirit of service.

- Inspire, engage, and support students in service and civic work greater than themselves.
- Cultivate student leadership opportunities and developmental programs.
- Promote faculty and staff philanthropic engagement.

MCLA Strategic Planning Task Force Members

President Mary Grant

Cynthia Brown, Vice President of Academic Affairs

Charlie Cianfarini, Computer Support Services

Abbot Cutler, English/Communications

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Anne Goodwin, Biology

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Avaz Hajizadeh, Business Administration

Petra Hejnova, Political Science and Public Policy

Maureen Horak, Associate Dean of Library Services

Monica Joslin, Dean of Academic Affairs

Dr. Eugene Leibowitz, MCLA Board of Trustees

Jamie Morrison, Head Men's Basketball Coach

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