

# ENGAGING OUR MISSION

## A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR LINCOLN CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

2018 – 2020 (AN ADDENDUM TO THE 2013-2017 PLAN)

### FOUNDATIONS:

#### DEFINING VERSES

- Acts 5:29—“But Peter and the apostles answered, ‘We must obey God rather than men.’” (Seven words that still define us—“we must obey God rather than men” was the text for Earl Hargrove’s sermon “Spreading the Gospel” known as “The Preachers Are Coming” preached at an area rally Feb. 24, 1944.)
- Matthew 28:18-20—<sup>19</sup> “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (“make disciples of all nations” reminds us the Great Commission is our Great Commitment and the basis for LCU’s global heart and mission mindset.)
- Ephesians 4:11-12—<sup>11</sup> “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,” (Evangelists, pastors and teachers preparing God’s people for the work of ministry is the theological framework for LCU’s focus on the “priesthood of all believers” and “every member a minister.”)
- 2 Corinthians 10:5—<sup>5</sup> “We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,” (“we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” is the text that enlarged LCU’s educational horizon in developing a distinctive focus on worldview.)

Source: Tanner, Tom. *Verses and Voices: The Story of Lincoln Christian College and Seminary*. 2009.

#### CORE VALUES

- We believe that *our highest privilege and duty is to glorify God, serve His Son, and rely upon His Holy Spirit.*
- We believe that *the Bible is God's authoritative Word* for the Church and its study is foundational for all of Christian life, faith, and service.
- We value *authentic Christian community* that fosters Christian character, conduct, and accountability.
- We value *responsible stewardship* of the resources and talents that God provides.
- We value *Christian leadership* as vital to the ongoing mission of the Church and as fundamental to our partnership with the Church.
- We value our Stone-Campbell religious heritage and its plea for Christian unity while carrying out *God's global mission.*
- We value *students and their holistic development* in and out of the classroom.

## VISION

*A Transformational Community of Global Difference Makers*

## MISSION

*Lincoln Christian University is a Christian higher education community whose mission is to nurture and equip Christians with a Biblical worldview to serve and lead in the church and the world.*

## INSTITUTIONAL DNA

“Each of my predecessors in the President’s Office has left his mark on what is today known as Lincoln Christian University. The composite of their contributions forms LCU’s DNA:

- Earl C Hargrove’s passion for preaching,
- Leon Appel’s zeal for evangelism,
- Robert Phillips’ love for the local church,
- John Hasty’s heart for global missions,
- Charles McNeely’s pursuit of excellence in Christian higher education, and
- Keith Ray’s commitment to the centrality of a Biblical worldview and theological thinking.

I prayerfully hope that my legacy will be consistent with those elements as today I issue a call **to advance the Kingdom of God around the world in every nation and every generation.”**

--Don Green, Inaugural Address, May 5, 2015

## FOREWARD:

In 2013 the trustees, administration, faculty, and staff concluded a strategic planning process that culminated in pursuing four strategic goals. Though our mission remains the same, the context of American higher education, especially Christian higher education continues to change. As for the past four years, we believe that engaging our mission for the next four years will demand that we continue to be accessible, collaborative, focused, and responsible, but it will also demand a commitment to be innovative.

A 2017 Progress Report to the Board of Trustees showed the following progress toward goal achievement:

- Goal One (Accessible)—35% completed, 47% some progress, 16% no progress, and 2% no longer applicable
- Goal Two (Collaborative)—13% completed, 63% some progress, 21% no progress, 3% no longer applicable
- Goal Three (Focused)—32% completed, 61% some progress, 7% no progress
- Goal Four (Responsible)—23% completed, 62% some progress, 13% no progress, and 2% no longer applicable

In light progress yet to be made it was determined that we would continue to pursue the strategic initiatives beyond 2017. In 2018 a fifth goal—Innovative—was agreed upon. At the June 2018 President’s Cabinet Retreat some time was devoted to brainstorming what this might look like at LCU. During its October 2018 Board of Trustees Retreat, the trustees and President’s Cabinet conducted a lengthy “Blue Ocean Strategy” discussion which was followed

by a faculty “white board” exercise to surface both innovative academic initiatives and non-academic initiative. Following a process of prioritizing faculty and administrators agreed upon initiatives to pursue. At the August Faculty/Staff Retreat time was devoted to discussing the relevance of our strategic goals, the absence of other more pressing strategic goals, and strategic priorities and actions to be taken in pursuit of these goals. It was the consensus of the group that the strategic goals and priorities are still appropriate. Further suggestions from the group are yet to be incorporated into a Revised Strategic Plan.

## STRATEGIC GOALS:

### **GOAL ONE**

We will identify and reduce obstacles such as time, cost, geography, culture and language to make an LCU education **accessible** to more people nationally and internationally.

### **GOAL TWO**

We will engage churches and other organizations in **collaborative** efforts that will aid us in the pursuit of our mission.

### **GOAL THREE**

We will candidly assess our strengths and weaknesses and engage in **focused** initiatives that build upon our strengths, minimize our weaknesses and which we can pursue with excellence.

### **GOAL FOUR**

We will moderate all initiatives and activities with **responsible** stewardship of human and financial resources and a recognition of who we are as a Christian University as described in our statement of faith.

### **GOAL FIVE**

We will confront challenges and seize opportunities by seeking **innovative** solutions that are consistent with our global vision, our Kingdom mission, and our historic values.

## DESCRIPTION OF GOALS:

### **Goal One: Accessible**

When Jesus began his ministry, he left his home and made disciples of people where they lived. He asked his disciples to do likewise. Though people often came to hear Jesus and his disciples, the Gospel was spread by going and meeting people where they lived – geographically, culturally and intellectually.

Every prospective student faces obstacles to enrollment. To help them overcome these obstacles LCU must meet them where they live.

For some students, access is limited by geography. LCU will continue to increase online and hybrid course offerings, and will also explore implementing new physical sites in key locations. For other students, access is limited by cost. LCU will regularly re-evaluate pricing structures to ensure that we are competitive with other institutions while being fair to our own students. For a growing segment of Christ's church, access to Christian higher education is limited by language. In connection with our China Initiative, we will continue to bring students to Lincoln to teach them English and enroll them in our academic programs, but under this plan we will also translate select courses into Mandarin. This will allow Chinese students to earn credits from LCU without learning English or securing a visa to study in the United States.

Over the next four years we will take substantial time to carefully evaluate other barriers to enrollment as well as barriers to retention – all with the goal of breaking these down to make and keep an LCU education accessible to as many students as possible.

### **Goal Two: Collaborative**

Jesus' ministry was collaborative. He ministered alongside everyone from fishermen to tax collectors. His message was for men, women, children and people of all nations and backgrounds. His church today is made up of all believers, each of whom is an integral part of the larger body with an important function that cannot be fulfilled in isolation.

Everything LCU does expends kingdom resources. Working collaboratively with churches, alumni and other organizations sharpens our ideas and conserves precious resources. Every new initiative – and many existing ones – must be viewed as potential collaborative opportunities.

Over the next four years we will be working to identify churches and colleges that can be strategic partners in offering LCU programs in new disciplines or markets. We will also explore the development of ongoing relationships with churches, non-profits and businesses that would be strong candidates for internship placement and career placement for our students. Where possible, we will pursue efficiencies of scale by seeking to develop model partnerships that can be replicated with multiple partnering organizations, especially other colleges and universities.

### **Goal Three: Focused**

The Apostle Paul was a man of immense faith and talent. He could likely have taken on any ministry he saw fit, yet he took pride in his role as Apostle to the Gentiles. That is not to say that he was uninterested in other ministry, but his was a focused ministry.

LCU serves a mighty God and pursues a Great Commission. LCU cannot possibly engage Christ's church in all of its activities. We must choose carefully our initiatives and ensure that the results demonstrate the kind of excellence one would expect from activity done to God's glory.

Over the next four years, we will develop rigorous processes for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of all of our activities, but especially our academic programs. We will use these results in improved assessment efforts to sharpen what we do so that we continuously improve. We will focus new initiatives on those activities that build upon the strengths of who we are.

## **Goal Four: Responsible**

In the parable of the bags of gold, Jesus told a story in which a man left three employees in charge of his business during an absence. Upon his return, the man discovered that two of his employees had taken the money he had given them and put it to work bringing back a return on the investment. The third, however, buried the gold, neither making a profit nor suffering a loss. Upon his return, the man dismissed the third employee for failing to even attempt to put to good use that which had been entrusted to him.

God has given to LCU three precious resources: our institutional integrity as set forth in our statement of faith, the people who make up our community – students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees and many others—and the financial resources that allow us to engage our mission.

Over the next four years we will go forward with the work entrusted to us while remaining true to who we are and being good stewards of the resources entrusted to us. Thus as we move forward by expanding access in such ways as creating more online and off-site educational offerings, we will also develop and implement rigorous faculty and staff training regarding online instruction and design as well as how to provide high quality student services to those not residing at our main campus. Similarly, in order to support our progress, we will implement a technology prioritization plan as well as maintain current policies and procedures for Campus Technology. Thus the goal is not to restrain the pursuit of the other strategic goals but instead, to be certain that our pursuit of those goals makes the most of our resources.

## **Goal Five: Innovative**

Jesus concluded His parables of the Kingdom in Matthew 13:52 with the parable of the householder “who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.” Living under the reign of Jesus and seeking His kingdom on earth demands of disciples that we embrace treasures both new and old. What this means for Lincoln Christian University as we move into the future is that we will confront challenges and seize opportunities by seeking innovative solutions that are consistent with our global vision, our Kingdom mission, and our historic values.

Lincoln Christian University celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> year of service to the Kingdom of God in 2018-2019. It achieved that significant milestone in part because its leadership has been intentionally and wisely innovative through the years. To be “a transformational community of global difference makers” will demand of LCU that we demonstrate a genuine openness to new ideas for transformation and embrace creative change in the context of an ever-changing global environment.

This additional goal in no way reflects that LCU has not been innovative in the past, as evidenced by innovative academic programs and delivery modalities and faculty being innovative in teaching methodology. However, it underscores the reality that ongoing innovation will be essential for navigating the rapidly changing cultural and higher education environment in which we find ourselves.

Nor does this goal suggest that there are not innovative elements within the other strategic initiatives, especially being accessible and being collaborative. It is rather a recognition that the degree to which LCU will be innovative in the future, will be a measure of its success and a mark of its faithfulness to its historic purpose.

Unlike the other strategic goals which are primarily proactive, with specific objectives outlined for implementation, this goal calls for the development of a mindset which will respond to challenges that confront us and seize opportunities before us with innovative actions and solutions.

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

### **Goal One: Accessible**

- 1.1 Attract more students by developing more online/hybrid courses and programs
- 1.2 Equip more students by developing classrooms equipped with video technology for synchronous classes
- 1.3 Recruit more Chinese students for ELA and undergraduate and graduate programs by expanding our recruitment efforts with alumni and Christian schools in China

### **Goal Two: Collaborative**

- 2.1 Develop more partnerships for MA in Ministry/MA Residency programs by enlisting other megachurches to adopt/adapt the model
- 2.2 Network with more Christian Schools/homeschool coops for dual credit classes (LEAP courses)
- 2.3 Partner with more churches, businesses, and organizations for internships and employment of graduates

### **Goal Three: Focused**

- 3.1 Continue to develop a culture of assessment and improvement in academics
- 3.2 Develop and implement a protocol for use in assessing every program, event, and activity
- 3.3 Implement a university-wide Career Services strategy for graduates

### **Goal Four: Responsible**

- 4.1 Improve quality of and use of institutional data in decision-making
- 4.2 Implement priorities for capital improvements/deferred maintenance plans
- 4.3 Explore refinancing of debt

### **Goal Five: Innovative**

- 5.1 Develop strategic program opportunities such as BA in Worship Media Ministry, BA in Sports Management, BA-MA pathways for dual credit
- 5.2 Establish articulation agreement with Lincoln College and other universities to add strategic program opportunities
- 5.3 Expand marketing efforts through various social media