

1909–2009: Into the Second Century

The Strategic Plan for Lesley University: 2009 – 2012

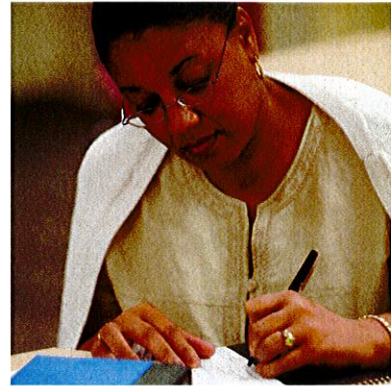


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I. Lesley University's Mission and Values

Founded in 1909, Lesley University now enrolls more than 9,000 students annually through its two undergraduate schools (Lesley College and The Art Institute of Boston) and two graduate schools (the School of Education and the Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences). The university's mission connects with Lesley's past, drives its present operations, and guides its future.

Lesley University is committed to active learning, research, artistic and cultural inquiry, and close mentoring relationships among students, faculty and practitioners in the field. We prepare graduates with the knowledge, skills, understanding and ethical judgment to be catalysts who shape a more just, humane and sustainable world.

Four core values support our mission:

Democracy: *The fundamental purpose of education in a democratic society is to provide opportunities for all to participate fully in the cultural, political and economic life of the nation and the world. These democratic ideals are reflected in an academic environment that encourages scholarship, freedom of expression and an open exchange of ideas.*

Inquiry: *Lesley University is devoted to active, transformative teaching and learning, artistic creativity, critical inquiry and individual development across the lifespan. We create and deliver innovative interdisciplinary programs, high quality instruction, research and scholarship, advocacy and outreach. The university identifies and engages with new artistic, professional and educational challenges, while extending educational opportunities that serve local and global communities.*

Equity: *We honor, value and respect all individuals and their communities for their unique backgrounds and capacities. Lesley learning communities educate students to provide educational, social, scientific and artistic services that meet the needs of diverse populations and underscore the importance of social justice.*

Community: *Learning is a collective endeavor that involves students, educators, families and communities. We believe in the power of individuals—working collaboratively—to bring about constructive change. This collective learning emphasizes personal identity and integrity as key to professional competency and effectiveness, and acknowledges each individual's relationship with local, national, global and natural communities.*

II. Lesley University in the World Today

Lesley University's 60,000 alumni, 9,000 students, and 1,000 employees seek to make a difference in education, the arts, human services and other fields in their communities and around the globe.

We are a university informed by history, motivated to make history, and willing to take calculated risks to be leaders in our fields. Our society faces challenges that are real—not academic abstractions: low levels of educational attainment; health care barriers; environmental degradation; substandard housing; the digital divide; and widening gaps in income, employment and economic opportunity. Our mission is to collaborate with undergraduate and graduate students who choose to be part of the solution to these problems.

At Lesley University, each academic program connects theory with practice, the classroom with the “real world,” the campus with the field placement, and the text with the experience. Our faculty and students are drawn to Lesley because of these connections—connections made evident in the speakers we bring to campus, our honorary degree recipients, art exhibits, service learning programs, and faculty and student scholarship.

These connections also directly influence the design and sustainability of our campus and our academic programs. Lesley's campus and programs are embedded within larger communities, including working neighborhoods and engaged communities of professional practice in the greater Boston area, in other locations among the fifty states, and around the world.

We design our curriculum, pedagogy and campus to embrace and support the community, and do this on a human scale, where faculty, students and staff know one another, respect one another, and learn together.

III. Ten Priorities for 2009—2012: An Overview

1. A Singular Focus on Student Success

Student success is our mission. Our students include traditional-age college students and adults earning bachelor and advanced degrees who complete their studies on campus, at other sites in Massachusetts, in twenty-three other states, in other countries, and online. Our students' lives are changed for the good when they earn a Lesley degree, and our society is changed for the good by Lesley graduates. This focus drives our individual and collective efforts.

We want our undergraduate and graduate students to enroll, succeed and graduate with a degree on time. We will scrutinize retention and graduation rates and assess student learning to inform plans that enhance each student's total experience. Our design and use of an e-portfolio for students will present documentation that drives institutional learning, continuous improvement and accountability. We will support this model of assessment and accountability through all levels of formal education.

2. Excellent Academic Programs

Our primary relationship with students, alumni and the larger community is through our undergraduate and graduate academic programs. We will initiate new academic programs, grow existing programs, and reconstruct or phase out some programs on an ongoing basis. These decisions are influenced by our mission, evolving social needs, and institutional expertise. We will review multiple sources of information to strengthen academic programs, enhance student learning, and promote excellence in teaching.

3. Dedicated Faculty, Staff and Administrators

Our employees' workplace is also our students' learning space; therefore, a just, creative and supportive workplace is the optimal learning space. We will invest in the professional development of employees, support faculty scholarship, recruit and retain a diverse range of employees, and engage in progressive shared governance so Lesley employees appropriately influence the future of their university.

The intellectual capital of our faculty is our most important resource. Through our faculty, we will invest in advocacy and research activities that improve our communities, our nation, and the world. We will improve our institutional ability to participate in knowledge creation and the application of that knowledge to real-world challenges.

4. Strong University Partnerships

No university is sufficient unto itself. Lesley's mission and programs are strengthened through partnerships with individuals, institutions and organizations that share our values and our enthusiasm for integrating theory and practice. We will support and promote regional, national and international partnerships that connect Lesley to other communities, foster student learning, and enhance the public good.

5. Dynamic Enrollment Management

Lesley University is tuition-dependent and enrollment-driven—similar to most colleges and universities—even with the recent growth of our endowment. We will sustain and grow enrollments through improved retention of current students and successful recruitment of new students regionally, nationally and internationally at the undergraduate and graduate levels. We anticipate opportunities to serve more adult learners at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, on campus and off campus, and to increase the number of undergraduate and graduate students from underserved populations in the greater Boston area and throughout the country.

6. Mission-Driven Technology

Technology is changing how, when, and where people learn, work, and communicate. We will integrate appropriate technologies into all programs and delivery models, including those that support face-to-face courses, supplement short-term residency courses, sustain online courses, and extend academic support services. We want every student and employee to develop the technological competencies to be successful in the workplace and as a lifelong learner. We also will use technologies to sustain our learning communities in all locations, to support our internal administrative processes, and to recruit new students and employees to this community.

7. Community-Driven Facilities

The university's physical infrastructure supports students, faculty and staff in their scholarship, teaching, learning and service. We will develop, on a sustainable basis, the university's tri-campus plan (Porter Campus, Quad Campus, and Brattle Campus), moving The Art Institute of Boston (AIB) to Porter Square, and implementing a partnership with the Episcopal Divinity School on Brattle Street—all with an eye toward building our academic community and serving the larger community in which we live and work.

8. Engaged Lesley Alumni

Lifelong learning means lifelong access to educational resources, contacts, and services. We will use digital technologies to extend educational resources, occupational information and opportunities, and professional networking to our alumni around the world. We also will engage alumni as referrals for future undergraduate and graduate students, as mentors to our students and recent graduates, and as advisors to faculty in the review of current and proposed academic programs.

9. Responsible and Visionary Management of Fiscal Resources

Effective management of our fiscal resources serves both current and future operations. In the coming years we will work with a larger endowment, expand our physical resources, and engage in a major capital campaign. We will face increasing budgetary pressures related to personnel and health care, technology, energy and program investment costs. We will need to constrain tuition and fee increases while we grow scholarship support for an increasingly diverse student body. Effective management, careful planning and clear vision are required to grow our resources, control our expenditures and fulfill our mission.

10. Comprehensive Friend-Raising and Fund-Raising

Friend-raising and fund-raising can be institution-changing. We will work with individuals and organizations who share our values, support our mission, and are willing to partner, contribute or advise. A strong, mission-driven university is not fueled by student tuition and fees alone. It is fueled as well by the spirit and generosity of alumni, friends, foundations and corporations who believe in Lesley's mission, programs, employees and graduates.

Strategic Priority 1: A Singular Focus on Student Success

- 1.1 Recruit students seeking an educational experience that intentionally integrates academic theory and professional practice.
- 1.2 Provide each undergraduate student with multiple opportunities for field placements, internships and/or community service-learning opportunities related to his/her major or professional interest.
- 1.3 Assess student learning annually in each program, moving toward implementation of an e-portfolio of student learning for all programs. Aspire to "best practice" in assessment practices that enhances student learning.
- 1.4 Involve alumni in evaluations of their academic programs through various methods, including campus discussions with each school's faculty leadership and alumni surveys.
- 1.5 Understand the student retention rate for each program within each school and, working with faculty and staff in each program, identify retention rate goals and strategies that help us meet those goals.
- 1.6 Understand the student graduation rate for each program within each school and, working with faculty and staff in each program, identify graduation rate goals and strategies that help us meet those goals.
- 1.7 Produce an annual fact book that portrays the diversity and complexity of our student enrollment, programs and employees by school and program to inform internal planning and provide consistent external reporting.
- 1.8 Support increased research opportunities for students at all academic levels.

Strategic Priority 2: Excellent Academic Programs

- 2.1 Build an academic program development center within the Office of the Provost to coordinate the creation of new programs in concert with appropriate faculty, staff and administrators.
- 2.2 Support faculty in the development of curricula that are academically sound and that reflect the complexity of the human condition—not just in the United States, but throughout the world—demographically, historically and politically.
- 2.3 Internationalize the educational experience for all students through increased opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to study abroad for a summer, a semester or a year.
- 2.4 Plan for the physical move of AIB to Porter Square by anticipating AIB programmatic partnerships with Lesley College and the two graduate schools. Consider expanded learning options at AIB for all university students.
- 2.5 Develop online bachelor's degree programs for adult learners. Expand degree (major) options for adult learners through Lesley College, AIB, and graduate courses (with clear admission requirements and academic expectations).
- 2.6 Engage in comprehensive academic programming in the two graduate schools, building upon the legacy of programs in education, the social sciences, and the arts while expanding the number and diversity of graduate programs that are available nationally through cohort, hybrid, or online delivery models.
- 2.7 Enhance the position of the School of Education as the national leader in teacher education by growing current programs, developing new programs, and creating substantive collaborations with schools and school districts in many states.
- 2.8 Develop a comprehensive university plan to offer a range of articulated undergraduate and graduate programs related to the larger topics of the environment and sustainability, and management.
- 2.9 Construct closer relationships between the university's research and service centers with related academic programs. Use each center's connection with the community to enhance our academic programs.
- 2.10 Support academic programs that use campus facilities in the summer for "low residency" sessions as part of their program delivery model.

Strategic Priority 3: Dedicated Faculty, Staff and Administrators

- 3.1 Develop a new affirmative action plan that describes clear search procedures, reports the demographic profile of the university's workforce by job category, identifies availability of underrepresented populations for each job category, and describes strategies to enhance workforce diversity at Lesley.
- 3.2 Begin a fund for staff development, administered by the Office of Human Resources and a Staff Development Committee, including an internal web site for information, applications, opportunities, and reports related to staff development.
- 3.3 Update the staff classification system so that all staff are placed in the appropriate job grade.
- 3.4 Update all staff performance programs and job descriptions; complete evaluations for all staff on an annual basis; and define a clear process for staff promotions.
- 3.5 Provide more financial support for faculty professional development, research and scholarship, and seek financial support for endowed faculty chairs.
- 3.6 Support development of faculty expertise with multiple delivery systems and the skills and supports needed to provide an engaging learning experience for every student consistent with each delivery system.
- 3.7 Consider annual increases to adjunct compensation, improving first the minimum salary earned by adjunct faculty.
- 3.8 Support all aspects of shared governance: the Student Government Association (SGA), the Faculty Assembly, the University Council, the Alumni Council and the Board of Trustees. Strengthen the mechanisms for staff to participate more fully in shared governance, and improve communication among all groups.
- 3.9 Actively solicit employee input and encourage innovation in regard to university practices, policies, and programs.
- 3.10 Working with the leadership of the university's board of trustees, develop a board that is geographically and ethnically diverse and that represents areas of expertise that will help the university fulfill its mission and enhance its reputation.

Strategic Priority 4: Strong University Partnerships

- 4.1 Build strong relationships with regional, national and international organizations that serve underrepresented and diverse populations so that their clients or students understand the educational opportunities available for them at Lesley.
- 4.2 Design our facilities to interact with the larger community, supporting both residential neighborhoods and the commercial activity of Massachusetts Avenue and Porter Square.
- 4.3 Support community service, speakers, exhibits, and programs that enhance the quality of life of the university and the larger community.
- 4.4 Support faculty and students in their connections with and contributions to communities of professional practice.
- 4.5 Continue to develop strong relationships with artists and arts organizations in the Boston area and beyond, building on the excellence of AIB and the number of Lesley programs and students in the arts.
- 4.6 Develop partnerships with foundations when their priorities are congruent with Lesley's mission, programs and plans.
- 4.7 Strengthen our relationship with community colleges so that their graduates, both adult learners and traditional-age students, consider Lesley a viable option for earning a bachelor's and/or master's degree. Develop pilot programs with key Massachusetts community colleges, other New England community colleges and community colleges in other parts of the country (e.g. our partnership with Tacoma Community College in Washington).
- 4.8 Develop undergraduate and graduate programmatic relationships with the excellent cultural institutions in the greater Boston area, including museums, libraries, and other educational, non-profit organizations.
- 4.9 Continue to build effective working relationships with school districts across the country that share our interest in effective teaching and learning, and the integration of theory and practice. Continue to strengthen our historical relationships with local and regional schools.
- 4.10 Develop more international partnerships with institutions that share our values and that will support faculty and student exchanges and curricular enhancements.
- 4.11 Identify and build relationships with partners who share our interest in the development of effective state and national policies that influence the communities we serve (notably in education, human services, the arts, and the environment).

Strategic Priority 5: Dynamic Enrollment Management

- 5.1 Grow the traditional Lesley College enrollment of approximately 700 to 1,100 students through improved retention and modest increases in the number of new students.
- 5.2 Modestly grow The Art Institute of Boston enrollment of approximately 520 undergraduates through improved retention and a limited increase in the number of new and transfer students. Grow undergraduate enrollment to approximately 600 students when AIB moves to its new facility at Porter Square.
- 5.3 Increase the number of students enrolled through the Adult Learner Division (ALD) by adding online degree programs and by providing adult students with mentoring to ensure effective use of all university resources. Consider annual growth patterns of 10%.
- 5.4 Identify strategies that continue to increase the percentage of males at Lesley College toward 40% of the enrollment of traditional-age students within the college.
- 5.5 Establish ideal enrollment targets for each undergraduate and graduate program and identify supports required to realize these targets.
- 5.6 Identify the supports required to reposition the brand of our graduate programs, increase our share of the graduate market, and balance the enrollments of the overall graduate program portfolio.
- 5.7 Use new capacity through I-Strategy to generate consistent, periodic application and enrollment reports that support planning and decision-making by admissions managers, academic program managers and the university's management team.
- 5.8 Strive to realize the complementary enrollment goals of access, quality, and diversity through careful planning and monitoring of the undergraduate tuition discount strategies.
- 5.9 Enroll more international students (undergraduate and graduate) who benefit from our academic programs and contribute to the educational culture at Lesley.
- 5.10 Review admissions responsibilities across the university to maximize efficiency and effectiveness, and ensure appropriate alignment with academic programs.
- 5.11 Develop a more effective and differentiated presence on the web to attract and inform prospective undergraduate and graduate students.
- 5.12 Reallocate marketing resources steadily from print to web and investigate new methods of electronic recruitment that match the needs of specific programs and delivery models.

Strategic Priority 6: Mission-Driven Technology

- 6.1 Establish improved and timely decision-making processes to make advances in our technological infrastructure; continuously improve the applications that employees, students and alumni use on that network; and enhance the training so that we use these technologies effectively.
- 6.2 Define the technological competencies required to be a successful student or employee in each area. Organize a system for technology orientation and ongoing training for students, employees, and alumni that is planned around these competencies and is responsive to specific needs.
- 6.3 Integrate appropriate technologies into all academic programs and delivery models, including those technologies that support face-to-face courses, supplement short-term residency courses, online courses, and extend student access to academic support services and the larger university community. Ensure that students and faculty in off-campus programs have access to the tools they need.
- 6.4 Support development of web-based course materials, information and tools for every course and learning experience at the university to enhance student learning, facilitate research and communication, and increase access to information, resources and services.
- 6.5 Begin development of e-portfolios (digital archives) that contain robust examples of student learning—portfolios that can be used for assessment of student learning, program improvements, and both internal and external accountability systems.
- 6.6 Appoint technology committees to advise on the development of technology plans and operations that support teaching and learning, academic support, student technology, administrative applications, myLesley (internal), and Lesley.edu (external). Appoint an active and informed technology advisory council that includes the chairperson of each committee.
- 6.7 Develop Lesley.edu so that it anticipates the information needs, questions and transactions of various constituents, including prospective students, prospective employees, prospective partners and friends.
- 6.8 Develop myLesley so that it promotes community, collaboration and communication among all prospective students, enrolled students, employees and alumni with announcements, a university-wide calendar, student and employee transactions (e.g. order a transcript, file for reimbursement) and links to meaningful sources of information and services.
- 6.9 Use digital technologies, including myLesley and Lesley.edu, to support a more comprehensive relationship with Lesley alumni (see Priority 8).
- 6.10 Continuously explore and upgrade the technological tools and applications that serve our students, employees, alumni and other constituents.
- 6.11 Extend wireless technology throughout university facilities.

Strategic Priority 7: Community-Driven Facilities

- 7.1 Develop and implement a campus master plan that meets program needs, represents best practices for sustainability, and enhances our neighborhoods and the larger community, especially our home in Cambridge.
- 7.2 Complete the design, funding, regulatory approvals and construction of the new Art Institute of Boston at Porter Square in Cambridge.
- 7.3 Implement the phased-in partnership with the Episcopal Divinity School, as reflected in the purchase and sale agreement and the Covenant between EDS and Lesley University.
- 7.4 Enhance classrooms, labs and studios to ensure that they support effective pedagogy and student learning.
- 7.5 Construct a new residence hall on the corner of Wendell and Massachusetts Avenue.
- 7.6 Improve the quality and accessibility of space for the Threshold program.
- 7.7 Establish information commons for faculty and students at each of the three campuses (Porter, Quad, Brattle).
- 7.8 Investigate options for development of a fitness/athletic center for the university that will enhance student and employee health, support undergraduate athletics, and support academic programs related to community health and fitness.
- 7.9 Complete the university plan to move from 630 beds for undergraduate students to approximately 1,000 beds.
- 7.10 Investigate possible opportunities to create some adult/graduate student housing.
- 7.11 Identify viable partnerships or purchases that result in quality playing fields for our D-III athletic teams.
- 7.12 Enhance information and services to assist students who want to or need to live off campus.
- 7.13 Improve physical access to all facilities, with an initial focus on Alumni Hall, Ludcke Library and White Hall.
- 7.14 Ensure that our campus is safe and secure, and offers a welcoming environment to all who live, learn, work and visit our campus by updating and communicating the university's safety and security plans.
- 7.15 Provide visible support for walking, biking and use of public transportation for all employees and students.
- 7.16 Support "green" initiatives for each building across the university, including energy and water efficiencies, recycling, and sustainability planning.
- 7.17 Establish a university-wide committee to lead Lesley's planning and participation in the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC) initiative.

Strategic Priority 8: Engaged Lesley Alumni

- 8.1 Establish a comprehensive relationship with alumni that supports their lifelong learning, employment opportunities, and their engagement in the continuous improvement of Lesley University.
- 8.2 Design and implement a new website for Lesley alumni that includes academic resources (library, academic support services), course and program information related to occupations, university information and announcements, and career planning resources.
- 8.3 Invite recent Lesley alumni to Cambridge to assess their learning experiences within particular programs and majors to support the continuous improvement of our programs.
- 8.4 Invite Lesley alumni to Cambridge to participate in policy seminars—day-long conversations about important issues and challenges related to the education of young children, the teaching profession, health services topics, the arts (in communities and schools), and more.
- 8.5 Formalize systems for alumni mentors to support Lesley graduates across the country.
- 8.6 Develop a systematic approach to engage interested Lesley alumni as recruiters of prospective students to Lesley's undergraduate and graduate programs.
- 8.7 Strengthen connections with the Alumni Council so that it advises the university about how it can better serve its alumni and how alumni can better serve their university.

Strategic Priority 9: Responsible and Visionary Management of Fiscal Resources

- 9.1 Implement an increasingly transparent and effective process for adoption of the annual university budget.
- 9.2 Consider options to reduce and simplify the number of tuition rates while maintaining competitive tuition rates for all undergraduate and graduate programs.
- 9.3 Consider a modest student technology fee to support enhanced digital access and improved technological services for all students regardless of geographic location or program.
- 9.4 Level off the AIB tuition discount between 20-25%, and the Lesley College tuition discount at approximately 35%.
- 9.5 Explore all options, including the U.S. Department of Education's "Direct Lending" program, to assure continuing availability of loan funds for students.
- 9.6 Support improved procurement processes and policies and require participation in such processes when institutional savings are likely.
- 9.7 Examine manual processes using work flow engineering analyses and automate when appropriate to provide better and more efficient services to the Lesley community.
- 9.8 Investigate opportunities to constrain high annual increases in health care costs through a greater range of health care insurance options for employees.
- 9.9 With the recently enhanced value of the endowment, develop temporary short-term and then longer-term spending policies.
- 9.10 Establish consistent "indirect rates" for all research and service centers within the university. Create budgetary models that include fiscal incentives for strong performance.
- 9.11 Establish consistent "indirect rates" for faculty grants and contracts that include financial incentives for faculty and departments successful in receiving those grants and contracts.
- 9.12 Design a financial, enrollment and personnel "dashboard" of selective data that tracks trends and our progress in meeting key strategic goals.

Strategic Priority 10: Comprehensive Friend-Raising and Fund-Raising

- 10.1 Establish and promote an organizational culture in support of private philanthropy at Lesley University.
- 10.2 Develop and administer a sustainable and effective program in support of the president's fundraising. Develop and administer a sustainable and effective annual fund; an annual employee campaign; a planned giving program; a major gifts program; and support for faculty/academic grants and contracts.
- 10.3 Develop productive relationships with donors that have the capacity to financially support students (through tuition benefits, scholarships and other means of support) in their quests for a college degree.
- 10.4 Seek scholarship funds that support undergraduate and graduate students with financial need, students with special talents, first-generation and minority college students, students with academic interests and abilities in high need areas (e.g. math and science), and students who are adult learners.
- 10.5 Counting the Doble endowment as an initial gift in the "silent phase" of a campaign, plan and initiate Lesley's "Second Century" capital campaign. Campaign priorities will include two capital projects (AIB and a fitness center); scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students; investments in faculty chairs to promote scholarship and research; support for the integration of technology into all Lesley programs; and investment in our relationship with alumni.
- 10.6 Celebrate the Lesley Centennial throughout the 2009-2010 academic year, highlighting the university's mission, its people and programs, graduates and its future.
- 10.7 Develop strong relationships with individuals and organizations that have an interest in Lesley's particular academic programs and majors.

Lesley University Board Of Trustees, 2009

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