

KNOWLEDGE INTO ACTION

A STRATEGIC PLAN
FOR GRINNELL COLLEGE
2023–2030

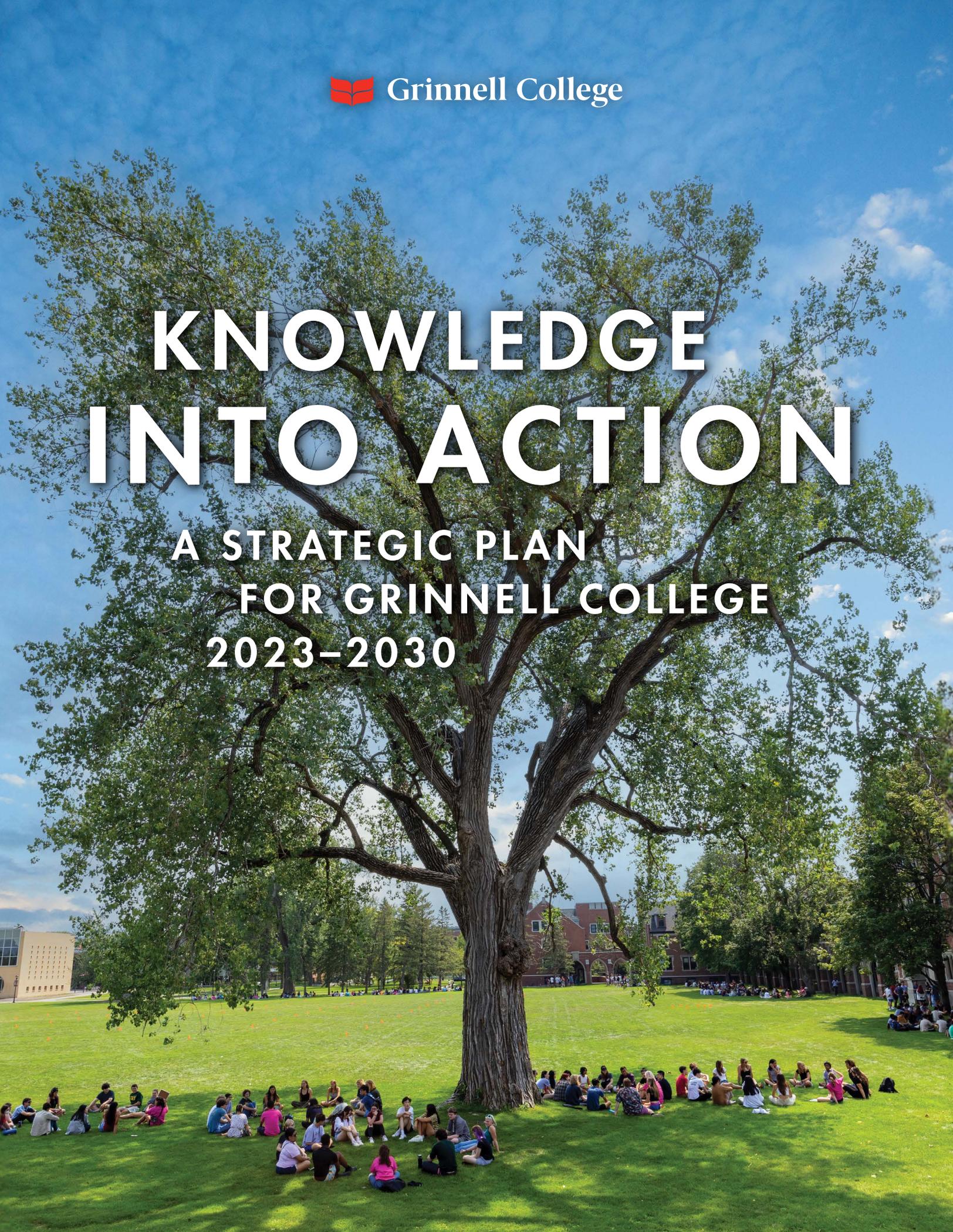


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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



“Knowledge into Action” is a strategic plan that reaches into the wellspring of our strengths as an institution of educational excellence and a source of positive change to best position us for challenging futures. Its competitive assertion is that the applied learning of a Grinnell education distinctly prepares students and constituents of the College to meet and expand the opportunities of a global college in a rural setting with a national voice.

Delineated through a communal and iterative process, four themes will guide work, energies, decisions, and resources over the coming years: **Catalyst for Educational Excellence, Belonging and Connection, Collective Equity, and Shared Goals and Common Ground.** Accountable to our current constituents’ experiences of the College, this plan also works to prepare and safeguard the experiences of future Grinnellians.

Over the course of its history, Grinnell College has come to be known as a community of inquiry with a legacy of moving knowledge into action. The next chapter of the collective biography of the College will empower educational excellence in its connections to society; it will create an environment of collaborative partnerships fostering student success; it will join the promise of equal access to the experiences of equitable outcomes; and it will build coalitions to amplify the voices and positive impact of Grinnellians in the world today and that to come – safeguarding the inter-generational equity of the institution and its mission to serve the common good.



I invite you to see yourself, and your hopes and ambitions for this College, in the pages that follow, and to join your energies and resolve to “Knowledge into Action” as it strengthens collaboration and discovery for positive change in the institution and the world it shapes.

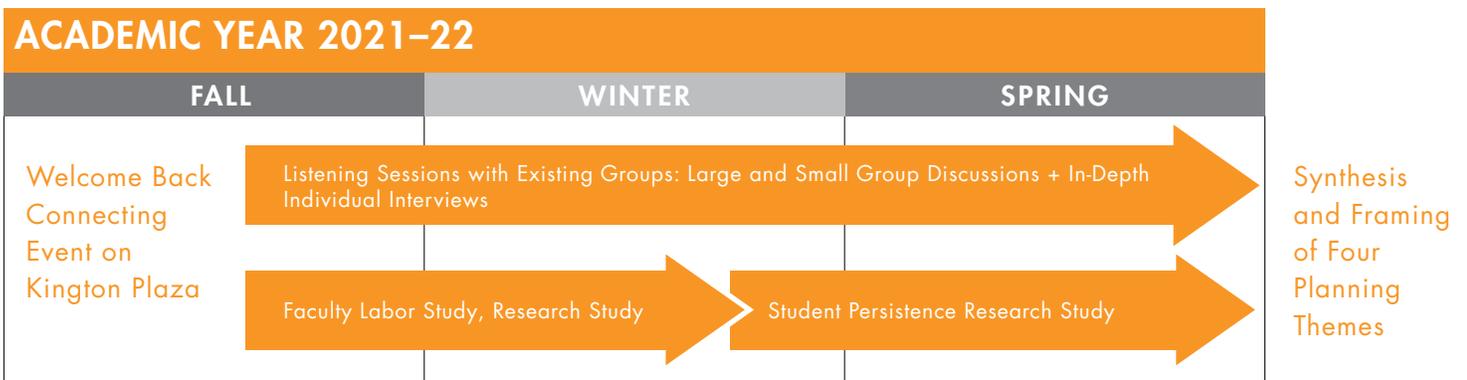
Anne F. Harris
President

TIMELINE AND PROCESS

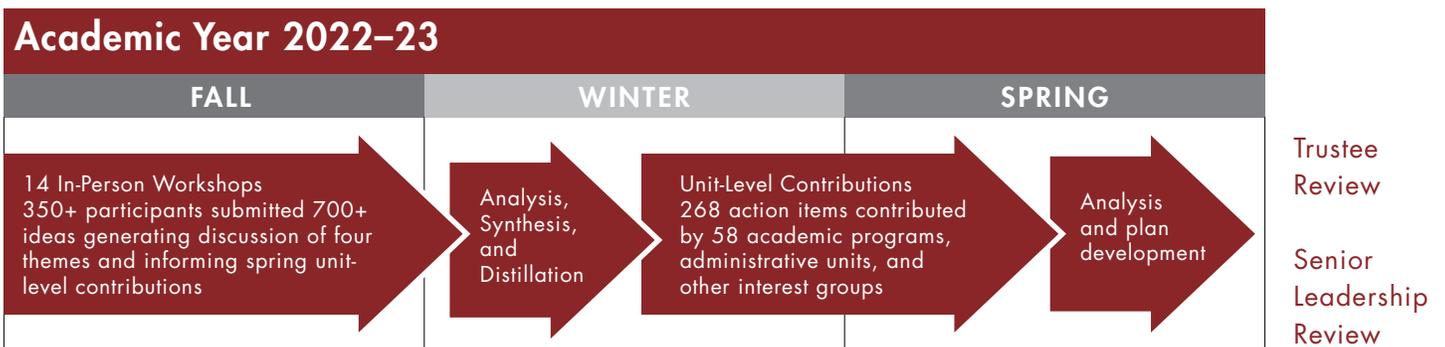
OPENING THE DISCUSSION



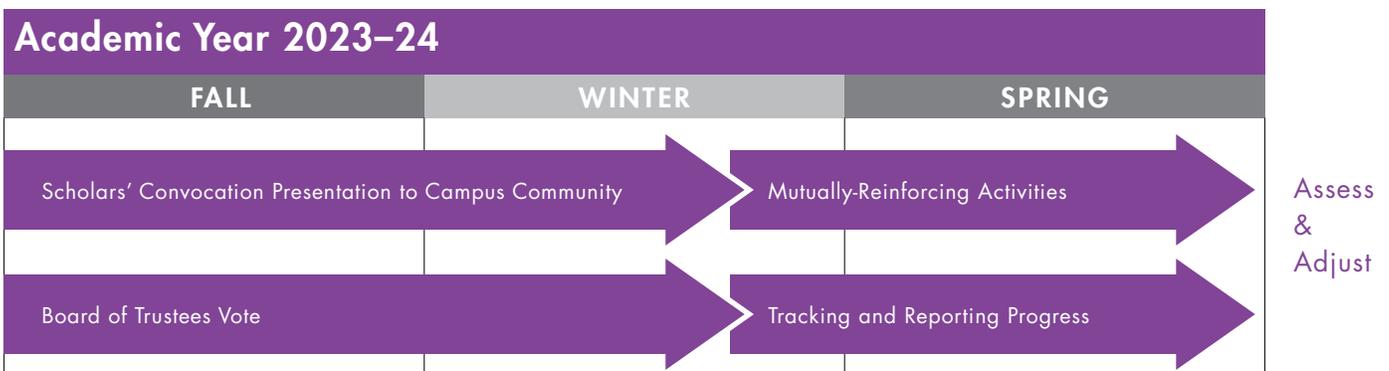
LISTENING AND FRAMING



COLLECTIVE DELIBERATION: FROM LISTENING TO PLAN



IMPLEMENTATION



MISSION AND VALUES OF GRINNELL COLLEGE

MISSION

When Grinnell College framed its charter in the Iowa Territory of the United States in 1846, it set forth a mission to educate its students “for the different professions and for the honorable discharge of the duties of life.” The College pursues that mission by providing an education in the liberal arts through free inquiry and the open exchange of ideas. As a teaching and learning community, the College holds that knowledge is a good to be pursued both for its own sake and for the intellectual, moral, and physical well-being of individuals and of society at large. The College exists to provide a lively academic community of students and teachers of high scholarly qualifications from diverse social and cultural circumstances. The College aims to graduate individuals who can think clearly, who can speak and write persuasively and even eloquently, who can evaluate critically both their own and others’ ideas, who can acquire new knowledge, and who are prepared in life and work to use their knowledge and their abilities to serve the common good.

VISION

That the College be an agent of civic trust, moving knowledge into action for a more just and equitable society.

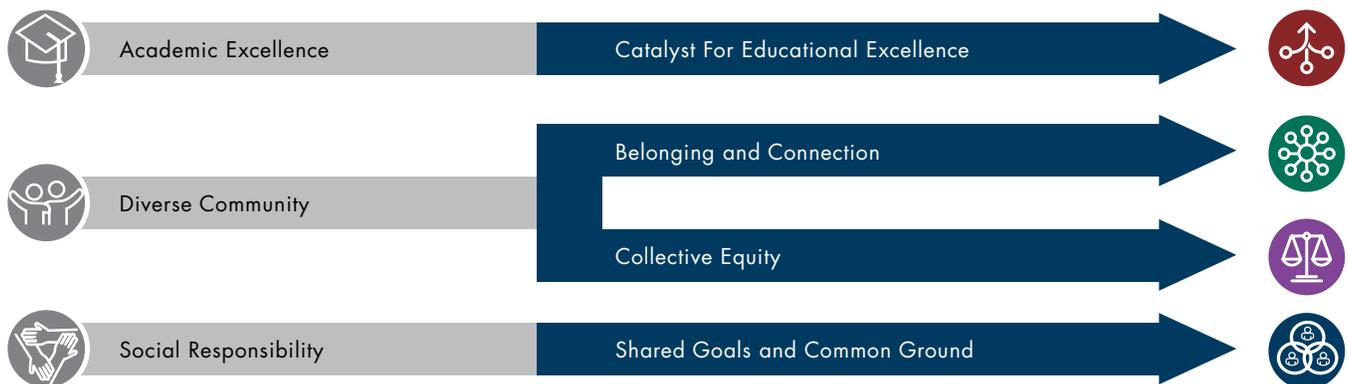
How the mission drives the vision



Moving knowledge into action for a more just and equitable society

VALUES

Educational excellence, diverse community, and social responsibility



KNOWLEDGE INTO ACTION WILL
EMBOLDEN AND FULFILL WHAT IT MEANS
TO GO FORTH, GRINNELLIAN BY:

- empowering educational excellence in its connections to society
- creating an environment of collaborative partnerships fostering student success
- joining the promise of equal access to the experiences of equitable outcomes
- building coalitions to amplify the voices and positive impact of Grinnellians in the world

while safeguarding the intergenerational equity of the institution and its enduring mission to serve the common good.



Knowledge into Action is a strategic plan that strengthens collaboration and discovery in the institution and the world it shapes.



Academic Excellence

CATALYST FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Greater engagement with meaningful intellectual and developmental experiences through teaching and learning that equip individuals for positive change.

OBJECTIVES

Students have coordinated curricular and co-curricular engagement with experiential and applied learning, global study, mentored research, or internships.

Faculty members have the time and resources to fully explore and create knowledge.

Staff members have clear career paths and the opportunities and support to pursue professional development.



A Diverse Community

BELONGING AND CONNECTION

More authentic and lasting connections with Grinnell and with each other in spaces and experiences that facilitate intellectual, experiential, and social communities.

OBJECTIVES

Strengthen student recruitment, persistence, and retention, closing demographic gaps.

More faculty and staff participate in interdepartmental collaboration, more effective partnerships, and inclusive and sustainable governance.

Alumni experience more communal and philanthropic engagement with Grinnell.

COLLECTIVE EQUITY

More equitable thriving through valued lived experiences supported by collective actions that foster success and well-being for all identities.

OBJECTIVES

The College makes changes that foster the thriving and success of individuals of BIPOC, FGLI, LGBTQIA+, religious, and disability identities.

Create a culture of work for students, faculty, and staff that is sustainable and fulfilling.

Financial stewardship that is prepared to meet the needs of the educational mission and those of the faculty, staff, and students who sustain it for generations.



Social Responsibility

SHARED GOALS AND COMMON GROUND

Grinnell College is better known as a trusted partner and a destination for coalition building through living, learning, and working across difference, in community, and for the common good.

OBJECTIVES

Increased recognition for community engagement and impact among internal and external stakeholders.

Grinnellians have a stronger voice in the multi-racial and multicultural democracy of the United States within its global setting.

Grinnell's campus planning, institutional policies, and external partnerships demonstrate a deepened stewardship of our environment.



CATALYST FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Greater engagement with meaningful intellectual and development experiences for teaching and learning that equip individuals for positive change.

OBJECTIVE 1: Students have coordinated curricular and co-curricular engagement with experiential and applied learning, global study, mentored research, or internships.

Potential actions for future implementation include:

- 1-1 Create interdisciplinary curricular and co-curricular opportunities to build small-scale courses and programs that engage big questions (e.g., energy, identity, health).
- 1-2 Integrate High Impact Practices (HIPs) into college-wide learning outcomes to assist with student developmental planning, advising, and institutional accountability for equity.
- 1-3 Expand Global Grinnell through global study opportunities, participation, and engagement.
- 1-4 Implement a program in Office of Admission to attract and support coalition builders.

OBJECTIVE 2: Faculty members have the time and resources to fully explore and create knowledge.

Potential actions for future implementation include:

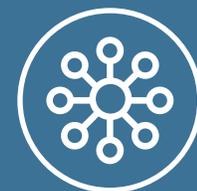
- 2-1 Develop interdisciplinary connections across the faculty to build innovative curriculum possibilities that are relevant to students as they encounter the world now.
- 2-2 Design a program of teaching fellows to give faculty time and resources to devote to innovative teaching and pedagogy.
- 2-3 Consider the matter of the liberal arts across multiple disciplines, making institutional and multidisciplinary connections between the Sciences, Humanities, and Social Studies.
- 2-4 Expand internal research development programming and software tools.

OBJECTIVE 3: Staff members have clear career paths and the opportunities and support to pursue professional development.

Potential actions for future implementation include:

- 3-1 Design opportunities for staff development to contribute to the College's mission and learning outcomes.
- 3-2 Develop a leadership program for new and current staff members to develop leadership skills, experience, and cross-divisional and community knowledge.
- 3-3 Create a staff mentoring program.
- 3-4 Design developmental support for the staff that engage with teaching and classroom support.





BELONGING AND CONNECTION

More authentic and lasting connections with Grinnell and with each other in spaces and experiences that facilitate intellectual, experiential, and social communities.

OBJECTIVE 1: Strengthen student recruitment, persistence, and retention, closing demographic gaps.

Potential actions for future implementation include:

1-1 Reinvent a residential experience and student programming that provide tools and opportunities to build community, develop self-understanding, and establish collaborative relationships across difference.

1-2 Build a culture of recognition to celebrate positive contributions to campus and community.

1-3 Support and promote athletic identity, spectatorship, and participation across different types of events (competition, intramurals, recreation) within an institutional vision for athletic excellence to attract qualified students who are competitive athletes.

1-4 Expand the Laurel Scholars program with a focus on highly qualified, historically excluded students in multiple cities.

1-5 Plan a library renovation that brings together campus partners in a student-centered space for community academic success.

OBJECTIVE 2: More faculty and staff participate in interdepartmental collaboration, more effective partnerships, and inclusive and sustainable governance.

Potential actions for future implementation include:

2-1 Support opportunities for curricular and co-curricular unit collaborations led by faculty and staff for student programs.

2-2 Create clarity to start conversations between staff and faculty about how to experiment with and pilot ideas so that curriculum and programming remain dynamic in the face of changing student expectations, experiences, and identities.

2-3 Continue to increase visibility and voice of staff in institutional life.

OBJECTIVE 3: Alumni experiences more communal and philanthropic engagement with Grinnell.

Potential actions for future implementation include:

3-1 Work and create outreach to increase engagement of alumni of color and affinity groups.

3-2 Endow financial aid to support no-loan program and other financial aid programs in perpetuity.

3-3 Evaluate existing programming that uplifts alumni/donor and student relationships and celebrates donors of financial aid and other scholarships and opportunities through expanded collaborations between Careers, Life, and Service (CLS), Development and Alumni Relations (DAR), and academic departments and centers (e.g., the Wilson Center, the Institute for Global Engagement).





COLLECTIVE EQUITY

More equitable thriving through valued lived experiences supported by collective actions that foster success and well-being for all identities.

OBJECTIVE 1: The College makes changes that foster the thriving and success of individuals of BIPOC, FGLI, LGBTQIA+, religious, and disability identities.

Potential actions for future implementation include:

- 1-1 Expand the curriculum and programming to include classes and events that connect with multiple and intersecting identities.
- 1-2 Develop and invest in cultural centers and programming (e.g., Black Cultural Center, Disability Cultural Center).
- 1-3 Provide interventions to attract and retain diverse faculty and staff candidates with parallel focus on cultural/climate assessment to increase likelihood of recruitment and retention.
- 1-4 Build and strengthen relationships with local and regional indigenous groups, recruiting indigenous/native students.
- 1-5 Build identity-based peer mentoring programs for majors and concentrations.

OBJECTIVE 2: Create a culture of work for students, faculty, and staff that is sustainable and fulfilling.

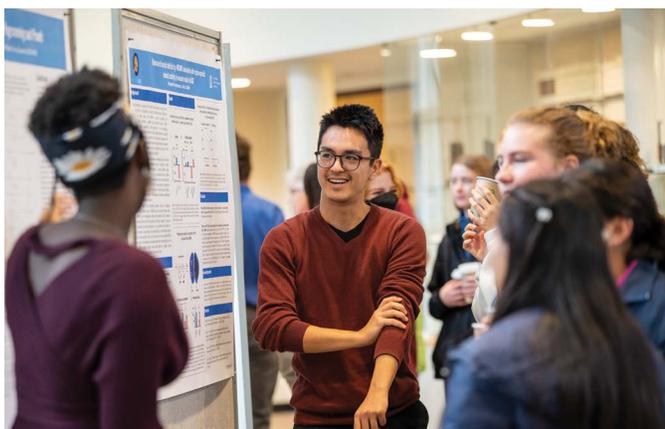
Potential actions for future implementation include:

- 2-1 Build a shared understanding among campus constituents and leadership regarding the compatibility of data/cyber security and the academic mission of the College.
- 2-2 Continue to support restorative practices.
- 2-3 Redefine measures of success and examine rigor in the academic experience.
- 2-4 Increase and assess employee wellness initiatives.

OBJECTIVE 3: Financial stewardship that is prepared to meet the needs of the educational mission and of the faculty, staff, and students who sustain it for generations.

Potential actions for future implementation include:

- 3-1 Create endowments for curricular and co-curricular programming based on an understanding of praxis work (theory-informed practice: knowledge into action).
- 3-2 Continue to develop financial aid policies that provide equitable access to a Grinnell education.
- 3-3 Focus on and develop sustainable and varied revenue streams.
- 3-3 Identify long-term ways to reduce endowment dependency – Reduce Endowment Dependency (RED) Initiative.



SHARED GOALS AND COMMON GROUND



Grinnell College is better known as a trusted partner and a destination for coalition building through living, learning, and working across differences, in community and for the common good.

OBJECTIVE 1: Increased recognition for community engagement and impact among internal and external stakeholders.

Potential actions for future implementation include:

- 1-1 Support community building programs and community dialogue, with Renfrow Hall as a focus and inspiration and the Civic Innovation Pavilion as a place to gather.
- 1-2 Continue to support community engagement coursework and course development, and recognition of this teaching and research in faculty portfolios.
- 1-3 Further develop Physical Education, Athletics and Recreation (PEAR) and the performing arts in Bucksbaum and other creative spaces, such as the MakerSpace downtown, to build community.
- 1-4 Reflect on and expand the ways the College fosters community partnerships on multiple scales: local, regional, statewide, and national, involving alumni and friends of the College.

OBJECTIVE 2: Grinnellians have a stronger voice in the multi-racial and multicultural democracy of the United States within its global setting.

Potential actions for future implementation include:

- 2-1 Expand existing structures and resources for coalition building and community building across and within difference, building on restorative practices, community dialogue, and the spaces for dialogue and collaboration of Renfrow Hall.
- 2-2 Support a culture of pilot initiatives and timely assessment to promote creativity and collaboration for societal challenges.
- 2-3 Leverage coverage of Grinnell College National Poll and other work in public scholarship by national outlets to engage national conversations.

OBJECTIVE 3: Grinnell's campus planning, institutional policies, and external partnerships demonstrate a deepened stewardship of our environment.

Potential actions for future implementation include:

- 3-1 Rethink the college landscape design and maintenance; foster a land ethic that centers biodiversity and sustainability and how the Grinnell community honors its debt to native peoples in the Midwest.
- 3-2 Bring together faculty, staff, and students around topics in environmental studies, engaging the Center for Prairie Studies and other campus partners to increase connections between the College and community partners and agricultural business and policy leaders.
- 3-3 Discuss and support indigenous stewardship, contingent on commitment to and interest from the Meskwaki Nation.
- 3-4 Explore a one-year Conrad Environmental Research Area (CERA) post-baccalaureate program and/or scholar-in-residence program to support community outreach, environmental education, research, monitoring, and land management.



MEASURES OF SUCCESS

These measures are subject to revision throughout the duration of the strategic plan.

GRINNELL AS CATALYST

OBJECTIVE 1-1: Students have coordinated curricular and co-curricular engagement with experiential and applied learning, global study, mentored research, or internships.

1. Increased overall participation in one or more High-Impact Practices (goal of 100%), disaggregated by student demographics
2. Increased participation in internships, disaggregated by student demographics and location (e.g., local, international, etc.)
3. Increased percentage participation in semester-long study abroad, disaggregated by student demographics
4. Increased participation in course-embedded travel, disaggregated by student demographics
5. Increased participation in service-learning/community engagement courses, disaggregated by student demographics
6. Student engagement in Centers' activities (e.g., Wilson Center HackGC competition)
7. Establish tracking of, and improvement in, advising ecosystem per the Higher Learning Commission quality initiative
8. Increased philanthropic support for sustainably funding equitable access to High Impact Practices
9. Increased number of majors requiring one or more High Impact Practices as a graduation requirement

OBJECTIVE 1-2: Faculty members have the time and resources to fully explore and create knowledge.

1. Greater equity in distribution of faculty teaching load, by department, division, rank, and demographics
2. Greater equity in distribution of faculty advising load, by department, division, rank, and demographics
3. Increased philanthropy to support knowledge creation (including added/endowed tenure-track lines)
4. Track student-to-faculty ratios by department, division
5. Number of published scholarly articles, books, book chapters, and public resources
6. Improved climate measured via Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) faculty survey
7. Formalized tracking of faculty service that includes previously unseen or unrecognized service, disaggregated by demographic, department/division, and rank

OBJECTIVE 1-3: Staff members have clear career paths and the opportunities and support to pursue professional development.

1. Professional development/continuing education budget utilization
2. Utilization of internal development opportunities such as GLADIS and summer learning series
3. Tracking of and increase in internal promotions
4. Formalized tracking of college-supported professional development opportunities
5. Documented development of clear career progression pathways within departments and divisions (e.g., admission and financial aid ladder) — list of competencies necessary should a position become available
6. Track access to professional development/continuing education budget lines
7. Improved climate measured via HERI staff survey/HR staff engagement survey
8. Improved retention in identified high-turnover areas

BELONGING AND CONNECTION

OBJECTIVE 2-1: Strengthen student recruitment, persistence, and retention, closing demographic gaps.

1. Close demographic gaps in persistence and retention
2. Increased second-to-third year retention rate
3. Increased third-to-fourth year retention rate
4. Increased four-year graduation rate
5. Increased six-year graduation rate
6. Assessment of residential experience
7. Develop and track Student Belonging Index

OBJECTIVE 2-2: More faculty and staff participate in interdepartmental collaboration, more effective partnerships, and inclusive and sustainable governance.

1. Increased number of interdepartmental team-taught courses
2. Increased number of inter- and intra-departmental projects
3. Staff participation in institutional initiatives such as search committees and the First Year Experience (FYE) course
4. Tracking and evaluation of cross-divisional initiatives that span the curriculum and co-curriculum
5. Identify and implement cross-divisional technology solutions

OBJECTIVE 2-3: Alumni experience more communal and philanthropic engagement with Grinnell.

1. Demonstrated progress in achieving public fundraising campaign goal supporting the highest priorities of the College as outlined in the strategic plan and feasibility study
2. Increased alumni participation in events on campus, off campus, and virtual
3. Increased alumni giving retention
4. Increased average alumni dollars raised
5. Increased alumni acquisition
6. Increased alumni event engagement, disaggregated by affinity group

COLLECTIVE EQUITY

OBJECTIVE 3-1: The College makes changes that foster the thriving and success of individuals of BIPOC, FGLI, LGBTQIA+ , religious, and disability identities.

1. Closed retention/graduation disparities between demographic groups among students and retention disparities among faculty and staff
2. Improved campus climate for diversity, as measured by National Assessment of Collegiate Campus Climate (NACCC) or other assessments
3. Increased representation in the faculty and staff bodies
4. Survey data collection and assessment (e.g., Microsurvey, Thriving Quotient, Sense of Safety on Campus)

OBJECTIVE 3-2: Create a culture of work for students, faculty, and staff that is sustainable and fulfilling.

1. Staff vacation utilization
2. Established process for ongoing data collection on workload (e.g., microsurvey for faculty/staff, student time assessment)
3. Improved academic climate metric in National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
4. Improved workplace data in the HERI survey for faculty and staff

OBJECTIVE 3-3: Financial stewardship that is prepared to meet the needs of the educational mission and those of the faculty, staff, and students for generations.

1. Achieve goals of comprehensive campaign across all strategic focus areas of the College
2. Established process for tracking and reducing duplication and other barriers to work effectiveness
3. Established process for evaluating and sunseting programs/initiatives
4. Track revenue streams and meet appropriate goals
5. Increased philanthropy for scholarships and financial aid
6. Meet goals associated with the Reduce Endowment Dependency (RED) Initiative

SHARED GOALS AND COMMON GROUND

OBJECTIVE 4-1: Increased recognition for community engagement and impact among internal and external stakeholders.

1. Established policies that recognize community-based teaching, service, and research
2. Public participation in college public offerings and events
3. Become recognized as a Carnegie Community-Engaged Campus
4. Increased participation in constituent community engagement activities (student, faculty, staff, alumni), disaggregated by demographics and location (local, international, etc.)
5. Measures of economic impact

OBJECTIVE 4-2: Grinnellians have a stronger voice in the multi-racial and multicultural democracy of the United States within its global setting.

1. News mentions of Grinnell community engagement in a multicultural context (e.g., local and national publicity for engagement)
2. Increased visibility for Grinnell College National Poll
3. Increased participation in, and recognition of, faculty/staff public scholarship
4. Tracking of, and increased participation in, faculty/staff professional service and thought-leadership through elected, appointment, and volunteer leadership positions
5. Tracking of events held at Grinnell by external organizations

OBJECTIVE 4-3: Grinnell's campus planning, institutional policies, and external partnerships demonstrate a deepened stewardship of our environment.

1. Tracking of, and increase in, external partnerships toward environmental stewardship
2. Increased partnerships and relationships with indigenous nations
3. Decreased natural gas consumption
4. Increased use of renewable energy sources
5. Decreased water usage
6. Decreased waste production (through established recycling and composting programs)
7. Progress toward net zero carbon emissions
8. Decreased carbon footprint

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Loyal Terry '23
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Fernando Villatoro '22
Molly Nelson '21
Kate Kwasneski '21
Ashton Avelin '22

Members of Executive Council and Staff Council for the many sessions that hosted strategic planning presentations and discussions over the past two years

Executive Council

Clark Lindgren, chair of the faculty
Tamara Beauboeuf
Ed Cohn
Tim Dobe
Kelly Herold
Angelo Mercado
Vida Praitis
Gemma Sala
Lee Sharpe
Andi Tracy

Staff Council

Ben Coopridger, co-chair
Alexis Steele, co-chair
Micho Adler
Rachel Arsenault
Gina Donovan
Allison Haack
Erika Jack
Carrie Jones
Randye Jones
Sarah Smith
Terri Stark
Carissa Tigges

The readers of the “Common Good” strategic principles essays, the audiences of the “Once and Future Grinnell” podcast in 2021, and the faculty and staff participants in the spring 2021 town halls.

The faculty, staff, and students who attended the 10 open sessions, as well as the alumni, parents and families, trustees, and community leaders who attended the sessions specially designed for them.

The Trustees of Grinnell College, for their engagement, creativity, and support of all things Grinnell.



The knowledge we discern, the actions we take, the times we speak up, the initiatives we undertake, the resources we budget, the deliberations we engage, the futures we dream all shape those of our peers, our colleagues, our friends, our visitors, and our many interlocutors. We are, like to a democracy, simultaneously inhabitants and stewards of this College: as we live and work here, we shape the shared experiences and thus the future of Grinnell College and the society it shapes.

– President Anne F. Harris, inaugural address, May 7, 2022



**Grinnell
College**

grinnell.edu/strategicplan