



# STRATEGIC PLAN

LINDENWOOD 2026: ADAPT, BUILD, ENGAGE  
(FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026)

# MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

LINDENWOOD 2026: ADAPT, BUILD, ENGAGE

Building on nearly 200 years of innovative teaching and learning, Lindenwood University is committed to providing a world-class education that is accessible and affordable.

## THE NEXT GREAT LEARNER-CENTRIC UNIVERSITY

LINDENWOOD 2026: ADAPT, BUILD, ENGAGE



## OUR MISSION

Real Experience. Real Success.

Enhancing lives through quality education and professional preparatory experiences.

## OUR VISION

The Next Great Learner-Centric University

Delivering comprehensive student-centric learning and engagement through innovative, relevant, and forward-thinking academic and experiential programs.

## OUR VALUES

- We put our students first
- We thrive together
- We do what's right
- We have grit



Our strategy is to serve “The New Majority,” a diverse and growing student population, by creating a lifelong-learning ecosystem that adapts to their evolving educational needs.

## “THE NEXT GREAT LEARNER-CENTRIC UNIVERSITY”

By 2026, Lindenwood will grow to 12,000 students

by offering lifelong, learner-centric education to “New Majority” students

through a learning ecosystem that anticipates what learners need

and delivers it when and how they need it.



Objective  
(Ends)



Scope  
(Domain)



Advantage  
(Means)

# THE NEW MAJORITY

LINDENWOOD 2026: ADAPT, BUILD, ENGAGE

The New Majority includes adult students, students of color, military families, and first-generation students. They are average to above-average learners looking for accessible, quality higher education at an affordable price.

## STUDENTS OF COLOR



46% of public-school students in the United States are from diverse backgrounds

## FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS



40% of college students are the first in their families to attend college

## ADULT STUDENTS



40 million adults have some college but no degree or credential

## MILITARY FAMILIES



Over 1 million veterans receive GI Bill benefits (80% are enrolled full time)

The New Majority expects colleges to anticipate what they need and deliver it when and how they need it. This requires Lindenwood to take a more “learner-centric” approach.

## EXPECTATIONS HAVE CHANGED

Gen Z learners want shorter, less expensive, more direct-to-career pathways in high-demand industries.

Question the Quo, 2022

Nearly 75% of college students are “nontraditional,” defined as over 25, often with full-time jobs (59%) and children of their own.

The Hechinger Report, 2022

More learners want online education and experts predict online students will make up 25% of all college students within five years.

Education Dynamics, 2022

Today’s learners expect proactive outreach and a simplified and streamlined enrollment process through their smart phones.

Chronicle of Higher Education, 2022

Employers increasingly tout their willingness to “train on the job,” with 50% of IBM’s U.S. job openings not requiring a college degree.

Gallup, 2021

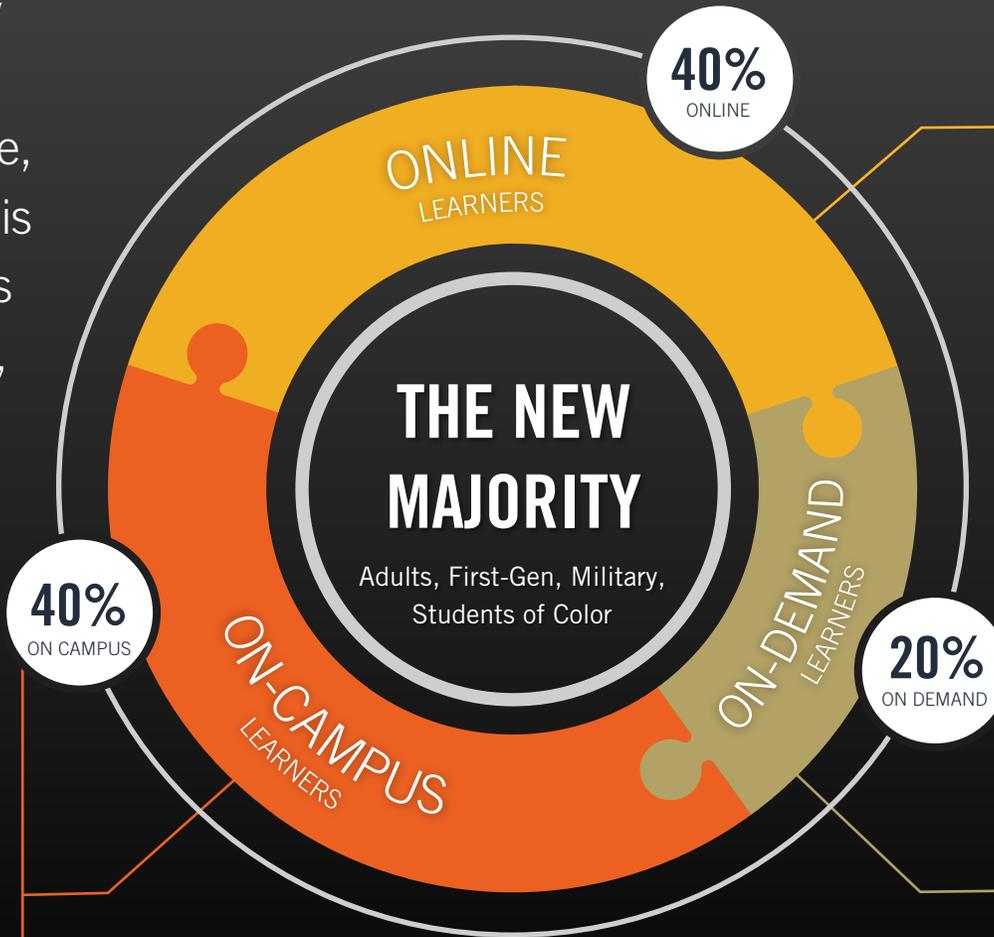
40 million adults have some college but no degree or credential. 678,566 of these adults live in Missouri. 1.94 million live in Illinois.

National Student Clearinghouse, 2023

# STRATEGIC APPROACH

To meet the evolving needs of The New Majority, Lindenwood will diversify its academic offerings and services around three learner types: on campus, online, and on demand.

Our “40-40-20 plan” strategically diversifies our academic portfolio with 40% on campus, 40% online, and 20% on demand options. This approach aims to directly address learner concerns about the value, relevance, flexibility, and cost of their education.



Online learners want degree pathways that provide the speed, flexibility, and accessibility to fit into their already busy lives. They are cost-sensitive and prefer all their courses and interactions to be online.

Acquisitions play a key role in growing our “40-40-20” academic offerings.

On-campus learners value a traditional campus experience that offers multiple learning modalities leading to a degree. These learners are either commuting to or living on campus and see the campus as their home base.

On-demand learners want instant access to non-degree education to help them make progress toward acquiring a specific skill or career outcome. On-demand learners include those with and without college degrees.

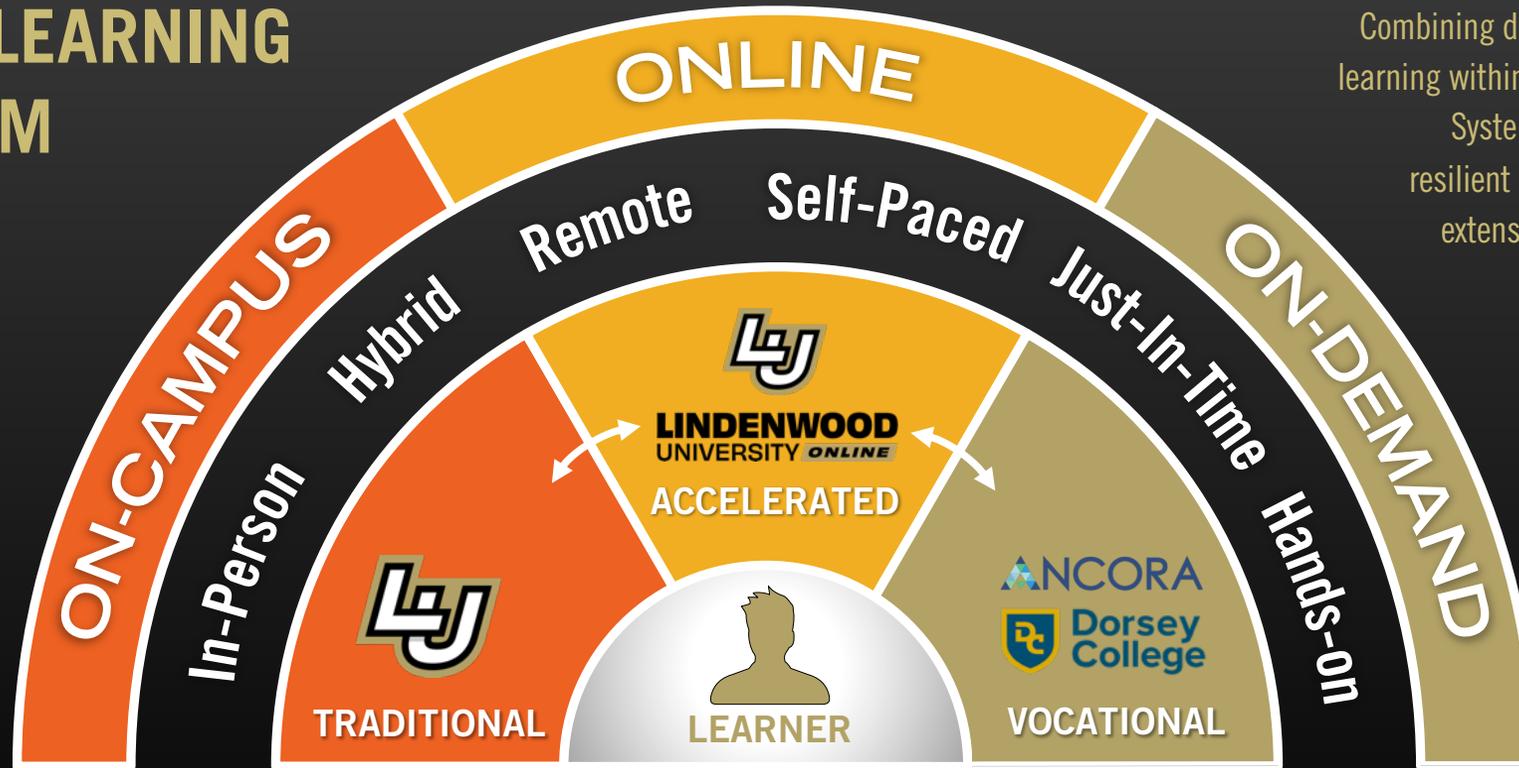
VALUE, RELEVANCE, FLEXIBILITY, COST

# STRATEGIC APPROACH

As our strategy evolved, in 2022, we developed the Lindenwood Education System, enabling us to acquire institutions with minimal disruption. With the acquisition of Dorsey College in 2023, our lifelong-learning ecosystem began to take form with Lindenwood Online playing a key role in developing online pathways for adult learners. We foresee the contraction of the higher education market leading to three types of sustainable universities: tier one intuitions, scalable online universities, and dynamic learning ecosystems, like the Lindenwood Education System.

## LIFELONG-LEARNING ECOSYSTEM

“COMBINE TO COMPETE”  
ACQUISITION STRATEGY

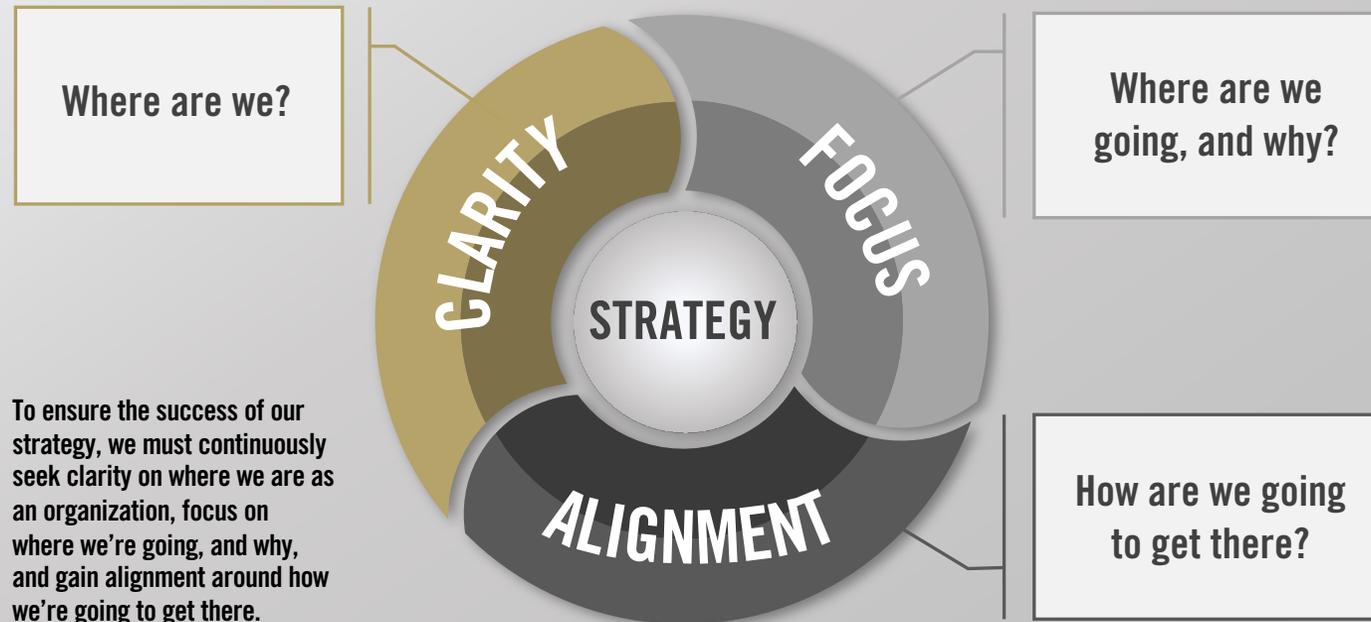


Combining diverse institutions of higher learning within the Lindenwood Education System forges a more robust and resilient system, strengthened by its extensive scale and wide range of educational offerings.

PERSONALIZED. LIFELONG. AFFORDABLE.

To achieve our strategic vision, we must continuously bring clarity, focus, and alignment to our strategy.

Strategy is a set of integrated choices that enables us to get from where we are to where we want to be.



To ensure the success of our strategy, we must continuously seek clarity on where we are as an organization, focus on where we're going, and why, and gain alignment around how we're going to get there.

“A lack of alignment, according to a poll of global CEOs, is the number-one obstacle between strategy and execution.”

— *Measure What Matters*, by John Doerr

## BARRIERS TO STRATEGY

- Only 10% of organizations execute their strategy.
- Only 5% of the workforce understands the strategy.
- Only 25% of managers have incentives linked to their strategy.
- Only 40% of organizations link budgets to strategy.
- Only 15% of executive teams spend more than one hour per month discussing strategy.

Paul Niven, author of *Balanced Scorecard, Step-by-Step*



# ADAPT, BUILD, ENGAGE

HOW LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY PLANS TO BECOME  
THE NEXT GREAT LEARNER-CENTRIC UNIVERSITY

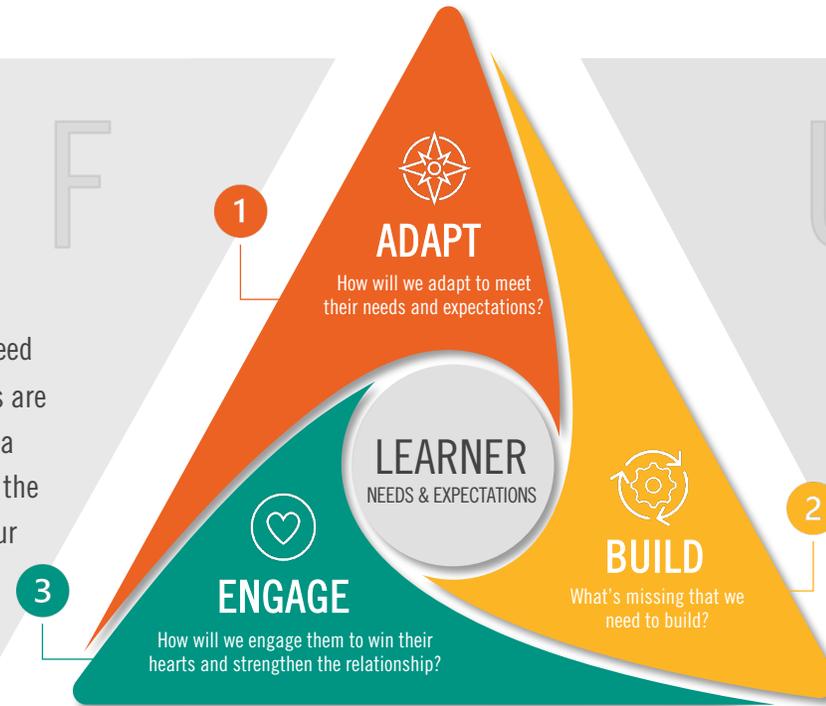
Lindenwood’s strategic framework identifies our Big Opportunity, outlines our Change Vision, and defines our Strategic Pillars – Adapt, Build, and Engage.

## BIG OPPORTUNITY

**LEARNER NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS HAVE CHANGED.** A new generation of learners expect colleges to anticipate what they need and deliver it when and how they need it. Most colleges like ours are not designed around meeting these needs and expectations. As a result, our value has declined. An opportunity exists to redesign the university around learner needs and expectations and expand our audience over the next five years. With our incredible team and the right plan, we can do this. But it will require **seeing everything through the eyes of the learner.**

## CHANGE VISION

**WITHIN FIVE YEARS** we will be known as one of the most relevant, diverse, and beloved universities in the Midwest. We will positively impact tens of thousands of lives. We will help strengthen our local and regional economies. We will attract the best faculty and staff to join our team. We will have healthy and diverse revenue streams. Our brand will receive national recognition. And we will be well on our way to becoming **THE NEXT GREAT LEARNER-CENTRIC UNIVERSITY.**



**ADAPT TO THEIR NEEDS, BUILD WHAT’S MISSING, ENGAGE THEIR HEARTS**

## STRATEGIC PILLARS

### ADAPT

We will adapt our people, processes, and programs to meet the needs and expectations of a new generation of learners.

### BUILD

We will build speed to match the demands of the market, skills to meet “in-and-out” learner needs, and affordability to address the “crisis of cost.”

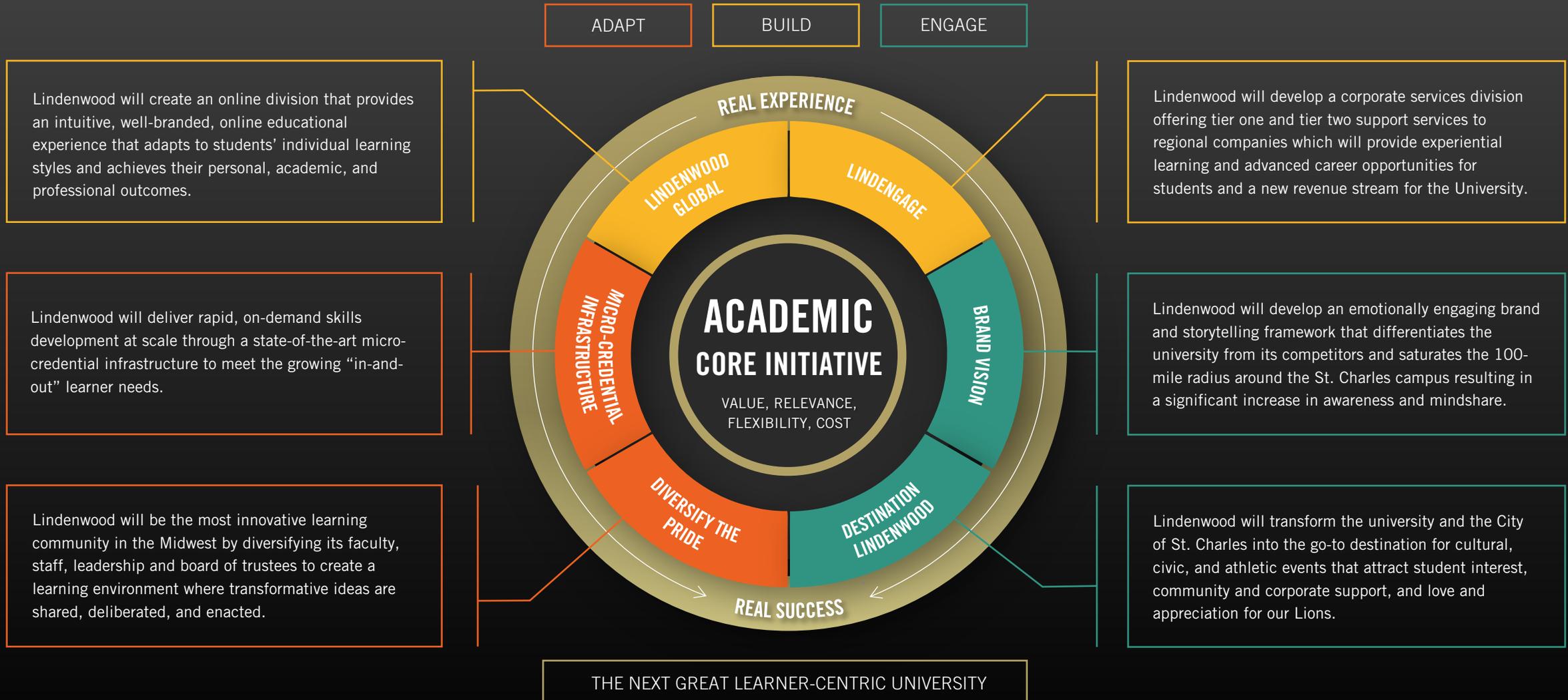
### ENGAGE

We will reach new learners in our market, attract them by demonstrating our difference, and retain them by loving our Lions.



# STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Seven strategic initiatives will help advance our **Real Experience, Real Success** mission and enable us to become **The Next Great Learner-Centric University** in the Midwest.



# STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

Our strategic plan aims to achieve four outcomes by Fall 2026. The table below shows the milestones to be achieved as the plan progresses.

**12,000  
STUDENTS**

**100 NEW  
PARTNERS**

**A TOP-OF-  
MIND BRAND**

**\$165M IN  
REVENUE**

Outcomes	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024	Fall 2025	Fall 2026
12,000 Students <sup>1</sup>	7,282	8,172	8,346	9,912	12,000
100 New Partnerships	12	25	50	75	100
Top-of-Mind Brand <sup>2</sup>	55%	58%	60%	63%	66%
\$165 Million in Revenue <sup>3</sup>	\$102.3M	\$105.7M	\$117.6M	\$141.1M	\$152.4M <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Includes total enrollment throughout the Lindenwood Education System.

<sup>2</sup> Aided advertising recall. Baseline score in 2021 was 52% via Zeitgeist study.

<sup>3</sup> Includes total revenue throughout the Lindenwood Education System; excludes CARES funding.



# STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

ADVANCING OUR MISSION

The Academic Core Initiative contributes key deliverables in the areas of academic program quality, academic success, and academic engagement with our community.



## THE INSIGHT

In a constantly changing educational landscape, responsiveness to today's learners is paramount. University students increasingly seek degrees that directly prepare them for careers or advanced study. They are discerning in their choice of institutions, prioritizing those that align with their learning preferences and needs. Flexibility, quality, relevance, and affordability are vital for both current and future learners.

## THE NEED

Today's students desire education that enhances employability with real-world skills for the next two decades. Increased access to higher education necessitates varied support and flexibility for academic and career success. They seek active engagement in learning to create change in their personal and professional lives through personally meaningful experiences.



## ADAPT

We will adapt our people, processes, and programs to meet the needs and expectations of a new generation of learners.

## VISION FOR TRANSFORMATION

Lindenwood's Academic Core prepares students for the next 20 years with relevant programs, a core curriculum nurturing sought-after attributes, and opportunities to be change agents in their careers and communities. The RISE Framework for teaching and learning offers intellectual challenge, a sense of belonging, and a supportive environment for students to thrive. Flexible options will empower learners to tailor their education.

## STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

- Lindenwood will position itself to compete on the quality of its academic offering.
- Lindenwood will raise the bar for how it supports the success of our students.
- Lindenwood will continue to foster academic engagement with its community.

Becoming The Next Great Learner-Centric University in the Midwest will require an innovative and diverse leadership team.



## THE INSIGHT

Increasing diversity is a moral imperative but a Boston Consulting Group study of more than 1,700 companies around the world also shows that diversity increases the capacity for innovation by expanding the range of a company's ideas and options, leading to better financial performance.

## THE NEED

Learners need and expect to learn from and alongside those with diverse perspectives and backgrounds. They want to form relationships with those who can respect, mentor, teach, and connect with diverse learners, and who involve a wide range of perspectives when creating solutions.



## ADAPT

We will adapt our people, processes, and programs to meet the needs and expectations of a new generation of learners.

## VISION FOR TRANSFORMATION

Lindenwood will be the most innovative learning community in the Midwest. To realize this vision, the university will diversify its faculty, staff, leadership and board of trustees to create a learning environment where transformative ideas are shared, deliberated, and enacted.

## STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

- Increased recruitment and retention of diverse faculty, staff, and trustees
- Increased number of innovative solutions
- Increased mentoring for career advancement
- Improved learning environment
- More welcoming community

Meeting the needs and expectations of today's learners will require Lindenwood to provide upskilling and reskilling opportunities for today's ever-changing job market.



## THE INSIGHT

According to Strada Education, 2 in 3 (68%) adults considering enrolling in education prefer nondegree pathways, up from 1 in 2 (50%) a year ago.

**MARCH 9, 2021** — Southern New Hampshire University acquired Kenzie Academy to expand access to in-demand micro-credentials.

## THE NEED

A growing number of learners need to develop specific skills to enter the job market more rapidly, without pursuing a four-year degree, while others need to learn new skills to stay current in their existing jobs, or transition to new jobs.



## ADAPT

We will adapt our people, processes, and programs to meet the needs and expectations of a new generation of learners.

## VISION FOR TRANSFORMATION

Lindenwood will deliver rapid, on-demand skills development at scale through a state-of-the-art micro-credential infrastructure to meet the growing “in-and-out” learner needs.

**DEFINITION:** Micro-credentials are a digital form of certification indicating demonstrated competency/mastery in a specific skill or set of skills.

## STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

- Increased partnerships with employers; co-created educational offerings
- K-12 pathways and remediation offerings
- Stackable options leading to degrees
- Career advancement opportunities for alumni
- Enhancements to current degree offerings

To serve the 40 million adults with some college but no credential, Lindenwood will need to provide pathways to degrees beyond the traditional semester-based system.



## THE INSIGHT

According to a joint report by the Boston Consulting Group and Arizona State University, the overall post-secondary student enrollment has been seeing a yearly decline of 1% to 2%, while the number of students taking online courses grows 5% annually.

## THE NEED

Millions of adults with some college but no degree or credential need 24/7 learning opportunities that allow them to pursue education on their own terms. The University needs to provide accessible, affordable, high-quality online education to meet the growing needs of today's learners and drive a greater share of its revenue.



## BUILD

We will build speed to match the demands of the market, skills to meet “in-and-out” learner needs, and affordability to address the “crisis of cost.”

## VISION FOR TRANSFORMATION

Lindenwood will create an online division that provides an intuitive, well-branded, online educational experience that adapts to students' individual learning styles and achieves their personal, academic, and professional outcomes.

## STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

- Create an online infrastructure that will revolutionize how we serve students and enable us to scale our operation and expand our reach
- Provide students with a consistent, high-quality online education experience
- Provide faculty with guidance, standardizations, support and incentives needed to best serve students

To provide “Real Experience and Real Success” in today’s tech economy will require Lindenwood to create its own “earn and learn” workplace experience for students.



## THE INSIGHT

An opportunity exists to leverage our IT expertise and students and provide product-specific help desk support to corporations focusing on cyber security, networking, and IT while giving our students real-world experience.

## THE NEED

Learners need hands-on learning experiences and skill sets that prepare them to enter the workforce with a good paying job. Companies need job-ready graduates who can contribute on day one. And the University needs alternative revenue sources to help sustain its mission.



## BUILD

We will build speed to match the demands of the market, skills to meet “in-and-out” learner needs, and affordability to address the “crisis of cost.”

## VISION FOR TRANSFORMATION

Lindenwood will develop a corporate services division offering tier one and tier two support services to regional companies which will provide experiential learning and advanced career opportunities for students and a new revenue stream for the University.

## STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

- Providing students with real-world experience in growing tech fields
- Providing opportunities to increase partnerships with regional employers that lead to student jobs
- Providing the University with an alternative revenue stream to help sustain its mission

To create a brand that matters, we must capture the essence of the Lindenwood experience and tell our story to a new generation of learners.



## THE INSIGHT

Generation Z prefer brands that are authentic, with 82% saying they trust a company more if it uses images of real customers in its advertising. Product quality, positive ratings and reviews and customer service are the top three characteristics that establish trust in a brand among Gen Z, according to the Center for Generational Kinetics.

## THE NEED

Learners need to emotionally connect with their university in ways that differentiate it from other options resulting in a brand vision that they can see themselves participating in.



## ENGAGE

We will reach new learners in our market, attract them by demonstrating our difference, and retain them by loving our Lions.

## VISION FOR TRANSFORMATION

Lindenwood will develop an emotionally engaging brand and storytelling framework that differentiates the university from its competitors and saturates the 100-mile radius around the St. Charles campus resulting in a significant increase in awareness and mindshare.

## STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

- A compelling brand with positive reviews
- A storytelling framework that makes it easy to talk about the Lindenwood difference
- Increased awareness in our critical target markets
- Increased students and donors; thrilled alumni
- A warm feeling when people think of Lindenwood

To attract more students to campus, we must create a compelling campus experience that positions Lindenwood as the go-to educational destination in our region.



## THE INSIGHT

Lindenwood sees an opportunity to create a college town experience that helps attract and retain students and builds community coalitions that mutually benefit the City and the University.

## THE NEED

Learners need to feel that Lindenwood is a welcoming community that provides the full “college town” experience they have come to expect from well-established universities. They need to feel involved and know that the town they are in loves their school and its students.



## ENGAGE

We will reach new learners in our market, attract them by demonstrating our difference, and retain them by loving our Lions.

## VISION FOR TRANSFORMATION

Lindenwood will transform the university and the City of St. Charles into the go-to destination for cultural, civic, and athletic events that attract student interest, community and corporate support, and love and appreciation for our Lions.

## STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

- Attract and retain students with a “home-away-from-home” experience
- Expose the community to the rich history and resources of the university
- Form new community coalitions that benefit our students and our university
- Strengthen our brand and increase our brand awareness



# GOVERNANCE

THE STRATEGY COUNCIL ENSURES WE ARE MAKING  
PROGRESS TOWARD ACHIEVING OUR STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

# STRATEGY COUNCIL

The strategic plan is governed by the Strategy Council which meets weekly to discuss the refinement and execution of our strategy.



PRESIDENT, CO-CHAIR

Dr. John Porter worked 33 years for IBM, the last 15 in senior management. He has also served as a board member in higher education and as an adjunct instructor and visiting professor. During his professional career, Porter has worked in numerous locations in the United States, as well as in South Africa and Dubai. He has an MBA from Washington University in St. Louis and a Doctor of Education degree from Johns Hopkins University.



SVP & CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER, CO-CHAIR

Rob Westervelt leads the development and implementation of Lindenwood's five-year strategic plan. He is a Stanford-certified innovator with expertise in high-performance leadership and strategic change. Over his 28-year career in higher education, Rob has led a wide range of departments and has successfully rebranded organizations, led turnarounds, and generated more than \$65 million in additional net revenues.



PROVOST & VP ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Dr. Bethany Alden-Rivers oversees accreditation and works closely with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) to evaluate best institutional practices. She guides student retention initiatives and classroom experiences, as well as program offerings to ensure Lindenwood's differentiation in market. She has an MBA from Missouri State University and a Master of Research from The Open University, where she also completed her PhD in educational technology.



SVP HUMAN RESOURCES

Dr. Deb Ayres' responsibilities include leadership and oversight of HR, benefits, employee performance and development, and payroll functions for approximately 2,000 full and part time employees. Prior to leading HR functions for the university, Dr. Ayres served the Lindenwood College of Education and Human Services as an Associate Professor and Department Chair in the Educational Leadership Department. She has over 30 years of experience leading HR divisions.



GENERAL COUNSEL

Mark Falkowski has extensive experience as a higher education attorney in both private practice as a member of the higher education practice group for a large national law firm and as general counsel. He has successfully represented institutions in regulatory matters and in state and federal courts. Falkowski's legal experience supports all areas of University operations. He also handles corporate, governance, and transactional matters for the University.



CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

John Kaufhold is responsible for all treasury and financial functions of the University. Prior to Lindenwood, he served as Senior Director, Business Operations at Yale University. John has also served as Strategic Group Controller with Barnes Aerospace and held multiple roles as Division Controller within Barnes Group, Inc. John is also a CPA and worked in internal auditing early in his career.



# FY26 STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

THE MILESTONES AND RESULTS ACHIEVED  
DURING THE 2025-2026 FISCAL YEAR

# FY26 RESULTS

Our strategy to build a learning ecosystem was achieved a year ahead of schedule and significantly exceeded our five-year strategic outcomes.

**12,000  
STUDENTS**

**100 NEW  
PARTNERS**

**A TOP-OF-  
MIND BRAND**

**\$165M IN  
REVENUE**

Outcomes	Fall 2025 GOAL	Fall 2025 RESULTS	% OF GOAL MET	
12,000 Students <sup>1</sup>	9,912	20,756	+10,844	209%
100 New Partnerships	75	155	+80	207%
Top-of-Mind Brand <sup>2</sup>	63%	65%	+2%	103%
\$165 Million in Revenue <sup>3</sup>	\$141.1M	\$280.8M	+139.7M	199%

<sup>1</sup> Includes total enrollment throughout the Lindenwood Education System.

<sup>2</sup> Aided advertising recall. Baseline score in 2021 was 52% via Zeitgeist study.

<sup>3</sup> Includes total revenue throughout the Lindenwood Education System; excludes CARES funding.



# PLANNING BACKGROUND

THE FACTORS THAT SHAPED OUR STRATEGIC  
DIRECTION AND DECISION MAKING

Lindenwood's strategic plan was preceded by the most disruptive era in the history of modern higher education. We refer to this period as the "Decade of Disruption."

## DECADE OF DISRUPTION



**2011**

Stanford University offered the first massive open online course (MOOC) with 160,000 students registered and over 20,000 completing the course.



**2012**

MOOC provider Coursera launched. It is now the world's largest provider of online courses, partnering with 150 top colleges to serve over 82 million users.



**2013**

The nation experienced its first two-year decline in college enrollment since the 1990s. Nationally, enrollment fell by 2.2 million students between 2011 and 2020 (-12%).



**2014**

Western Governors University held its first Missouri commencement, graduating nearly 200 students. WGU now has more than 3,200 Missouri students. All are online.



**2015**

President Obama launched the College Scorecard to help consumers compare the cost and value of U.S. colleges and universities.

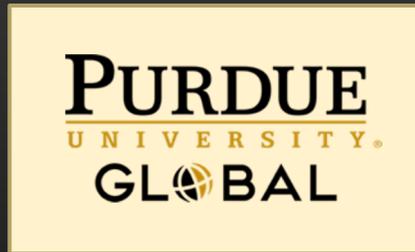
Lindenwood’s strategic plan was preceded by the most disruptive era in the history of modern higher education. We refer to this period as the “Decade of Disruption.”

## DECADE OF DISRUPTION



**2016**

Georgia Tech successfully concluded its experiment with online provider Udacity to deliver world-class computer science master’s degrees at half the price.



**2017**

Purdue University, a top 50 land-grant institution, completed its acquisition of the for-profit Kaplan University and launched Purdue Global.



**2018**

As a slew of news articles began to appear touting top companies that no longer required college degrees, 61% of Americans felt higher ed was going in the wrong direction (Pew Research).



**2019**

Nationally, student loan debt reached \$1.6 trillion. Between 2019 and 2020, Generation Z experienced the largest year-over-year increase in student loan debt at 39%.



**2020**

In the spring of 2020, a global pandemic significantly disrupted higher education when colleges were required to cancel all in-person instruction.

Although our strategic planning process kicked off in the middle of the pandemic, we strived to create a collaborative and inclusive process focused on transformational change.

- Strategic Task Force of 12 senior leaders, board members and faculty led the process
- 167 stakeholders participated in an official capacity in the development of the strategic plan
- Completed a four-part design thinking workgroup involving 31 leaders resulting in 245 transformative ideas
- These ideas were narrowed down through a pitch process to 8 transformative ideas that were formally pitched
- Formal pitches were reviewed and voted on by an additional 42 campus leaders
- Created a strategic framework identifying the “Big Opportunity,” “Change Vision,” and Strategic Pillars
- Met with Faculty and Staff Councils to socialize the Strategic Framework
- Developed three “triad teams” which expanded the 8 transformative ideas to 12 strategic initiatives
- Held four Town Hall meetings with an average of 243 attendees to socialize the strategy and get feedback
- Built 12 business cases, one for each strategic initiative
- Huron Consulting conducted external validation of the 12 initiatives using a weighted validation rubric
- 89 employees ranked all 12 initiatives in order of their importance
- Triad teams took this information refined business cases and narrowed the plan to six final strategic initiatives
- The Academic Core Initiative was added later to emphasize our focus on academic excellence
- The strategic plan launched on July 1, 2021



# LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY

THE NEXT GREAT LEARNER-CENTRIC UNIVERSITY