

ELMIRA COLLEGE



2023-2028 Strategic Plan



ELMIRA COLLEGE

MISSION

Grounded in the liberal arts and sciences, Elmira College provides a collaborative and supportive environment that enables students to become active learners, effective leaders, responsible community members, and globally engaged citizens. Proud of its history and tradition, the College is committed to the ideals of community service, and intellectual and individual growth.

VISION

Elmira College will be recognized as a leader in broad-based, interdisciplinary education, offering innovative programs that combine experiential learning, on- and off-campus leadership opportunities, and community engagement. The College's curricular and co-curricular programs will demonstrate a commitment to diversity, inclusion, and global awareness with a strong emphasis on the interconnectedness of world cultures and the historical exchange of ideas.



The Plan for Elmira

Who We Are

From its very founding in 1855, Elmira College was the first college for women with a course of study equal in rigor to the best men's colleges. "Female seminaries" as they were called at the time, were essentially glorified high schools. In contrast, from its inception, Elmira offered rigorous academic programs, allowing graduates to pursue new opportunities that were previously unavailable to women.

Today, as a coeducational institution, EC continues to provide students with clear pathways leading to careers in business, education, law, medicine, research, and a host of other fields by emphasizing hands-on learning and the development of professional skills.

In the classroom, professors seek to engage students through problem-solving tasks, information gathering and synthesis, question generation, and reflection-based activities, among others. This emphasis on active learning enables students to build connections between their prior knowledge and new experiences and concepts.

What We Face

Today, higher education is beset by many challenges, including a declining number of traditional-age college students, increasing government regulation, and the erosion of public's confidence in the value of a college degree.

Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, Elmira College started developing a plan to renew itself and build a bridge from its traditional liberal arts programs to one that more fully blends the liberal arts, professional programs, and the College's history of hands-on, immersive learning. The pandemic heightened the need to address these challenges and adapt to a new normal, and in the years following

the pandemic, a three-pronged approach was developed with each component a key factor in moving the College forward.

1. **Five-Year Financial Plan.** The College worked with the New York State Charities Bureau to create a financial plan that allows the College to access additional resources from the endowment to assist in navigating the College through current financial challenges. These funds will be borrowed from the endowment and paid back on a set schedule.

The new plan strikes a balance between paying for much needed improvements in infrastructure, compensation, and branding promotion, while staying on target with agreed upon spending targets. EC will continue to maintain fiscal responsibility, at times making difficult decisions, however, the College is not at risk of an immediate closure like other small colleges thanks to a low debt ratio and an admissions application rate that is trending upward.

2. **2023-2028 Strategic Plan.** The 2023-2028 Strategic Plan lays the path forward for the financial plan. The plan focuses on three strategic initiatives: 1. Enhance Strength and Stability; 2. Foster Innovation; and 3. Ensure an Inclusive and Supportive Environment. More details are shared below.
3. **Comprehensive Campaign.** While there are positive indicators for success, the College must increase the philanthropic investments it receives from donors to achieve long-term sustainability. Elmira is proud of its historic mission, and in today's continually evolving global landscape, the College aims to continue providing accessible education that equips students with the skills necessary to remain flexible and adapt to a rapidly changing environment. The education provided through philanthropic investments in a comprehensive campaign will equip graduates to handle the challenges and opportunities that await them.





The Planning Process

This document represents the culmination of a yearlong effort to update the College's strategic plan and revise the planning process in light of current challenges. Two primary goals over the next five years will be to increase enrollment and enhance the College's financial health. More students will make for a richer, more diverse campus environment and enable the institution to continue providing a quality educational experience. An improving financial picture will also provide the resources necessary to ensure that employees are compensated fairly and for the institution to offer competitive programs and services.

The College relies on a Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) for overseeing the assessment and planning processes and ensuring that resource allocation is informed by appropriate metrics. With this role in mind, the LRPC developed a timeline and process for collecting feedback and input on future strategic initiatives, goals, and objectives for the College.

In January and February 2023, the LRPC conducted nine SWOT analyses (Strengths-Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) focus groups. The focus groups included students, faculty, staff, and parents. In addition, an online survey was distributed to faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community leaders to solicit input and engage them in the planning process. Feedback from the survey and focus groups was shared with students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members in March 2023, giving each stakeholder group an opportunity to respond and provide additional feedback.

From the first round of surveys, focus groups, and feedback, the LRPC developed an initial 2023-2028 Strategic Plan draft. This draft was then shared with the campus community in May 2023 for review and feedback. Following additional

revisions, a final draft of the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan was unanimously approved by the Board of Trustees in June 2023.

Over the summer, and following the 2023 Faculty & Staff Development Day, the objectives were streamlined and divisional Action Plans created for FY24.

Where We Are Going

As noted above, the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan focuses on three strategic initiatives:

1. Enhance Strength and Stability
2. Foster Innovation
3. Ensure an Inclusive and Supportive Environment

Enhance Strength and Stability

The first strategic focus is to enhance strength and stability for the College. A key goal is ensuring strong enrollment through annual enrollment growth and persistence to graduation. To achieve this goal will be a challenge - given the downturn in the number of traditional-age college students and skepticism among parents and students about the value of a college degree. We will need to adjust online content and marketing to maximize student interest, introduce more robust partnerships with community colleges and expand online programs, particularly at the graduate level. This means providing access to, and increasing awareness of, resources for recruiting diverse faculty, staff, and students and introducing new academic programs based on market research on high demand fields and what undergraduates are looking for in a college education. It also involves expanding athletic program opportunities and facilities.

Beyond enrollment, strengthening the College's financial position means researching and implementing cost-saving initiatives and diversifying and augmenting the College's revenue streams. We will be looking at campus wide strategies to maximize space utilization, reduce costs and identify areas for revenue generation.

Increasing philanthropic support to the College is another key aspect in the College's three-pronged approach to the future. Development of a comprehensive campaign is in its beginning stages and work is being done to finetune best practices and increase internal and external support through relationship building.

In addition, enhancing the College's commitment to environmental sustainability and providing continuity and growth through employee retention efforts are important factors in promoting institutional strength and sustainability.

Foster Innovation

The second strategic focus area is fostering innovation. Academics and the learning experience are at the center of what we do at Elmira, which is why there are several components in the plan that support the advancement of research, creative works, and knowledge generation. Elmira College must be creative and adopt a more student-focused approach to education. We need to offer differentiated academic programs for a more diverse student body and provide meaningful learning experiences both in and outside the classroom. Academic programs need to be flexible in delivery method and offer students a direct link to a career or graduate studies. This means seeking increased grant support, expanding cross-disciplinary activities, and increasing student career- and life-readiness.

Ensure an Inclusive and Supportive Environment

The third strategic focus area hones in on ensuring an inclusive and supportive campus environment for students, faculty, and staff. This includes providing access to, and increasing awareness of, resources for the recruitment of diverse faculty, staff, and students. We will look to enhance access to college beyond the traditional college-bound populations through the development of partnerships and financial aid policies that provide opportunity to these student populations.

As mental health concerns continue to rise nationally, this focus area seeks to support the mental and physical wellbeing of our students and employees by increasing on-campus access to recreational activities, mental health services and programs, and ensuring a safe physical and virtual campus environment.

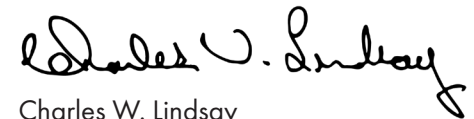
Conclusion

While these continue to be challenging times for higher education, this 2023-2028 Strategic Plan lays the groundwork for the future. It strikes a balance between strength, stability, innovation, and creating a supportive and inclusive campus environment. It continues to focus on the College's long history of academic quality and the exceptional educational opportunities experienced by students attending Elmira College.

The journey to a stronger, bolder Elmira College has begun. The five-year financial plan shows us our destination: We know where we need to go. The Strategic Plan lays the path: We have a way to get there. The comprehensive campaign will be the light that keeps us on that path and is crucial to ensuring we reach our destination.

I want to thank our stakeholders for their participation, input, and support over the last several years. Your continued support and dedication are critical. I'm looking forward to a stronger, bolder future for Elmira College and working with all of you to make this five-year Strategic Plan a reality.

Be It Ever So,



Charles W. Lindsay
President



2023-2028 Strategic Plan

Goals and Objectives

Strategic Focus I. Enhance Strength and Stability

Goal A. Ensure strong enrollment through annual enrollment growth and persistence to graduation.

Objectives:

- Increase undergraduate and graduate FTE enrollment by 30% between fall 2023 and fall 2028 as outlined in the College's Five-Year Financial Plan
- Expand athletic recruitment through expansion of athletic program offerings and installation of turf field on campus
- Build student success structure and programming to increase retention, persistence, and graduation rates
- Research, develop, and implement graduate programs to enhance student advancement
- Develop active partnerships that engage faculty and students from regional community colleges with EC faculty and students to strengthen collaboration and transfer pipeline

Goal B. Strengthen Elmira College's financial position through cost-savings and diversification and augmentation of revenue streams

Objectives

- Develop campuswide strategies to maximize space utilization, reduce costs, and identify areas for revenue generation
- Review Elmira College's organizational structure to maximize efficiency and provide for future growth.

Goal C. Increase philanthropic support to the College

Objectives

- Finalize plans for and begin initial phases of comprehensive campaign
- Use best practices in database management to enhance giving trend analysis
- Grow the culture of philanthropy with internal and external EC communities by building relationships with alumni and implementing an educational campaign with students and employees
- Increase alumni engagement by expanding in-person and virtual alumni programming

Goal D. Use best practices to improve institutional sustainability and effectiveness

Objectives

- Promote and facilitate increased collaboration and communication across departments and divisions
- Establish and centralize a data infrastructure that supports the College's analytics needs, provides data access to end users, and optimizes resources to support data informed decision making
- Enhance the College's commitment to environmental sustainability through participation in and implementation of environmentally focused partnerships and initiatives

- Provide continuity and growth for academic programs through retention of faculty and staff by developing and implementing plan to rectify salary compression and bring salaries inline with CUPA targets

Strategic Focus II. Foster Innovation

Goal A. Support faculty and students in the advancement of research, creative works, and knowledge generation

Objectives

- Increase grant-writing activities and administrative support for scholarship
- Expand cross-disciplinary research and creative activities
- Establish partnerships with local businesses/organizations to solve real-world problems while providing real-world, hands-on experience for students

Goal B. Enhance organizational infrastructure to support innovation and collaboration

Objectives

- Increase student career- and life-readiness through integration of curricular and co-curricular programs
- Develop processes for faculty and students to communicate technology needs and goals for streamlined productivity and creativity

Strategic Focus III. Ensure An Inclusive and Supportive Campus Environment

Goal A. Increase diversity of faculty, staff, and student populations across the inclusion spectrum

Objectives

- Provide access to, and increase awareness of, resources for the recruitment of diverse faculty, staff, and students
- Enhance student access to higher education beyond traditional college-bound populations through the development of partnerships, direct admit relationships and financial aid policies that provide opportunity to new student populations
- Increase student support resources to accommodate the needs of diverse populations

Goal B. Invigorate the campus community by providing resources to support mental and physical wellbeing

Objectives

- Increase on-campus access to recreational activities for students and employees
- Enhance mental health services and programs to students
- Develop a holistic approach to reduce burnout and improve faculty and staff engagement, satisfaction, and connection to the College
- Ensure a safe and secure physical and virtual campus environment

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