

Summer 2022

Building Our Future Together

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Recommended Citation

Nelson, Scott Bernard 94 (2022) "Building Our Future Together," *Linfield Magazine*: Vol. 18: No. 1, Article 15.

Available at: https://digitalcommons.linfield.edu/linfield_magazine/vol18/iss1/15

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Building our future together

How Linfield turned the voice of the community into a plan for the future

By Scott Bernard Nelson '94

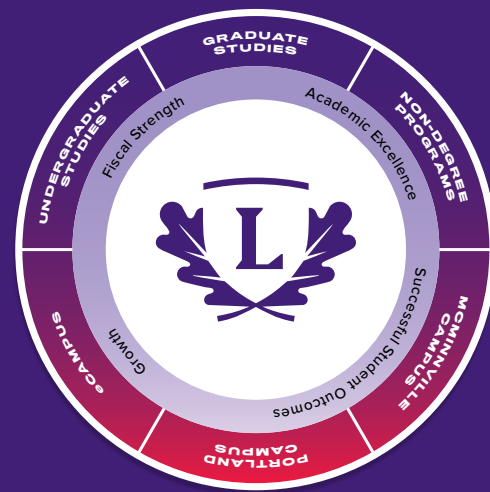
Where strategic plans come from at most organizations is almost as mysterious as what's in them. Plans appear from on high and end up largely unread in people's email inboxes or in desk drawers, reflecting a theoretical (if earnest) exercise that often feels far removed from day-to-day work.

Linfield decided to rethink that paradigm with its new strategic plan, drafted over the past year in a process that ultimately included hundreds of employees and more than five dozen volunteers. The result, "Uncommonly Inspired: On becoming a comprehensive master's level university," was approved by the Linfield University Board of Trustees in May and posted on the university's intranet for students and employees. A detailed rollout plan will be announced this fall to make the new plan a reality.

"We intend to grow and thrive in the years ahead, and for that to happen, we need a laser focus on strategic planning," said Linfield President Miles K. Davis. "Planning isn't a luxury, it's an imperative in these increasingly competitive times. I'm proud of the hard work by so many in the Linfield community to bring 'Uncommonly Inspired' to life – and I'm looking forward to the hard work still in front of us to operationalize it."

The ultimate goal, Davis said, was to generate a working document reflecting all facets of Linfield life and one that would be easy to keep front and center in decision-making.

True to its charter, the process of creating "Uncommonly Inspired" began at an all-employee meeting and involved people from every corner of the organization. Direct feedback from the Linfield community was transformed into three theme areas:



- **FOCUS** – Elevating the work already happening at Linfield making it even more distinct and powerful.
- **CREATE** – Bringing to life new possibilities for the university, including academic programs and opportunities for non-tuition revenue sources.
- **UNITE** – Fostering collaboration to achieve a future worthy of Linfield's mission and oriented around student success.

Volunteers formed working groups around the three themes and eventually made recommendations that became the foundation for "Uncommonly Inspired."

The final document is a concise 20 pages that is purposefully easy to read and actionable. But, most importantly, it reflects the people who came together to make it. It outlines growth, excellence and collaboration at Linfield, while continuing to put students at the center of what we do.

UNCOMMONLY INSPIRED

FOCUS

- GOAL 1:** Reinforce our integrated learning model to prepare students for a life of purpose
- GOAL 2:** Enhance learning, living and athletic spaces
- GOAL 3:** Cement experiential learning as a central tenet of the Linfield experience

CREATE

- GOAL 1:** Develop distinctive new academic programs responsive to prospective student interests
- GOAL 2:** Maximize opportunities to diversify university revenue in ways that are consistent with the mission
- GOAL 3:** Build an adaptive campus culture focused on the changing demographics and needs of students

UNITE

- GOAL 1:** Advance one Linfield experience across the university
- GOAL 2:** Invest in diverse, creative and resilient employees oriented around shared student success
- GOAL 3:** Tell the Linfield story

TIMELINE:

AUGUST 2021

- All-employee meeting held

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2021

- Recording available for viewing employee meeting online
- Online survey live for continued feedback

NOVEMBER 2021-FEBRUARY 2022

- Planning team created
- Working groups synthesize feedback and build recommendations

MARCH 2022

- Open sessions held by working groups to receive input on recommendations
- Final recommendations made to planning group and president

APRIL 2022

- President's Leadership Team transforms recommendations from working groups into single working document, "Uncommonly Inspired"

MAY 2022

- Linfield University Board of Trustees approves "Uncommonly Inspired"
- Strategic plan shared via website to Linfield community

JUNE-JULY 2022

- Implementation details finalized

AUGUST 2022-JUNE 2023

- Implementation and building cascaded plans

JULY 2023-JUNE 2027

- Living the plan

