

Marietta Forward: Overview

An Overview of the Strategic Plan for Marietta College January 2024

Marietta Forward is the college community's strategic response to pressures of the rapidly changing higher education landscape. To ensure that this historic college has a strong future for generations ahead, this is our aspirational plan for success. *Marietta Forward* is shaped by a careful consideration of the strengths of our college, the relevance and perceived value of our current offerings, and evolving marketplace opportunities.

Marietta Forward places – and keeps – every Marietta College student at the center of our educational enterprise. The principal drivers of this strategic plan are: 1) the quality (content, structure, relevance, and delivery) of the academic program; and 2) the quality of support offered to Marietta students across their college experience.

Before approving the plan, the College's Board of Trustees was provided with a detailed projection of all investments required to support *Marietta Forward*. In October of 2023, the Board approved *Marietta Forward* as the strategic plan for Marietta College.

THE PLAN'S FOUNDATION.

Marietta Forward is the result of an extensive strategic planning process that began with an external study conducted by AGB Consulting, a subsequent internal review and assessment by the College's broad-based Planning Committee, and the intensive, focused effort of the President's Cabinet and other stakeholders. The plan is intentionally practical, with key performance indicators that will track our progress against goals (e.g. graduation rates, net tuition revenues, program development and satisfaction with programming) on a regular basis. The plan is ambitious, actionable, and attainable, and is built upon five overarching Strategic Initiatives.

THE FIVE *MARIETTA FORWARD* STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

SI-1: Fully Implement the Student-Ready College.

The core organizing principle of *Marietta Forward* is an unyielding commitment to the success of every student enrolled. This plan creates the resource structure necessary to support today's, and tomorrow's, students throughout their Marietta education. Success metrics include increased rates of retention, persistence, and degree completion; development and implementation of effective programming; and evidence of increased student engagement.

SI-2: Strengthen Current Academic Programs.

Through Strategic Initiative 2 the College will assure that we provide relevant academic programs of interest to a critical mass of college-going students, and reduce the number of and

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the expenses associated with low enrollment academic program offerings. This initiative will lead to the redistribution of resources to support new, high-demand programming and greater investments in current programs that require additional resources to maximize their enrollments. Success will be grounded in a current, and then ongoing, review of all academic offerings. Measurements will include both the relevance and desirability of programs as perceived by the college-going population and future employers while maintaining or enhancing program quality.

SI-3: Develop New Educational Programs focused on Non-Traditional Student Education and Workforce Development.

The lead objective of SI-3 is to generate and steadily increase net tuition revenues by building new programs for new populations. Through a new cost and revenue center – the Marietta College Division of Executive Education and Workforce Development – the College will increase its contributions to regional economic growth, contribute to workforce readiness, and serve the needs of a greater segment of the population. This new programming will leverage our position of excellence at the undergraduate and graduate levels of education and address the rising need for continuing education among non-traditional students. Measurements will include the launch of new offerings, student and employer participation, course and program completion, increased demand, and positive net revenue streams.

SI-4: Identify and Launch New Academic Programs.

In addressing the interests and ambitions of the next generation of learners, Marietta will generate new student enrollments and increase net tuition revenue at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. This will be achieved by 1) offering new, in-demand areas of study; 2) building the College's reputation for delivering relevant and high-quality campus-based and online educational programming; and 3) improving student satisfaction, persistence, and graduation rates through an increase in perceived, and realized, educational value. Measurements will include establishing Marietta Online as a subdivision within Academic Affairs and launching new undergraduate and graduate programs

SI-5 Create a campus culture of support for individual leadership, inclusion, and belonging.

This objective is designed to strengthen the community and ensure greater student and employee success by providing a more welcoming, inclusive environment for individuals from all backgrounds and cultures. Tactics will increase student and employee persistence by encouraging greater engagement; increasing community-wide awareness of and appreciation for other cultures, beliefs, ideas, and backgrounds; and engendering a clear sense of belonging to and ownership of the Marietta experience. Results will include benchmarking (to the region) and evaluating annually the diversity of student and employee populations and measuring the community's perception of the value of differences, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

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Funding *Marietta Forward*.

Marietta Forward is an additive strategic plan, one that will build on existing programs and offerings, evaluate and at times eliminate others, and offer new initiatives that will be attractive in the marketplace. The Plan objectives span four academic years (2024-25 through 2027-28).

Success will require a significant investment in personnel, programming, and infrastructure. This investment must come in the form of new funding (new program revenues, grants, and philanthropic gifts) as well as through the redistribution of current resources.

The President's Cabinet prioritized those tactics within the *Marietta Forward* plan that are most pressing, will have the greatest benefit financially, and/or will make the most difference to the student experience. Tactics are identified as: 1. MUST (top priority tactics; the minimum that we must implement); 2. SHOULD (all MUST tactics plus those that would strengthen our ability to reach our goals); and 3. COULD (all MUST and SHOULD tactics plus those that will give Marietta a competitive advantage in student support and programming).

This prioritization acknowledges that significant investments can only be made when resources needed to support these tactics are available through added or redirected funds.

The College's Board of Trustees has committed to raising the funds necessary to launch *Marietta Forward* in July of 2024.