



Abundance & Grace: A Blueprint for Flourishing in Faith and Hope
Strategic Directions & Prioritized Goals
2023-2027

Abundance & Grace: A Blueprint for Flourishing in Faith & Hope is an incremental plan for the Seminary's next chapter of excellence based on extensive consultation with Seminary partners, including students, faculty, trustees, administrative staff, and alums. The Blueprint highlights strategic directions and prioritized goals focused on our vision statement in four areas of institutional life: *Academic Pedagogy, Campus Culture, Administration, and Governance*. Our strategic directions and prioritized goals over the next four years will guide and organize the Seminary's efforts to build upon our strengths, create opportunities for growth, and support student flourishing as expressions of our Core Values and commitment to forming pastors and servant-leaders who will impact the Church and the public square.

With broad conversations across the Seminary, a *Strategic Blueprint Implementation Team* will assist faculty, student government, administration, staff, and the board of trustees in prioritizing the goals for each academic/fiscal year while developing assessment guidelines. The Strategic Blueprint Implementation Team comprises Lucy Baum, Co-Chair; Victor Aloyo, Co-Chair; Ann Clay Adams, Jennifer Cuthbertson, Jane Fahey, Pen Peery, Dana Abu Ghazaleh, and Wendy Dewberry.

Statement of Mission

Columbia Theological Seminary exists to educate and nurture faithful, imaginative, and effective leaders for the sake of the Church and the world.

Vision

(from the Vision Statement: *A Prayer for Vision in Columbia's Bicentennial Season*)

We offer these vision prayers as a statement of our collective intention as we follow where the Spirit leads in our *strategic directions*.

- We pray that Columbia's students will be educated, equipped, and nurtured to become a new generation of pastoral leaders for the Church and the world.
- We pray that Columbia's community will embody the welcome, hospitality, justice, and belonging of the reign of God.
- We pray that Columbia's partnerships will bring vibrant spiritual, cultural, and academic exchange, with opportunities to generate new ideas and knowledge, create connections, and engage in experiential learning.
- We pray that Columbia will join boldly in the new thing God is doing among us and the world, enabling us to learn, teach, serve, and live joyfully in God's holy house of prayer and in God's good creation.

Strategic Directions

ACADEMIC PEDAGOGY

Building on Columbia Seminary's excellence in theological inquiry, critical thinking, and innovation, we will provide theological leadership for the Church and the world by educating and equipping faithful, imaginative, and effective pastoral leaders through degree and non-degree programs, contextual education, research, and lifelong learning.

AP - Goal #1

Enhance the relevance and strength of our degree and certificate programs and determine in which formats Columbia will offer them in the next decade.

AP - Goal #2

Enhance the configuration of faculty and program leaders to promote the Seminary's formation of pastoral leaders and support innovation and collaboration.

AP - Goal #3

Optimize current and future resources to support the faculty's pedagogical development, scholarly engagement, and service to the Seminary, Church, and community.

AP – Goal #4

Enrich and foster partnerships that align with Columbia's educational commitments.

CAMPUS CULTURE

Expanding on Columbia Theological Seminary's residential campus, we will develop and implement the framework for a campus culture of Christian worship, hospitality, and belonging that exists on our campus and extends translocally and globally.

CC—Goal #1

Pursue an ambitious and inspiring enrollment strategy that is informed by data, rooted in Columbia's core values, and emphasizes the academic preparedness and vocational discernment of applicants.

CC - Goal #2

Building upon the Becoming Project¹, students, faculty, and staff will participate in Christian community that honors and promotes intercultural intelligence, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

CC – Goal #3

Optimize support services by promoting the holistic well-being of students, staff, and faculty in a safe and inclusive environment for people of all genders, races, and identities.

CC—Goal #4

Cultivate adaptive leadership skills and attitudes that prepare students, faculty, staff, and alums to sustain a life in ministry in their present and future contexts.

¹ <https://www.becomingcts.com/>

ADMINISTRATION

Enriching Columbia Theological Seminary's exemplary workplace culture, we will pursue excellence in our policies, procedures, and practices, stewarding the resources of the seminary and building mutually beneficial relationships with external partners at the local, regional, and global levels.

AD – Goal #1:

Shape and direct systemic efforts to promote, nurture, and restore existing relationships with alums, congregations, donors, and denominational bodies.

AD – Goal #2: Identify and build new and emerging constituent relationships by sharing our vision and inviting others to participate in our mission.

AD – Goal #3

Develop and sustain strategies that address student financial insecurity. *(See also CC Goal #3, tactic 4)*

AD – Goal #4

Optimize space utilization and development to advance the Seminary's mission by updating the campus master plan (to optimize seminary facilities to provide for the mission of the seminary, foster connection with the surrounding community of Decatur and Atlanta, and promote accessibility and ecological sustainability)

AD – Goal #5

Maximize employee growth by enhancing workplace satisfaction, efficacy, and accountability.

AD – Goal #6

Enhance communication infrastructure and build communication patterns with internal and external constituencies that are timely and consistent.

AD – Goal #7

Prepare for and launch a Comprehensive Campaign² to equip the seminary for its third century.

Governance

Strengthening Columbia Theological Seminary's vision of inclusion and commitment to diversity, we will engage, explore, and facilitate the highest levels of institutional leadership and effectiveness, organizational justice, and future-oriented planning within an environment of transparent, shared governance as we join boldly in the new thing God is already doing among us.

GG – Goal #1

Enrich engagement, trust, accountability, and ownership in our shared governance models³ by clarifying roles and expectations among students, faculty, staff, alums, President's Council, and Trustees.

² Capital Campaigns tend to focus on a distinct, concrete, and pressing financial need. A Comprehensive Campaign is broader in scope, including fundraising for multiple goals and objectives.

³ By "shared governance models" we refer not simply to the structures and powers enumerated in the seminary's bylaws, but more broadly to the distribution of labor, roles, and responsibilities that shape the work of trustees, faculty, administrative staff, and students alike.

GG – Goal #2

Review, revise, and integrate our practices and policies related to shared governance.

GG – Goal #3

Ensure faithful financial stewardship in support of the Seminary’s mission and vision long-term.

GG – Goal #4

Continue to build a Board of Trustees who reflect and honor the diversity of the Church and seminary constituencies.

GG—Goal #5

Position the seminary for thriving by actively engaging trustees in leadership and fiduciary oversight⁴ of strategic directions.

GG – Goal #6

Equip and enhance the seminary’s discerning and decision-making bodies to create equitable, inclusive, and just spaces.

⁴ Fiduciary oversight includes legal, financial, and ethical concerns.