

**FOUNDATIONS FOR
KENYON'S THIRD CENTURY**

**Strategic Plan
July 2021**

Kenyon

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From its founding in 1824, Kenyon College has brought students and faculty together to address enduring and emerging questions, rooted in a belief that the transformative power of a liberal arts education combined with the close relationships developed in an intentional community cultivates the creativity and leadership needed to meet the challenges of the current moment and the future. The commitments to both the enduring and the emerging, and to both tradition and the future, have driven the College to evolve and adapt over its nearly 200-year history, and at each stage of its evolution become a stronger and more resilient institution.

As Kenyon prepares to celebrate its bicentennial, its graduates must be prepared to meet the global challenges presented by climate change; to develop and apply technology not only effectively but also ethically; to build equitable, just, diverse and inclusive communities in an increasingly polarized environment; and to solve complex, dynamic problems in uncertain contexts. And, Kenyon must do this while addressing unprecedented challenges facing American higher education, including the wake of the COVID-19 global pandemic (which disrupted operations and strained finances), continued shifts in student demographics, and the barriers created by the combination of higher tuition costs and stagnant family income.

“Foundations for Kenyon’s Third Century” lays out priorities and strategies to meet these challenges. This path ahead maintains the enduring elements of a Kenyon education: the importance of residentiality; building intentional community and close connections among faculty, staff and students; and a rigorous approach to the traditional liberal arts as the central core of the curriculum. But, the plan also proposes initiatives to position Kenyon to meet the demands of the time as well as strengthen the College’s finances.

Not only by strengthening Kenyon’s commitment to a student body and faculty and staff that are reflective of the demographics of the nation and representative of the world, but also by fostering a community characterized by a shared sense of belonging, the College will prepare all of its students for building equitable and inclusive communities. By committing to integrating environmental stewardship into the curriculum, campus operations and campus culture, Kenyon will position all of its students to construct more sustainable communities and futures. By adding a computational studies program in its curriculum, and embedding it within a rich liberal arts context, Kenyon will not only unleash students’ creativity in the design and use of new technologies but also ground their approach to technology in values and ethics. By increasing opportunities for students to deepen their learning outside of the classroom, through both international experiences and research and internship opportunities, Kenyon will introduce students to problem-solving in dynamic, complex contexts.

To make these needed adaptations and strengthen the College’s financial foundations, Kenyon will embark on a set of strategic changes: to increase the student body by 200-250 students, to change the calendar to incorporate a winter term devoted to high-impact practices, and to enrich the set of institutional partnerships of the College.

FOUNDATIONS FOR KENYON'S THIRD CENTURY

INTRODUCTION

Last academic year, the College affirmed its statement of mission and values. Throughout the disruption brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, this statement has served as a touchstone for the College, guiding decision-making during a period of unprecedented change. During this time of disruption, Kenyon College is reflecting on its strengths and the resilience of the past year, and now is looking forward. It has concluded its last strategic plan (Kenyon 2020, see Appendix I), has exceeded the original goals of its Our Path Forward comprehensive campaign and extended the campaign, and is on the brink of celebrating its bicentennial. While we are still navigating the short-term stresses of the COVID-19 pandemic, this is an important moment to assess the external pressures that Kenyon faces, imagine a vision for a thriving Kenyon as it begins its third century, and establish priorities that will guide our allocation of resources and institutional decision-making in seeking to achieve this aspirational vision.

THE NATIONAL AND GLOBAL CONTEXT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN 2021

Over the past several decades, higher education has faced financial and demographic challenges. Rigorous economic scholarship has identified stress points in the financial model for higher education, especially for private liberal arts colleges, where much of the operation involves fixed labor and facilities costs. The rising sticker price of colleges has put more pressure on discounting and financial aid, creating tension between revenue and academic quality at many institutions. All of these economic factors have been accelerated in the past year by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In order for Kenyon to continue to thrive in the years ahead, we must develop strategies to effectively address these looming challenges to the higher education sector in general, and private liberal arts colleges in particular:

- **Impact of family income growth on the financial model of higher education.** The annual income for families at the 80th percentile and below has increased at a significantly lower rate in the past two decades compared to the income of families above the 95th percentile, which has grown significantly. At the same time, the published cost of college has increased. This has put pressure on the operating model for institutions such as Kenyon: as tuition increases, financial aid must increase to enroll middle- and lower-income families. We identified this growing income inequality as a challenge when we set out on the Kenyon 2020 plan, and it has grown more acute in the years since then. How will institutions create opportunity for talented students from a range of backgrounds in the face of rising costs and family income trends?
- **Changing demographics.** Geographically, increasing numbers of high school students in the United States will come from the West and the South. Racially, Latinx, African American and Asian American populations will continue to grow. How can colleges enroll a talented group of students that reflects the demographics of the nation? What is required to build an inclusive campus to support the success of the changing population of students?
- **The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.** The COVID-19 crisis has disrupted life and social institutions around the world, including higher education. At the onset of the pandemic in March 2020, residential institutions (including Kenyon) pivoted to remote teaching and learning, developing a new facility with technology in our teaching and in our basic operations as a community. As we emerge from the pandemic, are there lessons to be learned about the role of technology and remote teaching in the educational work of residential institutions? Can we deepen

the significance of a residential experience in education, and can we articulate clearly the value of the residential (versus the remote) experience (especially the value in the context of the cost)? Social isolation and financial challenges to families posed by the pandemic have increased anxiety and depression among young people. Can we develop a model of health and wellness appropriate to respond to growing emotional and mental health concerns among our students?

- **Equity and social justice.** The past year has brought long-overdue national and international attention to the persistent presence of racism, discrimination and injustice. Higher education has not been immune from these discussions; even as campuses become more diverse, colleges have struggled to confront traditions and current practices that inhibit a shared sense of belonging among all students. How can colleges not only cultivate a sense of belonging, but equip graduates to build belonging in their own communities?
- **Global connections.** Over the past half century our society, our economy and our lives have been increasingly affected by international interconnectedness. Greater global interaction places high demands on colleges and universities to prepare students for global citizenship. With the disruption to global travel caused by the pandemic and growing backlash to globalization both threatening the ability to promote international education, how can campuses build international diversity in the student body and among faculty and staff and integrate that diversity into our residential campus? How does the work of a liberal arts education — inside and outside the classroom — address the global diversity of humanity?
- **The environment.** Rapid environmental change presents a serious challenge to individuals, communities and institutions. How will colleges practice the sustainable use of resources, and perhaps more importantly, how will they integrate environmental stewardship into the fundamentals of a liberal arts education?

CURRENT STRENGTHS: A PLATFORM FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

The years 2020 and 2021 have been extremely challenging for Kenyon, with the COVID-19 crisis bringing unprecedented financial challenges for the institution and members of the College community, significant disruption of the residential experience, and the need to pivot rapidly to new pedagogical approaches. Fortunately, this crisis came at a moment when Kenyon was at a historical high point in terms of institutional strength. Particular areas of strength include:

- **An outstanding student body, a strong appeal among prospective students and a distinctive brand identity.** Kenyon attracts an application pool that is large and strong, both in its academic quality and diversity (and this has been a product of strategic investment in pool development over the past decade). Moreover, a recent branding study by the firm SimpsonScarborough found that prospective students and families associate Kenyon with a strong reputation in writing, close faculty mentorship of students and a tight-knit campus community positioned on a beautiful campus; these strong brand pillars give us a firm foundation upon which to build. Student achievements in national fellowship competitions, placements in major voluntary programs such as the Peace Corps and Teach for America, and success in graduate and professional school applications all attest to the student body's strength.
- **Talented, passionate, committed faculty and staff.** Kenyon continues to attract accomplished scholars who make teaching their first priority and gives them the resources to be successful in both endeavors. Members of our faculty successfully compete for national grants and fellowships (including National Science Foundation CAREER awards, Fulbright Fellowships and National Endowment for Humanities awards) and publish regularly. In addition, faculty members have doubled down on teaching by embracing new pedagogies and the College's own Center for

Innovative Pedagogy. Kenyon's staff brings first-rate academic preparation, years of experience working with students in residential environments and a deep loyalty to the institution. The close working relationships built by both faculty and staff with Kenyon students and their consequences for their lives after college have been lauded by students and their families for generations.

- **Critical role of a Kenyon liberal arts education.** In addressing the pressing problems facing the world today, the tools of a liberal arts education are needed more than ever. Kenyon's commitment to scientific inquiry, deep reading and analysis, excellence in writing and communicating in all forms, and public engagement are essential for this time in world history. The close interactions that we build within the Kenyon community — both here in Gambier and out in the world — stem from a kind of education that draws from different disciplines and experiences, preparing our students for a life of purpose.
- **Clear points of distinction and excellence.** Many institutions in Kenyon's peer group struggle to articulate distinct programmatic elements. Kenyon benefits from a trio of independent partner organizations (the Kenyon Review, the Gund Gallery and the Philander Chase Conservancy) that are truly unique. The Kenyon Review, an internationally renowned literary journal, enhances Kenyon's reputation as a writing college; the Philander Chase Conservancy is the only land-trust located in a liberal arts college and embodies our commitment to stewardship of the natural environment; and the Gund Gallery integrates an outstanding contemporary art collection into the curricular and co-curricular life of the College. All of these organizations offer professional experiences to our students during the academic year, and the Kenyon Review's programming for high school students boosts the College's recruitment efforts. Beyond these, the College has other areas of programmatic excellence that historically have received less attention, including the strong track record of producing science graduates who go on to complete advanced academic work, impressive recent successes in institutional and individual funding from external sources (such as the National Science Foundation and Howard Hughes Medical Institute), and a thriving Center for the Study of American Democracy, which models rigorous discourse across political difference.
- **Opportunities presented by a superb physical campus.** Kenyon is routinely included on national and international lists of the most beautiful college campuses, and this distinction is well-deserved. Over the past 20 years, more than \$250 million has been invested in campus infrastructure, from the Science Quad to the Lowry Center to new facilities for the visual arts. The new Chalmers Library, anchoring a new academic quad, will continue this improvement of campus infrastructure. And, a recent commitment of \$100 million towards the construction of three new residence halls will accelerate our efforts to improve our housing facilities. All of this work has been done following a well-conceived campus master plan. In addition, the work of the Philander Chase Conservancy over the course of the past 20 years has helped to preserve the rural character of the campus surroundings as well as to support the development of the Brown Family Environmental Center and Kenyon Farm, resources that connect the surrounding environment to the curricular and co-curricular work of the institution. All of this has created a strong "sense of place" at Kenyon, a campus environment that helps to forge community connections among students, faculty and staff, as well as an attractor to prospective students.
- **An active and dedicated community of accomplished alumni and an unusually dedicated community of parents.** Kenyon alumni and families of current and former students, distinguished as leaders in their communities around the country and the world, form a strong group of loyal volunteers who mentor our students, provide a network for career initiation and advancement, collaborate with faculty, and support the College with their philanthropy.
- **Increased collaboration in the local area.** Kenyon has worked to strengthen connections with the local area on many levels of its operations. Our local foods program is a cornerstone of our dining operations, anchored in direct partnerships with local farmers. The Office of Community

Partnerships connects students and faculty to project opportunities in local organizations, businesses and government. And direct person-to-person collaboration and contact leads to meaningful discussions across social, political and cultural divides at a moment when political polarization is all too common in our society.

SPECIFIC CHALLENGES KENYON FACES

The pressures in the external landscape affect Kenyon as well, and as a result there are specific vulnerabilities in Kenyon's operations and programs that need to be addressed in the coming years. These include:

- **Tuition dependence.** About 80% of Kenyon's annual revenue in its operating budget comes from tuition. Yet, some of the most important aspirations for Kenyon's future — including expanding financial support for talented students from low- or middle-income families — directly reduce that revenue. How do we expand opportunity while maintaining stable sources of revenue?
- **Rebuilding post-COVID.** Navigating the COVID-19 crisis required withdrawals from the College's financial reserves and these must be restored in order to put the College on secure financial footing into the future. At the same time, the COVID-19 crisis significantly disrupted the sense of community on campus (which is so deeply rooted in the physical space and the residential experience) and placed pressure on the faculty and staff who were required to pivot often in response to the changing conditions of the pandemic. How do we reinvent and rebuild our sense of community on campus?
- **Building a more diverse and inclusive campus community.** Kenyon has made progress on recruiting students, faculty and staff from diverse groups, but more work needs to be done. And an even larger challenge is the effort to ensure that all members of the community feel included. Moreover, while the College has become more diverse, self-reported data (for example in studies by the National Survey of Student Engagement) suggest that students are not strengthening their intercultural skills, including the ability to engage in conversations across points of difference. We must also increase our efforts at intentional community building among our increasingly diverse faculty and staff, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic that inhibited face-to-face personal interaction for so long. How do we build a sense of community throughout the institution?
- **Expanding opportunities for global learning.** The broader global interests of Kenyon's faculty have produced strength in global-related areas of study throughout the curriculum; in any given year about 50% of our juniors study abroad for at least a semester; and our numbers of international students on campus have risen to about 11% of the total population. But, it is still possible for students to navigate their Kenyon education without a meaningful engagement with material or topics from outside of the United States. In an environment where an understanding of (and facility with navigating) the global community is increasingly important, how do we provide opportunities for all of our students to have a substantive international experience before graduation?
- **Strengthening the connections between what students learn in the classroom and how they apply that knowledge.** In the last strategic plan, we made some progress in expanding opportunities for students to gain valuable learning experiences through internships, extended projects, undergraduate research or community-engaged learning. How do we continue to expand these opportunities? And how do we ensure that they are fully integrated into the academic experience of our students?
- **Making progress on the College's carbon neutrality commitment.** Kenyon has committed to attaining carbon neutrality in its operations by the year 2040. How do we not only make progress on reducing the carbon footprint of our physical infrastructure but also incorporate a culture of environmental responsibility throughout the community?

KENYON COLLEGE MISSION AND VALUES

During the 2019-20 academic year, the campus community reframed Kenyon's mission and values. These statements serve as the foundation for the strategic plan.

Our Mission

At Kenyon, we build strong foundations for lives of purpose and consequence. We harness the transformative power of a liberal arts education — engaging in spirited, informed and collaborative inquiry — to form a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the world and all who inhabit it.

Our Values

Intellectual Empowerment and Creativity

We cultivate intellectual courage and humility in equal measure. We confront enduring and emerging questions with honesty and imagination. In the tradition of the liberal arts, we seek greater self-awareness and equip ourselves to learn for a lifetime.

Embracing Differences

We commit to engaging a wide range of viewpoints, developing compassionate thinkers who value and embrace diverse cultures and identities. We believe equitable access to opportunity is essential to fostering a community in which every person has a sense of full belonging and the tools to reach their full potential.

Kindness, Respect and Integrity

We treat one another with respect and kindness, speaking with sincerity and acting with integrity, for we recognize the fundamental dignity of all. This unifies us across our backgrounds, identities and positions. Practicing these challenging ideals connects us to the best parts of what makes us human. We support a culture in which we contribute to the well-being of others while we also care for ourselves.

Enduring Connections to People and Place

Our residential environment promotes rich collaborations and lifelong connections. We form a close-knit and lasting community with strong ties to the village, county, nation and world. Our natural setting shapes the way we learn and live, and we recognize our vital role in stewarding the environment.

CORE ELEMENTS OF THE FOUNDATIONS FOR KENYON'S THIRD CENTURY PLAN PRIORITIES, INITIATIVES AND STRATEGIC CHANGES

To accomplish the College's mission, meet the demands of the external landscape of higher education, build on Kenyon's strong foundation and address the College's specific challenges, we will focus the work of the College for the next few years into three priorities, each with a series of accompanying initiatives. Also, to ensure that this plan is financially and structurally feasible for Kenyon, we will adopt a set of three strategic changes.

Priority I: Engage students in rigorous learning on enduring and emerging questions, rooted in Gambier's residential community, with a global reach.

Initiatives for Priority I

- A. **Faculty.** Kenyon will deepen and increase support for its current and future faculty community so that, post-pandemic, the College's evolving student body continues to benefit from excellent, committed teacher-scholars recruited from a broad range of sociodemographic backgrounds.
- B. **High-impact practices.** Kenyon will further expand and promote high-impact practices so that all students graduate with the ability to connect classroom-based learning with "real-world" problem-solving, drawing on the participation of Kenyon alumni and parents where appropriate.
- C. **International experiences.** Kenyon will expand existing opportunities and create new opportunities so that every student has a firsthand learning experience in a culture different from their own.
- D. **Computational studies.** Kenyon will create an interdisciplinary computational studies program so that students gain undergraduate-level competencies in computer science informed by the liberal arts.
- E. **Writing.** Kenyon will further develop writing across the curriculum so that its students graduate with exceptional writing skills that translate into many aspects of their professional and personal lives.
- F. **Integrated advising.** Kenyon will strengthen the impact of its advising approach so that every student charts a cohesive and purposeful undergraduate experience, recognizing that advising encapsulates a broad range of interactions, including academic advising, coaching by the athletics staff, the specialized guidance offered by offices such as the Center for Global Engagement, Student Accessibility and Support Services, and the Career Development Office.
- G. **Environmental literacy.** Kenyon will embed sustainability across the curriculum and leverage the Green Centers more effectively so that all students gain an understanding of the natural and built environment, their interconnections, and the links between human prosperity and ecological health.

Priority II: Recruit, retain and educate a community of academically excellent students, reflective of the diversity of our nation and representative of the world, thriving as individuals, and united by a shared sense of belonging.

Initiatives for Priority II

- A. **Inclusive excellence.** Kenyon will strengthen its commitment to inclusive excellence by enrolling, retaining and graduating a student body that is representative of the talent and diversity of our nation and the world, by recruiting and supporting a faculty and staff that are reflective of the Kenyon student body of the future, and by providing continued support for pedagogical innovation to promote inclusive teaching.
- B. **Community-building.** Kenyon will prioritize community-building and forming connections as integral components of the campus experience so that each student, as well as each faculty and staff member, has a strong sense of belonging and opportunities for meaningful participation.
- C. **Health and wellness.** Kenyon will implement a holistic approach to health and wellness, recognizing the particular mental health challenges faced by students emerging from the pandemic, so that each student learns to balance academic, financial, social and health-related demands independently.

Priority III: Fully realize Kenyon’s mission into its third century by securing the College’s financial foundations, advancing equitable access, and stewarding our built and natural environment.

Initiatives for Priority III

- A. **Strong financial foundations.** Kenyon will prepare itself to deliver on its ambitious mission over the next century and effectively navigate external economic uncertainty by rebuilding reserves depleted by the COVID-19 crisis and its economic impacts and by building the endowment.
- B. **Equitable access.** Kenyon will grow its capacity to meet the needs of the College’s future student body by strategically expanding financial aid and scholarships and limiting tuition increases.
- C. **Environmental stewardship.** Kenyon will expand its commitment to environmental responsibility as a hallmark of the College by integrating environmental sustainability in its decision-making and the full range of College activities.

Strategic Changes

The strategic changes identified below are cross-cutting recommendations that support all three of the priorities. That is, many aspects of the foregoing priorities and initiatives can be accomplished more effectively, and can be resourced and acted upon in a more timely manner, by making these foundational adjustments to the College and its operations.

- A. **Size of the student body.** Kenyon will increase the student body by 200-250 students and those elements of the College required to support that growth in order to enrich the academic program and campus experience, increase the diversity of the student body over time, generate revenue, and lower per student costs.
- B. **Academic calendar.** Kenyon will consider adjusting the academic calendar to incorporate a winter term, while also strengthening summer programming, in order to create more space for learning beyond the classroom and integrate high-impact practices and travel abroad into the academic experience for students.
- C. **Institutional partnerships.** Kenyon will develop a new set of institutional partners and reinforce existing partnerships to support both programmatic and recruitment goals.

IMPLEMENTATION AND ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIONS

The priorities of this plan will shape the work of the College over the next five years, and they will also form the basis for the work of the committees of the Board of Trustees, the faculty and other governing bodies. For each initiative, Kenyon will undertake a series of actions. The following includes illustrative actions that are key to bringing the initiatives to life; this list is not exhaustive and others may be required.

Priority I: Engage students in rigorous learning on enduring and emerging questions, rooted in Gambier’s residential community, with a global reach.	
<i>Initiatives</i>	<i>Illustrative Actions</i>
<p>A. Faculty. Kenyon will deepen and increase support for its current and future faculty community so that, post-pandemic, the College’s evolving student body continues to benefit from excellent, committed teacher-scholars recruited from a broad range of sociodemographic backgrounds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recruit, retain and promote a community of faculty that reflects the diversity of our future student body. ● Provide ongoing support for faculty research through resources devoted to faculty development. ● Strengthen and support the new Office of Sponsored Faculty Projects while also recognizing and promoting faculty research projects in the media through our Office of Communications. ● Provide faculty development support for other initiatives proposed in this plan. ● Support faculty who wish to build on the skills in online and remote teaching that they developed during the pandemic.
<p>B. High-impact practices. Kenyon will further expand and promote high-impact practices so that all students graduate with the ability to connect classroom-based learning with “real-world” problem-solving, drawing on the participation of Kenyon alumni and parents where appropriate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Incorporate internships more fully into the curriculum. ● Strengthen partnerships with centers and campus organizations (Gund Gallery, Kenyon Review, Philander Chase Conservancy, Brown Family Environmental Center, Office of Community Partnerships, etc.) to make opportunities explicit and more readily interfaced with the curriculum. ● Support faculty research that can incorporate opportunities to include student contributions. ● Enhance the ways that academic advising supports students to integrate campus work experiences, internships and other opportunities into their academic experience. ● Leverage our alumni and parent networks to grow the number of internship and professional development opportunities available.
<p>C. International experiences. Kenyon will create new and expand existing opportunities so that every student has a firsthand learning experience in a culture different from their own.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expand off-campus study opportunities and internships and create meaningful international experiences, such as course-embedded travel and winter term programming, that are alternatives or complements to traditional semester abroad models. ● Build partnerships with institutions abroad. ● Enhance the already strong global curricular elements on campus. ● Promote faculty development in global endeavors, both curricular and scholarly. ● Ensure that all students feel that having an international experience is an important part of a Kenyon education and is accessible to them, regardless of their major or participation in campus-based extracurricular activities.

<p>D. Computational studies. Kenyon will create an interdisciplinary computational studies program so that students gain undergraduate-level competencies in computer science informed by the liberal arts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a computational studies program that draws from a broad range of academic disciplines and establishes a new major. ● Provide curricular access to all students who wish to develop their technological literacy and computational skills.
<p>E. Writing. Kenyon will further embed writing across the curriculum so that its students graduate with exceptional writing skills that translate into many aspects of their professional and personal lives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expand offerings in writing-intensive courses throughout the curriculum, supporting interdisciplinary initiatives that center writing (such as Science and Nature Writing). ● Emphasize writing as an essential skill for post-graduate success. ● Highlight the beauty and power of high-caliber writing.
<p>F. Integrated advising. Kenyon will strengthen the impact of its advising approach so that every student charts a cohesive and purposeful undergraduate experience, recognizing that advising encapsulates a broad range of interactions, including academic advising, coaching by the athletics staff, the specialized guidance offered by offices such as the Center for Global Engagement, Student Accessibility and Support Services, and the Career Development Office.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support students through academic advising as they integrate co-curricular programming, high-impact experiences and the residential experience throughout all four years. ● Further enhance the faculty-centered advising system.
<p>G. Environmental literacy. Kenyon will embed sustainability across the curriculum and leverage the Green Centers more effectively so that all students gain an understanding of the natural and built environment, their interconnections, and the links between human prosperity and ecological health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Embed sustainability experiences in courses, co-curricular activities and student life to leverage the Green Centers more effectively and foster high-impact practices geared towards environmental literacy. ● Increase faculty engagement by promoting and rewarding “sustainability learning” as we have with community-engaged learning. ● Enhance the environmental studies major by expanding the faculty who can teach in the environmental studies curriculum and creating a physical home for students and faculty. ● Build a culture of environmental stewardship by integrating it into orientation and by acknowledging the tradeoffs in our actions (for example, while we place a high value on expanding international experiences, those will likely increase our carbon footprint).

Priority II: Recruit, retain and educate a community of academically excellent students, reflective of the diversity of our nation and representative of the world, thriving as individuals, and united by a shared sense of belonging.

<i>Initiatives</i>	<i>Illustrative Actions</i>
<p>A. Inclusive excellence. Kenyon will strengthen its commitment to inclusive excellence by enrolling, retaining and graduating a student body that is representative of the talent and diversity of our nation and the world, by recruiting and supporting a faculty and staff that are reflective of the Kenyon student body of the future, and by providing continued support for pedagogical innovation to promote inclusive teaching.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Effectively recruit a student body that more closely resembles the national population and assembles a wide range of international students as well. ● Expand opportunities for non-traditional students, such as community college transfer to Kenyon. ● Restructure and build upon existing partnerships such as the Kenyon Academic Partnership (KAP) program. ● Build robust systems of support for a more diverse and evolving student body to encourage retention, including supporting the Kenyon Interfaith Partnership and making more of the campus accessible to those with mobility challenges. ● Augment support services for international students with special attention to the programs that help them better integrate into the Kenyon community as a whole. ● Enhance the capacity of our faculty and staff to be effective teachers and mentors for the evolving student population.
<p>B. Community-building. Kenyon will prioritize community-building and forming connections as integral components of the campus experience so that each student, as well as each faculty and staff member, has a strong sense of belonging and opportunities for meaningful participation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create spaces and relevant programming conducive to community-building in the newly constructed and renovated residential buildings. ● Strengthen the integration of programming aimed at generating belonging for all members of the community (across divides of race, class, nationality) into the co-curriculum. ● Develop a comprehensive, sustained and effective first-year experience, including an expanded orientation. ● Build on a shared sense of place to promote environmental literacy.
<p>C. Health and wellness. Kenyon will implement a holistic approach to health and wellness, recognizing the particular mental health challenges faced by students emerging from the pandemic, so that each student learns to balance academic, financial, social and health-related demands independently.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coordinate the efforts of the Cox Health and Counseling Center, Spiritual and Religious Life Office, and Athletics, Fitness and Recreation Department to provide a broad set of options for holistic health and wellness. ● Invest in national expertise to assess Kenyon’s systems of health and wellness and develop programming to promote mental health for all Kenyon students, with a focus on meeting the needs of students of color.

Priority III: Fully realize Kenyon’s mission into its third century by securing the College’s financial foundations, advancing equitable access, and stewarding our built and natural environment.

<i>Initiatives</i>	<i>Illustrative Actions</i>
<p>A. Strong financial foundations. Kenyon will prepare itself to deliver on its ambitious mission over the next century and effectively navigate external economic uncertainty by rebuilding reserves depleted by the COVID-19 crisis and its related economic impacts and by growing the endowment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rebuild operating reserve funds spent down during the pandemic. ● Develop new revenue that supports ongoing and new College operations. ● Prioritize endowment growth through philanthropy and management of payout rates and investment returns. ● Seize opportunities available in financial markets to refinance existing debt in the most cost-effective way.
<p>B. Equitable access. Kenyon will grow its capacity to meet the needs of the College’s future student body by strategically expanding financial aid and scholarships and limiting tuition increases.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to strategically invest in financial aid and scholarships, reimagining needs analysis, and limiting tuition rate increases. ● Invest in the development of faculty and staff to meet the needs of the evolving student body.
<p>C. Environmental stewardship. Kenyon will establish ecological resilience and environmental responsibility as hallmarks of the College by integrating environmental sustainability into its decision-making and the full range of College activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conserve and further develop high-carbon ecosystems such as forests and wetlands. ● Continue to implement changes to our built environment to meet our goal of carbon neutrality by 2040.

Strategic Changes		
<p>A. Size of the student body: Kenyon will increase the student body by 200-250 students and those elements of the College required to support that growth in order to enrich the academic program and campus experience, increase the diversity of the student body over time, generate revenue, and lower per student costs.</p>	<p><i>Target:</i> Grow by 200-250 students by 2030.</p> <p><i>Illustrative Actions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a plan for the construction of new housing and renovation of existing housing that generates sufficient beds to accommodate expected growth, completed by the fall of 2021. ● Create a plan for adjustment to the dining program so that the College can feed the additional students envisioned. ● Plan for additions to faculty and staff necessary to support a larger student body. 	<p><i>Rationale</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A larger population could provide more students for smaller programs or to major in new programs (such as computational studies) as well as more robust social and co-curricular options. ● A larger student body will generate more extracurricular options — something that has always come from student creativity — e.g., publications, radio and podcasts, filmmaking, and more organizations based on changing student interests and affinity groups. ● More students would also further enliven the environment of the village center, using the new facilities as they evolve into Kenyon activity spaces or cafes and retail. ● With more students per class, the prospects of admitting more academically strong and diverse students increases. ● A well-planned evolution of the student body size, over the course of the coming decade, will enable Kenyon to intentionally evolve its faculty, staff, programs and support systems in ways that will maintain its strengths and ensure the high-quality education for which Kenyon is currently recognized. ● With a larger student body, fixed costs of operation can be spread across more students, allowing Kenyon to lower per student costs and contribute to cost containment efforts. ● A larger enrollment will generate more net revenue to contribute to Kenyon’s financial stability and its adaptability.
<p>B. Academic calendar. Kenyon will consider adjusting the academic calendar from two semesters to incorporate a winter term, while also strengthening summer programming, in order to create more space for learning beyond the classroom and integrate high-impact practices and travel abroad into the academic experience for all students.</p>	<p><i>Target:</i> Have a new calendar approved and in place by 2024.</p> <p><i>Illustrative Actions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Seek faculty endorsement of a new calendar. ● Determine the impact of calendar adjustments for athletics and co-curricular programming. ● Establish responsibilities in the academic administration for coordinating a winter term and its attentive activities. 	<p><i>Rationale</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To give emphasis to high-impact experiences and to be able to devote time for them, we should consider adopting a 4-1-4 calendar, with a winter term in January in which courses and other learning opportunities would be offered. A one-month winter term would allow short-term intensive internships, course-embedded travel, experimental courses that emphasize experiential learning, mentored research, intense laboratory courses, immersive language courses, and individual work on honors projects or similar independent study that is harder to accomplish during normal semesters. This will also enhance faculty goals — sometimes using the January term for faculty-student initiatives and in other years for advancing their own projects and research.

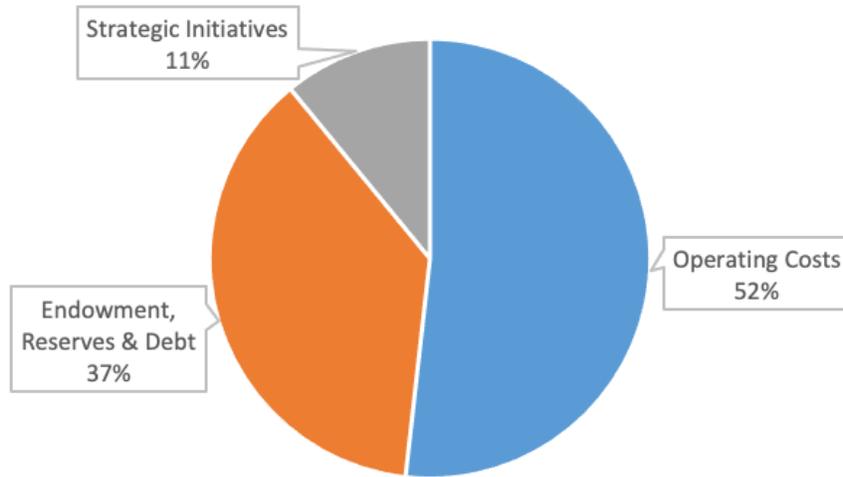
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicate resources to faculty development related to redesign of semester courses and creation of winter-term courses. • Ensure that financial constraints do not create inequities in the capacity of students to access winter term opportunities. 	
<p>C. Institutional partnerships. Kenyon will develop a new set of institutional partners and reinforce existing partnerships to support both programmatic and recruitment goals.</p>	<p><i>Target:</i> Review each existing partnership to determine if it is serving Kenyon’s purposes by June 2022. Identify potential additional partners by January 2022 for further vetting.</p> <p><i>Illustrative Actions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing external partnerships. • Consider Kenyon centers and affiliated organizations for programmatic and recruitment purposes beyond what they are already offering. • Identify programmatic areas in which collaboration with new partners could be beneficial to Kenyon, and then identification of new partners for further vetting. 	<p><i>Rationale</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment of students to achieve the College’s ambitious goals for enrolling an academically promising and diverse student body will require establishing stronger pipelines to channel prospective students to Kenyon and reinforcing or renovating existing connections, such as the Kenyon Academic Partnership, Camp IV and Kenyon Review Young Writers. • Achieving programmatic goals such as creating more international experiences or better experiential learning opportunities could be achieved more effectively and efficiently by working with institutional partners both abroad and in the United States.

FINANCIAL BASES OF THE PLAN

The financial implications of these illustrative actions have been modeled, assuming growth of 20 students per year over the next 10 years. The revenue generated by growth in the student body is capable of funding the infrastructure required to support that growth (including investments in new faculty, expanded student recruitment efforts and resources for student support), the priorities and initiatives put forward in this plan, and the investments in reserves and endowment that will strengthen the College's financial foundation.

Strategic Plan Financial Summary			
Assumptions for next 10 years:		Average last 10 years:	
20 Additional students per year for total of 200 after 10 years		Average growth 10 new students per year - not include 2020-21	
Discount rate of all classes increase from 42% to 48% after 10 years		Discount rate growth from 33% to 39% - not include 2020-21	
Annual tuition increase from 3.75% to 3% after 7 yrs & 3% for rest of the years		Average tuition increase 3.95% - not include 2020-21	
	5 yrs out	10 yrs out	Notes
Baseline Students - On-Campus Enrollment	1,690	1,690	Roughly equal to normal year on-campus enrollment
Additional Students - Strategic Growth	100	200	Adds 20 students per year for 10 years
Total On-Campus Students	1,790	1,890	Total on-campus enrollment = baseline + strategic growth
Total Off-Campus Study Students	110	110	Average FTE student count
Total On and Off-Campus Students	1,900	2,000	
Additional Annual Net Revenue (\$1,000's)	\$ 5,613	\$ 12,242	Tuition, room & board, less financial aid from strategic growth
Additional Operating Costs & Potential Debt Payment			
Variable Costs	\$ (1,589)	\$ (3,643)	Food, utilities, maintenance, etc.
Support Personnel & Related Expenses	(889)	(1,202)	Maint, res life, admissions, etc.
Additional Faculty	(677)	(1,494)	5 new faculty in 5 years, 5 additional by 10 years
Remaining Funds	2,459	5,904	
Reserves and Potential Debt Payment			
Reserves & Potential Debt Payment	(1,288)	(4,565)	Funds used to pay down debt / build endowment
Remaining Funds for Strategic Initiatives	\$ 1,171	\$ 1,338	
Strategic Initiative Costs			
High Impact Practices	\$ (333)	\$ (386)	J-term, internship funding, summer research
International Experience	(467)	(534)	Travel courses, add'l CGE staffing and programming
Computational Studies (excl. faculty)	(164)	(190)	Excludes faculty, included above
Res. Life/First Yr experience	(206)	(228)	Add'l staffing
Total Strategic Initiative Costs	\$ (1,171)	\$ (1,338)	

% Allocation of Additional Tuition Revenue



CONCLUSION

“Foundations for Kenyon’s Third Century” lays out priorities and strategies for sustaining the enduring elements of a Kenyon education, adapting to emerging challenges, and strengthening Kenyon’s financial foundations. These priorities, intended to guide the College’s planning and actions over the coming five years and beyond, provide a dynamic framework that will be adjusted and recalibrated in response to the changing environment. In its nearly 200-year history, Kenyon has consistently succeeded in meeting new challenges while sustaining its commitment to its fundamental mission and values, and with these priorities, that tradition of strategic, dynamic evolution will continue.

APPENDIX I

THE KENYON 2020 PLAN

The Kenyon 2020 plan, adopted in 2015 to run through 2020, has guided the College's major efforts since then, including fundraising with foundations and the alumni-and-parent community. While the Kenyon 2020 plan was formulated before the College rewrote its Mission and Values Statement in 2019-20, the latter document's main themes were foreshadowed in the former. A summary of Kenyon 2020 plan success to date suggests that offices and faculty departments and committees across the institution made the plan's priorities theirs.

The strategic priorities outlined in the Kenyon 2020 plan were:

- I. ***Focus on an integrated, comprehensive experience that prepares students for post-graduate success.*** Since 2015, the College made improvements in the first-year experience, particularly in new student orientation and efforts by the Career Development Office to reach first-year students with programming. Faculty and staff focused on increasing opportunities for high-impact experiences by: raising the profile of internships, mentored research, and community-engaged learning and research; creating a fund to subsidize internships for students with financial need; increasing the number of high-quality campus internship opportunities (such as the Kenyon Review Associates, Gund Gallery Associates and Center for the Study of American Democracy Associates); and adding opportunities for mentored undergraduate research outside of the sciences.
- II. ***Strategically use Kenyon's resources to attract, retain and graduate an academically excellent and diverse student body.*** The percentage of students from outside the United States has more than doubled while the share of the student body that is domestic students of color has fluctuated over the period of the plan from a low of 17.5% of the first-year class that entered in Fall 2016 to a high of 22.4% of those that entered in Fall 2020, with the latter being the highest share of the student body that is students of color ever. Meanwhile, programs designed to promote the retention and graduation of students from first-generation, socioeconomically challenged and otherwise traditionally underrepresented at liberal arts college backgrounds — particularly the Kenyon Educational Enrichment Program (KEEP) and the summer STEM program inspired by it — have grown in size and profile.
- III. ***Intentionally build community on campus, in our local region, and in the world-wide Kenyon family that enhances the learning environment and strengthens lifelong ties with the College.*** Kenyon successfully expanded the number of faculty coming from underrepresented backgrounds. Although faculty salaries have slipped slightly compared to our benchmark, faculty retention is high. The Center for Innovative Pedagogy has become a home for faculty seeking to improve their teaching practices and the College has created an Office of Sponsored Faculty Projects to support faculty research. Faculty in the sciences sought and received a Howard Hughes Medical Institute grant to support and focus their efforts on inclusive pedagogy; one result of their efforts came with a revision to the criteria for faculty evaluation that incorporated inclusive pedagogy explicitly. Meanwhile, Kenyon developed the Employee Performance Program to improve staff development. To improve the College's relationship with the broader community, we opened the Office of Community Partnerships (OCP), created an Office of Campus Events, and improved communications about Kenyon events in the region.

APPENDIX II

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Launched at the February 2020 Kenyon Board of Trustees meeting, but delayed because of the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the strategic planning process began in earnest in August 2020. This strategic planning process followed closely the completion of the reframing of the College's Mission and Values Statement, adopted by the Board and the faculty in February 2020.

A 24-member strategic planning committee composed of trustees, faculty, students, and members of the College's senior staff and other administrators guided the planning process. Cambridge Concord Associates provided consulting advice and support for the planning process as well as the earlier reconsideration of the mission. The committee initially engaged key Kenyon constituencies about their visions of Kenyon's future, meeting (virtually, because of the pandemic) with the Faculty Executive Committee, chairs of academic departments and programs, the full faculty, Student Council, the Campus Senate, Parents' Advisory Council, alumni volunteer leaders, and directors of the College's affiliated organizations and centers. Identifying key ideas emerging from those conversations, the committee broke into working groups to further develop concepts and initiatives. The working groups also explored likely resource implications of their proposed initiatives and shared them with the financial working group, which developed a model of the budgetary and financial implications of pursuing them. In January 2021 the committee began drafting the text of this planning document, sharing early drafts with the Board, the faculty, and students through the organizations mentioned above. The final version of the document was reviewed in a "red team" analysis by a group of two faculty members, two trustees, and two senior staff members, none of whom were members of the planning committee. The faculty endorsed the plan at its April 26, 2021, meeting. The Board of Trustees adopted the plan at its June 3, 2021, meeting.

APPENDIX III

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE ROSTER 2021

Diane Anci
Vice President for Enrollment Management
Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid

Jeff Bowman
Provost
Professor of History

Todd Burson
Vice President for Finance

Sean Decatur
President

Brackett Denniston III '69
Trustee

Siobhan Fennessy
Jordan Professor of Environmental Studies
Professor of Biology

James P. Finn '70
Trustee

Colleen Garland
Vice President for Advancement

Tom Giblin
Professor of Physics
Chair of the Faculty

Judy Hoff Gilbert '91
Trustee

P.J. Glandon
Associate Professor of Economics

Jazz Glastra '11
Associate Director for Career Development

Hope C. Harrod '98
Trustee

Aileen C. Hefferren '88 H'12
Trustee

Pamela Hoehn-Saric '80 P'10,'14
Trustee

Chris Kennerly
Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Associate Dean of Students

Joseph Klesner, Co-Chair
Professor of Political Science
Senior Advisor to the President

Kira Lancz '21
Student

Susan Morse
Chief of Staff

Zachary Sclar '22
Student

Reginald Sanders
Professor of Music

Shanti Silver '22
Student

Wendy F. Singer
Wortman Professor of History

Barrett A. Toan '69, Co-Chair
Trustee