STRATEGIC PLAN 2012–2017

A NEW VISION

GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY
VISION

1. the ability to think about or plan the future with imagination or wisdom: the organization had excellent vision and direction.

2. a mental image of what the future will or could be like: a powerful vision of success.
GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY is a regional New Jersey university offering Catholic education in the Mercy tradition. Founded in 1908 by the Sisters of Mercy, the university is a locally recognized institution with a well-respected School of Education. Indeed, there are few New Jersey education institutions that do not count our alumni among their staffs or administration.

However, in recent years, the university’s enrollment has decreased and has faced a financial shortfall, both as a result of the recession and limited awareness in the region. When this became evident, The Court community—at every level of every department—sprang into action to help address these concerns.

With urgency and determination, campus leaders were assembled. They identified cost-cutting measures and ways to operate more efficiently. They looked for ways to increase applications and enrollment, to create a more sustainable university environment. They looked for ways to rebalance staffing and academic programs. These resourceful individuals gathered information and charted a bold course through faith and hard work. At every juncture, campus leaders kept our community fully apprised of the proposals, decisions, and changes.

While the process was challenging and led to difficult decisions, it did serve to bring many within our community closer than ever as we sought to make the university the best it can be for our students. Certainly, the “winds of change” blew figuratively through our campus, but there were some very literal winds wailing as well, bringing external challenges during the strategic planning process. In 2011, Hurricane Irene blasted the Jersey Shore and flooded communities in various parts of the state. The following year, Hurricane Sandy and Winter Storm Athena blasted the Georgian Court campus back-to-back, creating more than $2 million in damage to the grounds. We persevered—both at home and on campus.

The planning process led to two significant changes that our university would embrace: a transition to a coeducational learning environment and a major rebranding of the university to showcase its mission and the transformative power of a Georgian Court education.

Our hard work led to the creation of a new strategic plan and a set of four primary initiatives to guide the university through 2017, as well as the steps to achieve those initiatives and measurements of success. This bold vision is already being realized. Through commitment, determination, and faith, the campus is well on its way to taking its rightful place as a leading institution of Catholic education.

Our future is rich with possibility.
A New Vision

FOR MORE THAN A CENTURY, The Court has been a living example of education in the Catholic Mercy tradition. Established in 1908 by the Sisters of Mercy as a women’s college, Georgian Court expanded its offerings with coeducational graduate and evening undergraduate programs in the 1970s. Granted university status by the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education in 2004, the campus is approximately 60 miles south of New York City and 10 miles west of the iconic Jersey Shore. Students may obtain undergraduate or graduate degrees in three schools: the School of Arts and Sciences, the School of Business, or the School of Education. Our campus will be fully coeducational with the start of the 2013–2014 academic year.

Georgian Court University provides comprehensive liberal arts education and is open to students of all faiths. Cultivated by a highly esteemed university environment, committed faculty, and technologically advanced setting, our curriculum is broad enough to be truly liberal, yet specialized enough to provide in-depth preparation for careers or further study. A small college setting allows us to give students personal attention. We have a commitment to creating world citizens and pride ourselves on helping our students use their unique strengths to find purpose—that place where talent and passion intersect.

We teach students about how they can make a positive difference in the world.

At Georgian Court University, students are taught by faculty members rather than graduate assistants. Ninety percent of our professors and instructors hold doctorates in their fields. We place an emphasis on mentoring, and students have a great deal of access to their professors to support classroom learning and individual study. Faculty members also model the university’s ideals, demonstrating a commitment to public service and a personal affinity to our Mercy core values of respect, integrity, public service, compassion, and service.

Our unique focus on becoming one’s best self, combined with our commitment to excellence in academics and career preparedness, give us strengths that need to be more widely known. Centered around the core values of the Sisters of Mercy, the university offers an extremely safe and inspirational campus environment supported by individualized attention and guidance.

Our Mission

Georgian Court University, founded and sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy, provides a comprehensive liberal arts education in the Roman Catholic tradition. The university has a special concern for women and is a dynamic community committed to the core values of justice, respect, integrity, service, and compassion, locally and globally. Georgian Court University provides students with:

• a curriculum broad enough to be truly liberal, yet specialized enough to support further study and future careers;

• an environment for the entire university community to grow through shared educational, cultural, social, and spiritual experiences;

• and the will to translate concern for social justice into action.

Georgian Court plans to expand student life and campus programs for a coed population.
Our Core Values

Georgian Court University is committed to the Mercy core values of justice, respect, integrity, service, and compassion.

RESPECT
We reverence the dignity of all persons and all life as gifts of God and strive to promote community in our world.

INTEGRITY
We believe that fidelity to moral principles, honesty, and sincerity are the basis of trustworthiness in all encounters.

JUSTICE
We believe ordering of right relationships with all persons and all creation is fundamental to our advocacy for structures that protect the vulnerable.

COMPASSION
We embrace the joys and sorrows of others to whom and with whom we minister and are moved to action in solidarity with the human community.

SERVICE
We joyfully extend our energy and resources on behalf of the poor, sick, and uneducated, working to relieve misery and address its causes where possible.

The Path to Change

Georgian Court University endured the economic downturn, though we did not emerge without effect. Enrollment and retention suffered and fund-raising became increasingly challenging as others also felt the economic uncertainty. Moreover, budget issues at the state level led to declining aid to colleges and universities.

In a meeting with faculty and staff on May 2, 2011, GCU President Rosemary E. Jeffries, RSM, Ph.D., ’72 presented an assessment of the financial challenges facing our university. For Georgian Court to uphold its commitment to providing high-quality education in the Roman Catholic tradition, we needed to embark on a course toward becoming more self-sustaining.

We drew upon the strength and commitment of all of our Georgian Court community and our external partners to identify challenges and opportunities. Sister Rosemary rallied each of these segments to work together, developing a plan for rebalancing and restructuring Georgian Court for future economic strength.

In June 2011, Sister Rosemary announced the first steps in reorganizing various departments and appointed a task force to work with each department throughout the summer. The task force would seek immediate ideas and information to reduce costs and improve efficiency, which would help close a projected budget deficit and examine more in-depth changes that would both make Georgian Court economically stronger and position the university for future growth.

Sister Rosemary addressed our community’s most immediate concerns, which included financial ones. She encouraged everyone at Georgian Court to assist in recruiting new students and retaining those already enrolled. It was a difficult period that included saying “good-bye” to some longtime members of the community as departments were streamlined and rebalanced. At the same time, our community responded enthusiastically to Sister Rosemary’s call for help. No stone was left unturned to examine the best moves for the university in each department, while focusing on the best decisions for our students.

By August 2011, when Hurricane Irene arrived
at the Jersey Shore with tremendous force, the storm seemed a bellwether for changes Georgian Court University would soon undertake: an 18-month period of analysis, streamlining, planning, and change that would result in improvements to and new opportunities in every area of the university. During this period, Sister Rosemary kept the community informed through monthly updates.

**Environmental Scan**

The planning process began with a baseline assessment of the current situation by which to measure progress and an environmental scan of current and anticipated environmental factors that impact our university. Our quest to elevate Georgian Court, both economically and academically, was no different. The university community analyzed its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). Doing so required some tough questions, such as:

**Who are we as an institution?**
**Where do we want to go?**
**How can we get there?**
**How will we tell if we’ve gotten there?**

We needed to take an objective look at our beloved institution and why it was struggling. The university has a number of distinctive characteristics, including its multi-dimensional approach to learning, forward-thinking faculty, and breathtaking grounds. The SWOT analysis uncovered key attributes that informed the planning process:

- Our faculty and staff work as a team to mobilize and strengthen students as learners, prospective professionals, and human beings.
- A multi-dimensional education is inclusive of academics, the arts, athletics and innumerable co-curricular opportunities that allow each student to develop as an intellect, a leader, and a citizen.
- GCU is an historic, beautiful, and idiosyncratic campus that acts as an oasis of learning and living, even for commuter students. The campus has a discernable effect on student perspective and development.

Our primary challenge was that few knew of these powerful attributes and the transformative nature of a Georgian Court education. The university’s limited profile and brand awareness were key weaknesses and threats, undermining enrollment and retention activities. To turn around this unacceptable situation, Georgian Court must reinvest in our brand and make the region aware of these strengths. Key steps include:

- Reintroducing ourselves to the immediate market area (Ocean and Monmouth counties).
- Introducing ourselves for the first time to the broader regional market.

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**Strategic Plan Timeline**

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<th>2011</th>
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<th>JUNE</th>
<th>JULY</th>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>President Jeffries holds campus talks on financial challenges</strong></td>
<td><strong>Restructuring and Visioning teams formed</strong></td>
<td><strong>Campuswide SWOT Analysis</strong></td>
<td><strong>Visioning and re-imagining the future of Georgian Court</strong></td>
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Recommendations and Feedback

Each of these groups worked tirelessly to create a series of recommendations within their focus areas. Some of the recommendations were put to work immediately, such as various cost-cutting and streamlining measures.

Other recommendations were more sweeping, such as the decision that Georgian Court would transition to a fully coeducational institution.

In September 2012, a draft of the strategic plan was submitted to the campus community for feedback through of meetings, presentations, online feedback mechanisms, and other tools. To widen outreach to a greater number of community members, the planning group agreed to develop a series of electronic surveys for students and other key groups. The goal was to collect input from students, faculty, staff, parents, and high school counselors.

In every case, decisions were made based on a collection of the best possible information and data, thoughtful analysis, feedback from community members, and a commitment to do what is best for our students and our university as a whole. The result of this sweeping, campuswide initiative was a new vision statement and an ambitious set of strategic initiatives to be accomplished by 2017 that will establish Georgian Court University as the region’s foremost Catholic university.
External Challenges

As Georgian Court University embarked on a period of self-analysis and change, we also faced a number of significant external challenges.

In August 2011, Hurricane Irene caused widespread damage and flooding to our region. As we recovered from the storm and its impact on our area, there was more bad news. In December 2011, Standard & Poor’s (S&P) rating service changed the university’s bond rating from BBB+ to BBB due to two years of declining enrollment. However, S&P also recognized the university’s strengths, including GCU’s:

- “Good financial resources for its rating category”
- Strong growth in freshman applications
- Debt level less than endowment size
- Success in our 2008 capital campaign

Bond rating downgrades happen regularly in every industry, including higher education. However, the downgrade did make clear the critical nature of addressing enrollment issues. The university was already well on its way to doing so through the planning process.

Of course, no one could have predicted the next major challenge: the combined “superstorm” that included Hurricane Sandy and Winter Storm Athena. Together, the two pummeled the New Jersey coastline, creating unprecedented destruction in our area. Although the campus was far enough inland to avoid serious flooding and no trees fell on our buildings, these storms caused over $2 million in damage and expenses to Georgian Court—the historic wrought-iron fence circling the campus was badly damaged, and we lost about 60 historic trees, which are part of the university’s designated arboretum collection.

We were blessed, however, in that all of the students and staff remaining on campus were safe.

While the $2 million-plus in damages is a daunting figure, we have coordinated our own recovery and repair concerns. In addition, the storms and their aftermath have encouraged us to examine ways to plan better for future emergencies and augment our existing emergency preparedness plans.

While some of these challenges may have caused pause or delay for some planning bodies, Georgian Court’s committed task forces, committees, and teams did not miss a beat. Ever dedicated and resourceful, they found ways to continue to work together on the strategic planning process and get the job done while also raising money (alumni and friends donated nearly $40,000 to help affected students) for families who lost everything in the storms.

Mercy in Action

Students, staff, and faculty joined in the regional effort to Restore the Shore. In addition to assisting with campus cleanup, student volunteers worked at residential and commercial sites and organized countless clothing and food drives.
VISION STATEMENT
Georgian Court University is a leading regional university that provides a transformative education, preparing students for ethical leadership and service in the Catholic Mercy tradition.

A NEW PATH
Strategic Initiatives for 2012–2017

Coeducation is just one part of our strategy to become a regional university. GCU is the only religiously affiliated comprehensive university in Central and South Jersey, and we want to make our transformative Catholic Mercy education available to more students. Given that many New Jersey natives leave the state to pursue college, going coed helps us keep more students closer to home—students who will join New Jersey’s educated workforce.

As we increase the Georgian Court applicant pool, we will continue our mission and remain committed to our special concern for women. Ultimately, we will prepare students to contribute to their communities as they lead and serve.

Beyond going coed, we are also focused on:

• New programs and experiences affirming our Catholic identity.
• A more comprehensive academic profile for incoming students.
• Stronger financial stewardship and accountability.
• New majors and degrees that are in demand.
• Online expansion, including 100% online master’s degree programs.
• More quantifiable student outcomes and gainful employment.
• An aggressive recruitment campaign across the Mid-Atlantic.
• More global study and international collaboration.
• Increased alumni giving and involvement.
• Raising funds through new gifts and donations.
• Encouraging student philanthropy.
• Preparing graduates for professional success; lifelong learning; and a commitment to social justice, ethical leadership, and global citizenship.

The following pages outline the Strategic Initiatives that have the greatest potential for advancing the institution, engaging the university community, and bringing the vision statement to fruition.
Preparation Meets Opportunity
The New Jersey Bond Initiative

In November 2012, New Jersey voters approved the Building Our Future Bond Act, a state-backed $750-million matching fund program to help university and colleges pay for academic construction and renovation projects. Building Our Future is part of a $1.3-billion higher education package that includes four additional funding programs for technology infrastructure, equipment leasing, a facilities trust fund, and other capital improvements.

The sudden availability for funding to support much-needed campus improvements was an opportunity we did not want to miss. Trustees approved the required 25 percent matching money, and in the following weeks, our faculty and staff worked tirelessly to shape $13.4 million in Building Our Future (and other) requests. In late March 2013, we submitted five applications and five boxes filled with plans, schematics, timelines, and more for New Jersey Department of Education approval. The proposals were for:

• **Upgrades to Raymond Hall, home of Georgian Court’s School of Education**, where many aspiring teachers learn their craft. These future educators need to understand how to teach and reach students in a digital environment. However, the building is not enabled with wireless Internet connections. This application seeks to rectify that deficiency.

• **Renovations and classroom expansion in Hamilton Hall**, home of the Georgian Court–Meridian Health School of Nursing. By expanding some existing classrooms and improving lab equipment, the university can accommodate more nursing students studying for their B.S.N. degrees.

• **Comprehensive improvements to the Arts and Science Center**, which dates back to the early 1960s and needs to be revitalized and reconfigured, especially in the classroom and lab spaces where STEM classes are taught. Some current classrooms don’t accommodate the collaborative learning that biology, chemistry, and other disciplines require.

• **“Building Capacity, Connectivity, and Collaboration,”** a technology request from the Higher Education Facilities Trust Fund.

• **“Technology Innovation in Education,”** an additional technology request from the state’s equipment leasing fund.

One month later, state officials announced their recommendation. Pending legislative approval, GCU would receive nearly $8.5 million for renovation projects and technology upgrades for Raymond Hall, Hamilton Hall, and the Arts and Science Center!
Rebrand Georgian Court University to Reflect Its Mission

The university will enhance its image and position itself as a regional university in the Catholic Mercy tradition.

Georgian Court University is repositioning itself as a dynamic regional university rooted in the Catholic Mercy tradition. This requires evaluation and enhancement of the university’s image and brand to move beyond the university’s reputation as an “educator of educators” to become a respected and sought-after choice among prospective students who wish to obtain their degrees in a variety of academic disciplines. As part of the strategic plan, Georgian Court recruits students from its core region—Monmouth and Ocean counties—as well as places throughout New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Maryland.

To achieve its goals, Georgian Court must work toward becoming a number-one choice among prospective students in the region, not just a fine and worthy alternative. In addition to proper brand positioning and outreach, we must nurture within our community a new, more confident sense of pride in the institution. Finally, as brand awareness increases, we must use that momentum to help current and prospective donors see the vision Georgian Court has developed and develop the conviction that Georgian Court should be their number-one philanthropic priority.

Our goals, strategies, and objectives:

1.1 Promote and enhance the reputation, image, and profile of Georgian Court.

1.1.1 Implement a comprehensive regional marketing plan.

1.1.2 Communicate the Georgian Court brand both internally and externally.

1.1.3 Promote the knowledge of faculty, staff, students, and alumni in order to increase internal and external visibility in the region.

1.2 Integrate the Catholic Mercy intellectual and social traditions through spiritual life, curricular and co-curricular programming, and service to the community.

1.2.1 Enhance the link between the Catholic Mercy core values and traditions and the operation of the university.

1.2.2 Integrate Catholic Mercy mission and core values in spirituality experiences for faculty, staff, and students.

1.2.3 Establish a teaching, research, and scholarly center for Catholic Mercy education and management as a resource to the region.
STRATEGIC INITIATIVE II
Promote Transformative Education

The university will promote academic excellence through teaching and learning innovation and transformational educational experiences.

Georgian Court University has a history of delivering committed, involved citizens along with degrees. Now is the time to focus on new ways to enhance the promise of developing students and alumni who have integrity, knowledge, and purpose. Academic excellence will be promoted through teaching and learning innovation and transformational educational experiences.

Our goals, strategies, and objectives:

2.1 Provide a curriculum that prepares students for the 21st century global environment.
   2.1.1 Redesign the core curriculum to facilitate integrative learning.
   2.1.2 Cultivate undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs that facilitate integrative learning.

2.2 Integrate academic and student life to educate the whole person.
   2.2.1 Prepare students for professional success.
   2.2.2 Foster commitment to social justice and ethical leadership.
   2.2.3 Create opportunities for global and international education.

2.3 Promote academic excellence through teaching and learning innovation.
   2.3.1 Enhance a comprehensive program for faculty development.
   2.3.2 Use assessment data for continuous improvement.

2.4 Expand initiatives in experiential learning.
   2.4.1 Provide opportunities for students to explore future careers, including internships.
   2.4.2 Encourage students to become civically and culturally engaged in the Catholic Mercy tradition.
STRATEGIC INITIATIVE III
Optimize Enrollment

The university will optimize student enrollment to develop successful graduates in the Catholic Mercy tradition and achieve institutional self-sufficiency.

As the university strengthens its educational offerings, career readiness programs, and regional awareness, enrollment is expected to increase.

To achieve stated goals, including those in our ambitious 18-month tactical plan, the university is calling on its entire campus community to assist in the effort to attract students.

In addition, a fundamental shift is being made as GCU transitions from a primarily women's university to a coeducational institution.

Optimizing student enrollment in tandem with effective marketing and renewed emphasis on creating successful graduates in the Catholic Mercy tradition will allow the university to achieve institutional self-sufficiency.

Our goals, strategies, and objectives:

3.1 Develop targeted enrollment strategies for growth in specific student populations and markets.

3.1.1 Implement a new 18-month tactical enrollment marketing campaign to better attract and recruit new freshmen and transfer students.

3.1.2 Develop a comprehensive student flow model to gain a better understanding of the enrollment patterns of undergraduate and graduate students and persistence in undergraduate and graduate programs.

3.1.3 Market and deliver academic programs that address the needs and desires of consumers of higher education services.

3.2 Transform into a fully coeducational university.

3.2.1 Extend needs/cost analyses associated with coed transformation, and use data to drive brand-building and marketing strategy promoting coed transition.

3.2.2 Expand athletics by adding men's teams to be compliant with NCAA Division II and the CACC.

3.2.3 Expand student life and campus programs for a coed population.

3.3 Raise the academic and financial profile of undergraduate students.

3.3.1 Require the submission of SAT or ACT exams in order for all first-time, full-time freshmen to be accepted into the class petitioning for enrollment for Fall 2012.

3.3.2 Distribute internal financial aid resources strategically to attract more qualified students from targeted markets.

3.3.3 Continue to develop new policies, procedures, and action plans to stabilize and potentially increase enrollment needs.
STRATEGIC INITIATIVE IV
Strengthen Leadership, Planning, Technology, and Governance

The university will achieve long-term stability by bolstering its human capital and physical and financial infrastructure through rigorous planning, careful assessment, prudent financial oversight, and management practices.

Any robust institution needs strong and visionary leadership, committed and talented team members, and a scalable, high-quality infrastructure to maximize its potential. Georgian Court University has been fortunate to have strong leaders and committed faculty, administrators, and staff members. The university will achieve long-term stability by further bolstering its human capital as well as its physical and financial infrastructure. This will be done through a wide range of rigorous planning, careful assessment, prudent financial oversight, and management practices.

Our goals, strategies, and objectives:

4.1 Strengthen capabilities of leadership and governance.

4.1.1 Encourage strong leadership and enhance individual and organizational performance in pursuit of institutional goals by effectively engaging all stakeholders: faculty, staff, trustees, alumni, community members, and other supporters, through appropriate structures and processes such as shared governance and inclusive decision making.

4.1.2 Develop and implement training programs that strengthen the university’s culture of excellence and facilitate cultural change to attain the university’s goals.

4.1.3 Assess climate, organizational performance, engagement, and managerial effectiveness.

4.2 Foster financial stewardship.

4.2.1 Engage the entire Georgian Court community in the budgeting, implementation, and planning processes for strong fiscal discipline and effective use of financial resources.

4.2.2 Develop and implement a robust business case template for analysis, approval, and ongoing assessment of all major initiatives.

4.2.3 Design and institute tuition and financial aid policies that generate maximum net tuition revenue and recruit a strong and diverse student body.

4.3 Cultivate alumni, friends, parents, and supporters of Georgian Court University.

4.3.1 Increase all fund-raising efforts to support and implement the university’s strategic plan and priorities.

4.3.2 Secure funds to strengthen the endowment and maintain/enhance both human and physical capital and current operations.

4.3.3 Establish a coordinated fund-raising effort encompassing all fund-raising at the university, including annual giving, major gifts, alumni engagement, grants, planned giving, and campus fund-raising events, which will develop best practices and stewardship of all donors and prospects.
4.4 Conserve and preserve.

4.4.1 Adopt effective and fiscally prudent conservation and renewal programs that promote environmental sustainability and preserve the university’s physical assets.

4.4.2 Develop, support, promote, and enhance university initiatives that improve, extend, coordinate, and celebrate sustainability and environmental awareness.

4.4.3 Collaborate with academic programs and faculty to develop educational initiatives that use the campus’s physical and natural space and operational processes as resources and settings for hands-on, in-depth study to develop the environmental and sustainability leaders and actors of tomorrow.

4.4.4 Integrate physical plant planning with the growth development plan in a way that allows flexibility to meet the changing needs of the developing institution.

4.5 Support and enhance the technological needs of the campus.

4.5.1 Form a campuswide technology steering committee to outline the future roles of IT in concert with the appropriate groups and committees on campus, envision the future roles of technology at the university, plan the path the university will take in getting from its present to that envisioned state, and participate in the implementation of the plan to assist in its realization.

4.5.2 Develop, identify, and seek support to address current information and technology needs of the institution.

4.5.3 Identify and support the implementation of technology strategies and systems that support student learning, enhance academic programs, improve customer service, streamline workflow, reduce redundancy and waste, minimize paperwork, and enhance system and data integrity.

4.5.4 Assess the current administrative systems and examine options, including an enterprise management system, to integrate the technology used in ways that are efficient, effective, and fiscally responsible.

4.6 Develop a culture of planning and assessment to ensure maximum efficiency and effectiveness in the management of the university.

4.6.1 Develop, implement, and evaluate action plans that are consistent with institutional strategic goals, objectives, and strategies.

4.6.2 Implement an assessment process to measure both strategic initiatives and operational performance.
**FY 2012–2013 Priorities**

In addition to these strategic initiatives, the university has a number of other institutional priorities that have resulted from the strategic planning process, task force and committee activities, and visioning exercises. Each of these will serve to improve our academics, financial health, and student life.

**Transition to a Coeducational Environment**

The most significant change to come from the strategic plan is Georgian Court’s transition from a primarily women’s university to a fully coeducational university. While the university has allowed men into its evening school and graduate programs since the 1970s, undergraduate study during the day, athletics, and student housing have only been open to women since the university’s founding.

However, as we researched options to attract more applicants, it soon became clear that transitioning to a coeducational environment would be the most effective and expedient way to increase enrollment. According to 2007 research from Stevens Strategy, less than 2 percent of women are interested in attending a Catholic women’s college. In addition, only 9 percent of current first-year students found Georgian Court’s women’s college status to be an important factor in choosing to attend. However, transitioning to a coeducational campus offers our university a number of important advantages:

- Increased ability to raise enrollment and tuition revenue
- Strengthened student academic and financial profiles
- Attraction of a more regional student population
- Increased graduate student program pool
- Enhanced vibrancy of campus life
- Catholic Mercy education delivered to a broader student body

We had excellent role models to follow: At least nine women’s colleges and universities have successfully “gone coed” over the past decade. In the first year, applications increased by an average of 113 percent and first-year enrollment increased by 60 percent, with men making up at least 30 percent of the average freshman class at these schools.
The transition would also allow us to fill an important need in the region. Catholic higher education is currently not available in New Jersey south of Essex and Hudson counties. Our existing facilities, programs, and resources could easily accommodate this expansion. Academic programs meet workforce demands in health care, business, education, and sciences, which will attract men to the university. Because campus academic buildings are not currently at capacity, we can potentially support additional majors in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) for women and men. Current housing design and capacity could be configured for and allocated to male students.

As we examined this option through the lens of what is best for our students, coeducational education became an increasingly obvious solution. In addition to attracting a greater number of academically strong prospective students, the transition would attract more men and women. Increasing enrollment is one of the first steps to achieving our vision—becoming a leading regional university that provides a transformative education, preparing students for ethical leadership and service in the Catholic Mercy tradition.

Continue Operational Efficiency

As the Cost Reduction Task Force delved into each area of university operations, the team discovered many opportunities to save money, improve revenue, and increase efficiency. We intend to proceed with that mindset, looking at programs with an eye for efficiency and cost control that do not have a negative impact on the quality of education we offer. Through simplification, clarity, and communication, we know we will be able to continue to operate at the greatest levels of effectiveness and efficiency to best support our mission and strategic plan.

Maintain and Enhance Student Life and Development

As the student population grows, we will develop ways to better serve and further engage them, cultivating a lifelong love of Georgian Court. The university already has a rich student life, filled with opportunities to participate in athletics, extracurricular activities, and specialized study. With our transition to a coeducational university, we will enhance these programs and look for improvements in all areas of student life.

Successful Plan Execution

The university community is committed to the success of our strategic plan. Because all areas of our community were involved with its creation, the activities outlined enjoy widespread support. At every turn, we will look for opportunities to act on and successfully achieve the goals and actions set forth in the plan.
Measuring Success

A plan without goals and methods of measuring success is just a wish list. To ensure we are making appropriate progress and that the university team is bound by accountability to leadership, staff, and students, the strategic planning team set forth a number of metrics by which success will be measured.

Enrollment goals. The university has set forth an ambitious plan for increasing enrollment, both through increased marketing and opening the university’s academic programs and housing to men. The admissions team will closely track progress and ensure that those goals are being met.

Market and regional awareness. Increasing enrollment and donor support will require successful rebranding and effective marketing to reach the various markets in New Jersey and surrounding states. The marketing, admissions, and development teams will monitor the impact of rebranding and marketing on enrollment and donor support.

Peer comparison. Peer institutions provide benchmark comparisons that are essential to the university’s assessment strategies and are used as one component in determining the relative health, growth, and trajectory of the university. Identified below are a set of institutions comparable to Georgian Court in a number of dimensions, including being private master’s universities and having similar missions, student population sizes, and endowments.

1. Alvernia University (Reading, PA)
2. Cabrini College (Radnor, PA)
3. Caldwell College (Caldwell, NJ)
4. Carlow University (Pittsburgh, PA)
5. Chestnut Hill College (Philadelphia, PA)
6. DeSales University (Center Valley, PA)
7. Holy Family University (Philadelphia, PA)
8. Le Moyne College (Syracuse, NY)
9. Manhattan College (Riverdale, NY)
10. Marywood University (Scranton, PA)
11. Misericordia University (Dallas, PA)
12. Mount Saint Mary College (Newburgh, NY)
13. Mount St Mary’s University (Emmitsburg, MD)
14. Neumann University (Aston, PA)
15. Rosemont College (Rosemont, PA)
16. Saint Francis University (Loretto, PA)
17. Saint Peter’s University (Jersey City, NJ)
18. St. Bonaventure University (Saint Bonaventure, NY)

Third-party data. Various media, such as U.S. News & World Report, measure and rank universities. These rankings can be an important part of the decision-making process for many prospective students. Currently, Georgian Court University ranks 108 out of 133 ranked colleges and universities on the Regional Universities (North) list. As awareness of our excellent academic programs and our enhanced market increase applications and enrollment, the university will increase our matriculation numbers and strengthen the academic profile of its student base.
Accomplishments

While challenges—from storms to enrollment and coeducational transition—have been many and significant, Georgian Court has persevered with determination and commitment. The university has already made some significant accomplishments in each of the initiative areas.

Strategic Initiative I: Rebrand Georgian Court University to Reflect Its Mission

• Completed branding study.
• Launched TheCourtRising.com and exploreGCU.com to tell the Georgian Court story and enhance marketing efforts.
• Developed a comprehensive social media strategy.
• Further integrated the university’s mission into marketing.

Strategic Initiative II: Promote Transformative Education

• Completed assessment plans for all disciplines and programs.
• Achieved accreditation of the Georgian Court–Meridian Health School of Nursing by the Board of Commissioners of the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education for our Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.) degree.
• Realigned Career Services and Academic Advising under a Student Success umbrella for greater efficiency and student preparedness.
• Established a campuswide goal of 100 percent student participation in internships.
• Developed an e-Career Center funded by a TD Bank grant received in Fall 2012.
• Created a Career Services Council that includes alumni and business professionals.
• Strengthened marketing and promotional materials for recruitment to highlight graduates and alumni success.
• Developed additional online programs for the 2013–2014 academic year, including the B.A. in Humanities, the M.A. in Administration and Leadership, and programs in business essentials and P–3 education.
• Created various opportunities through the Global Transformation Initiative, including partnerships with other universities.

Strategic Initiative III: Optimize Enrollment

• Executed an 18-month tactical plan that increased enrollment across all key benchmarks and resulted in a 47 percent increase in freshmen applications.
• Solidified details for partnerships with the Catholic Diocese of Trenton to provide professional development.
• Partnered with the Lakewood public school system to provide professional development and community support.
• Began the transition to a coeducational institution.
• Planned housing options for male students.
• Added five men’s sports to attract more men to the university.

Strategic Initiative IV: Strengthen Leadership, Planning, Technology, and Governance

• Completed intensive budget monitoring, cost cutting, and efficiency streamlining.
• Launched and completed a six-month phonathon to encourage alumni giving.
• Cultivated new plans for fund-raising opportunities.
• Completed second solar panel installation on top of the Arts and Science Center, which reduces electricity costs.
• Created a comprehensive sustainability plan.
• Coordinated campuswide initiative to advocate and promote the Building Our Future Bond Act on the November 6, 2012, ballot, which successfully passed.
Honored with the Grassroots Environmental Activist Award by the New Jersey Environmental Federation.

Enhanced IT plans and retained chief information officer as a university position. Submitted five bond initiatives proposals, each containing updates to technology.

Partners
Many people worked tirelessly and selflessly for the betterment of Georgian Court University. We are thankful to say many, including the individuals who served on committees, task forces, and other groups; alumni; students; donors; trustees; and other members of our community.

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VISIONING AND PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Visioning and Planning Committee was charged with developing a set of strategic planning assumptions to guide the university over the next several years.

Rosemary E. Jeffries, RSM, Ph.D., ’72, President
Lisa R. Biagas, Ed.D., Special Assistant to the President for Strategic Initiatives
Kathleen Boody, Dean for Student Success
Mary Chinery, Ph.D., ’86, Assistant Provost and Provost of English
Susan E. O. Field, Ph.D., Chair of the Department of Psychology and Immediate Past Chair of the Faculty Assembly
Michelle Giles, Communications and Grants Specialist
Karen Goff ’96, Dean of Students
Michael F. Gross, Ph.D., Associate Provost for Academic Development and Professor of Biology
Laura Liesman, Director of Athletics and Recreation
John McAuliffe, Vice President for Enrollment Management
Evelyn Quinn, M.S.W., M.Ed., ’74, Provost
Robert Kenny, Vice President for Finance and Administration
Pamela Schneider, Ed.D., Director of the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research
John W. Seazholtz, Trustee
Gail H. Towns, Director of Marketing and Communications

Visioning Workgroups

Georgian Court established planning groups for the five strategic parts of the vision statement. The groups were recently expanded to include additional faculty, staff, and students. In addition, open forums in Spring 2012 were held on each transformative initiative through late March.

Leading Regional University
Led by Pamela Schneider, Ed.D., Assessment and Institutional Research, and Michael F. Gross, Ph.D., Associate Provost for Academic Development and Professor of Biology
Laura Liesman (Athletics); Robin Solbach, Psy.D. (Counseling Center); Jaqueline E. Kress, Ed.D. (Education); Joseph M. Springer, Ph.D. (Psychology); Ashley Elmore, Ph.D. (Business); and John McAuliffe (Enrollment)

Transformative Education
Led by Evelyn Quinn, M.Ed., M.S.W., ’74 Provost; Kathleen Boody, Student Success; and John W. Seazholtz, Trustee
Paul Cappucci, Ph.D. (English); Catherine Moore (Career Services); Rita Kipp, Ph.D. (Arts and Sciences); Alfred F. Mancuso, Psy.D. (Psychology); Patrick Givens (Enrollment); and Adrianne Morton, Ph.D. (Student Support Services)

Ethical Leadership
Led by Gail Towns (Marketing) and Lisa R. Biagas, Ed.D. (Office of the President)
Eileen Fedele (Alumni Engagement); Diane Sztubrowski, RSM, ’68 (Donor Relations); Janice Warner, Ph.D. (Business); and Mary Williams (Athletics)

Service
Led by Ron Reck (Interim CFO); Karen Goff ’96 (Student Affairs); and Kathy Smith (Office of the President)
Mariann Mahon, RSM, ’67 (Campus Ministry); Lauren Traylor (Alumni Engagement); Lynn DeCapua, Ph.D., ’83 (Education); Cathleen M. McQuillen, D.P.S. (Business); Valerie Curtis (Athletics); Melissa Ruiz (Residence Life); and Jennifer Valentin ’13 (student)

Catholic Mercy Tradition
Led by Rosemary E. Jeffries, RSM, Ph.D., ’72, (President); and Mary Chinery, Ph.D., ’86 (Associate Provost);
Lisa Dille, Ed.D. (Education); Johann Vento, Ph.D. (Theology); Rev. Anthony J. DiPalma (Music);
Kathleen Ann Froriep, Ph.D. (Education);
Mariah Iapicco ’13 (student); Samantha Sinclair ’13 (student); and Tracey Howard-Ubelhoer (Admissions)

Coeducational Task Force
The task force is charged with researching and examining the processes, opportunities, resources, and costs associated with the proposed coeducational transformation of the university.

Chair: Mary Chinery, Ph.D., ’86, Assistant Provost and Professor of English
Michael F. Gross, Ph.D., Associate Provost for Academic Development and Professor of Biology
Laura Liesman, Director of Athletics and Recreation