



# THE STRATEGIC COMPASS

*... for an Even  
Better Tomorrow*

Georgian Court University  
Dr. Joseph R. Marbach, President







# THE STRATEGIC COMPASS

*... for an Even Better Tomorrow*



I have never been a proponent of the traditional strategic planning process that is often used in higher education. The academy's commitment to shared governance and consensus decision-making often results in higher education strategic plans attempting to be "all things to all people."

In addition, nearly every higher education strategic plan that I have read contains elements of the four compass points you will find in this document, namely: academic excellence, the student experience, revenue growth, and resource stewardship.

As a consequence, we took a different approach to strategic planning and developed a strategic compass for Georgian Court University. We engaged various constituencies across campus. They were charged to frankly assess who we are and what we do as an institution and how we can improve to best fulfill our mission. This resulting compass will guide us toward an agreed-upon direction for the future and gives us the flexibility to deviate from the prescribed path when significant opportunities arise, or when environmental conditions dictate a course correction.

The Georgian Court community has crafted **The GCU Strategic Compass . . . for an Even Better Tomorrow**, a plan that will direct our efforts to fulfill our mission for the foreseeable future and be re-examined, updated, and modified on a regular basis.

Our vision of "an even better" future for GCU is rooted in the sentiment shared more than 180 years ago by the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, Catherine McAuley, whose motto was "Resolve to be good today, but better tomorrow."

Nearly two centuries later, her words continue to ring true.

For Georgian Court, a better tomorrow is found in our commitment to excellence in academics and beyond. We are dedicated to creating an exceptional student experience, and we are determined to make the best and highest use of our resources.

**The GCU Strategic Compass . . . for an Even Better Tomorrow** reflects the work we do today and the challenging work ahead. I consider it an instrument to help navigate our future and a tool to keep us accountable. Everyone, no matter their role or job title, plays a part in our success as we move forward in the same direction.

Ultimately, it comes down to this: our strategy for guiding GCU into the future is built on our foundation, our mission, our *raison d'être*—helping students transform their lives.

Thank you for your help as we work toward this goal and for joining GCU in this journey.

Go Lions!

Joseph R. Marbach, Ph.D.  
President



# MISSION

Georgian Court University, founded by the Sisters of Mercy of New Jersey in 1908 and sponsored by the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas since January of 2007, 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.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Georgian Court University is a distinct Catholic university in the Mercy tradition, empowering students to shape a just and compassionate world.

Georgian Court University is re-creating itself by designing and delivering innovative academic programs, with a particular emphasis on the caring professions; enhancing the student experience inside and outside the classroom; expanding the university's footprint through multiple delivery formats at multiple locations in order to diversify revenue streams; and efficiently managing human and other resources to achieve positive revenue results.



## OVERALL STRATEGY

The university will:

- Attract more students by diversifying the academic programs offered in response to market demands.
- Expand its physical and virtual presence by offering courses on the Lakewood campus and beyond through multiple delivery formats at multiple locations.
- Retain more students by providing the best student experience possible, informed by the best practices aligned with student success.
- Utilize strategic planning in the areas of enrollment, advancement, and academic program development, as well as the development of a campus master plan and unit effectiveness in alignment with mission to actualize maximum operational efficiencies and revenue generation and diversification.



SUPPORT TEACHING  
AND LEARNING EXCELLENCE





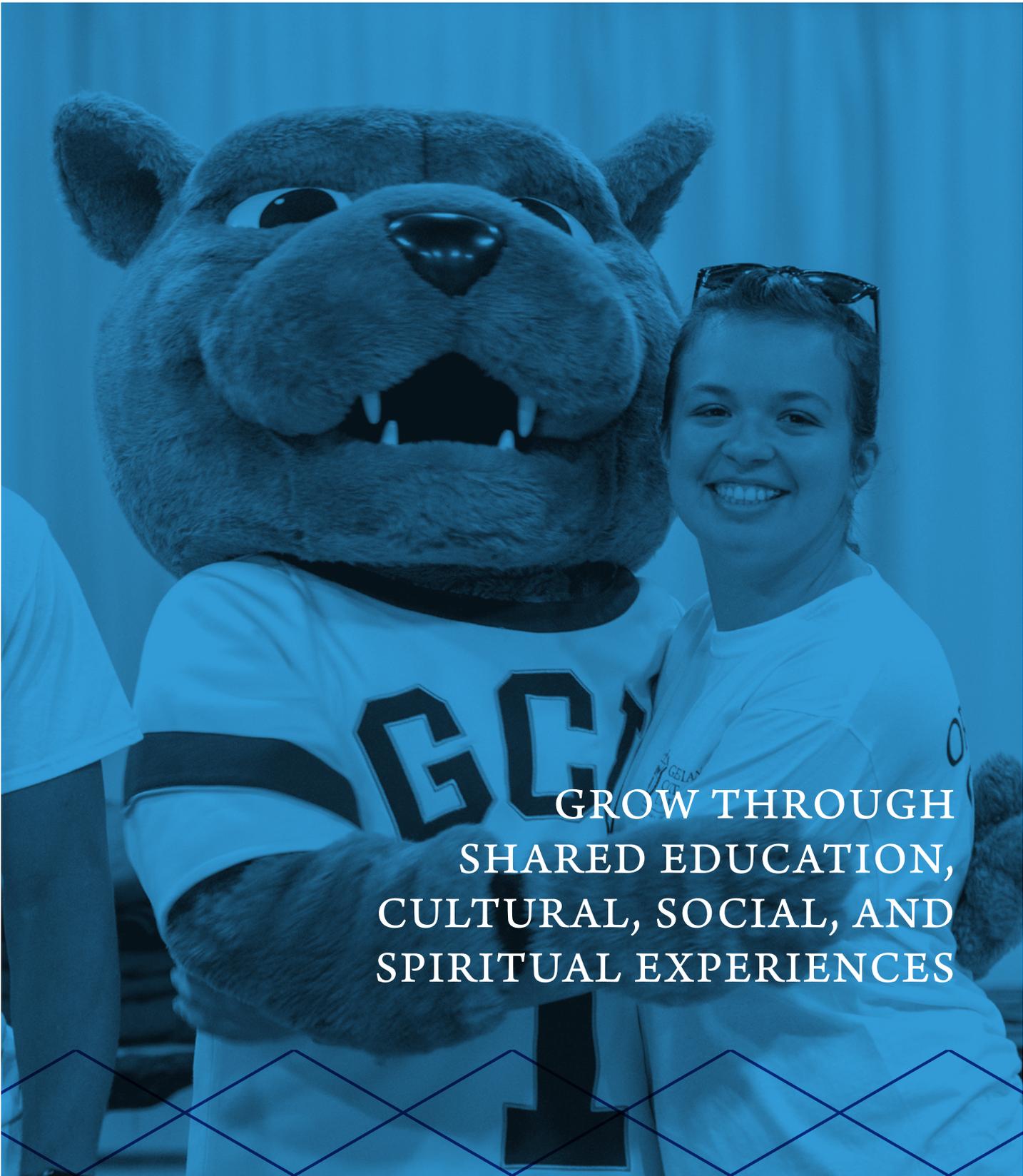
## Compass Point #1

# MISSION FULFILLMENT THROUGH ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

The university will evaluate, design, and deliver diversified academic programs offered in response to market demands based on both student interest and employer needs. It will prepare students to be confident positive contributors to their chosen professions through expanded opportunities to develop and apply skills through high-impact academic experiences. It will support teaching and learning excellence in all venues and modalities of instruction. To do so, the university will judiciously expand its physical and virtual presence.

### Objectives

- 1** Increase offerings by implementing sustainable new or revised undergraduate programs (at least five), new graduate programs (at least three), and non-degree programs that grow enrollments and meet currently underserved student populations or needs.
- 2** Stabilize one-year retention of first-year students at 75% or higher. Continue to improve one-year retention of second-year students and transfer students. Improve four-year graduation rates.
- 3** Provide consistent program quality, as measured by student satisfaction, across delivery formats (face-to-face, hybrid, online) and geographical site locations such that all students will have access to equitable services and facilities.
- 4** Increase the average number of high-impact practices in which students participate, including learning communities, service learning, research with faculty, study abroad, field or internship experience, and capstone experiences.
- 5** Increase the percentage of graduating undergraduate students who enter graduate school at GCU, at GCU partner programs, and elsewhere.
- 6** Increase the percentage of graduating students who are employed in positions in which their degree is needed within six months.
- 7** Maintain and grow academic space in alignment with program needs.



GROW THROUGH  
SHARED EDUCATION,  
CULTURAL, SOCIAL, AND  
SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES



## Compass Point #2

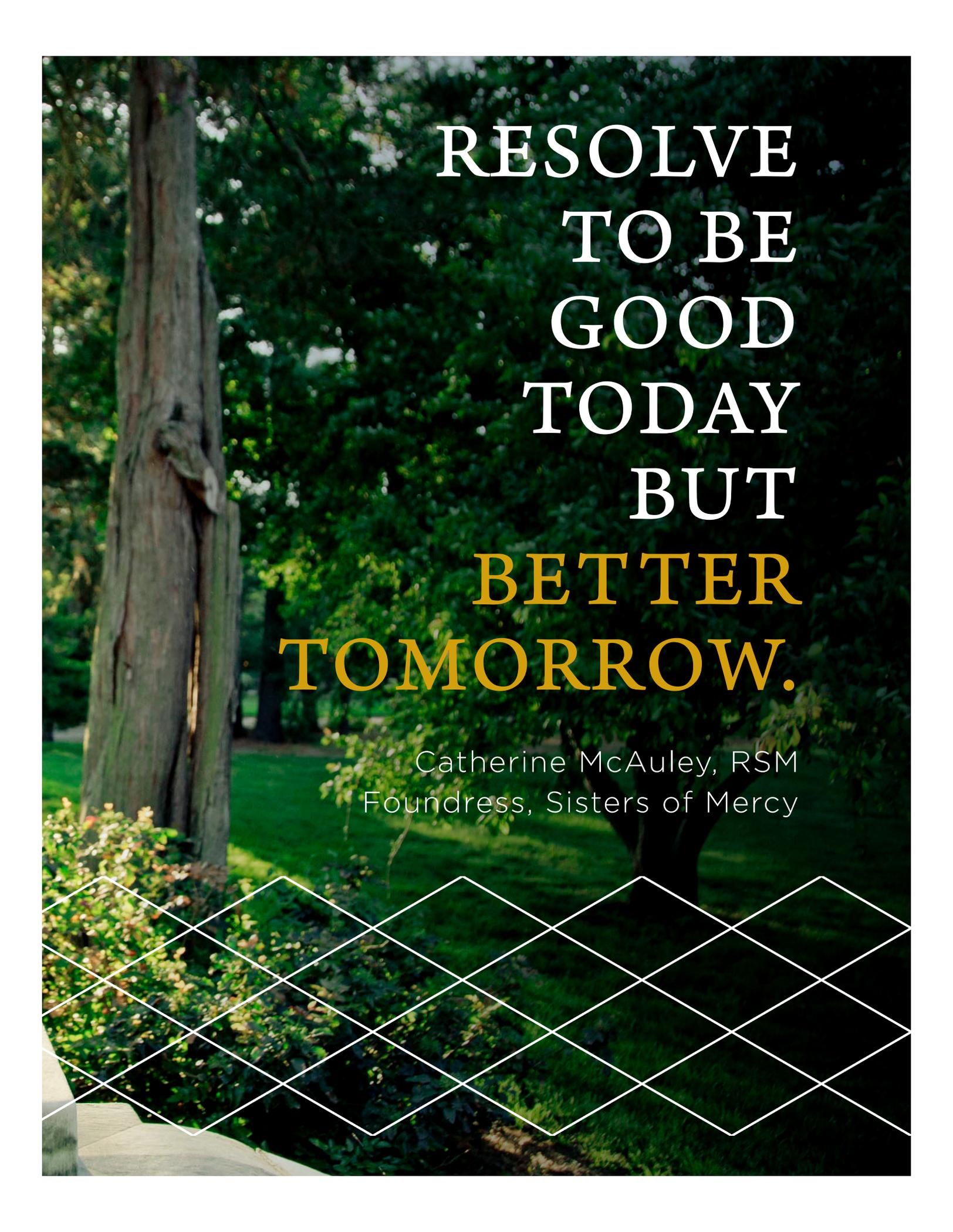
# MISSION FULFILLMENT THROUGH AN EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The university will enhance the student experience and attract and retain more students by ensuring all students find a mentor and by creating an environment in which the entire community can grow through shared educational, cultural, social, and spiritual experiences. It will develop a community of active participation that expands the interactions of students and increases the opportunities to understand various perspectives.

### Objectives

- 1 Improve the overall retention of resident students by providing a healthy and engaging residential experience.
- 2 Develop an IT infrastructure that includes a “one campus” communications and services structure that is on par with current higher education industry standards.
- 3 Enhance the physical space available for student engagement throughout campus.
- 4 Develop a collaborative campus environment that supports students through engagement with all campus stakeholders.
- 5 Provide students with opportunities to explore their faith and spirituality.
- 6 Provide unique student leadership experiences that focus on the philosophy of servant and ethical leadership.
- 7 Identify current or develop new GCU traditions to support and highlight a dynamic unified campus culture (Convocation, Homecoming, bonfire, etc.) and branded GCU experience.
- 8 Provide for an exceptional, safe, and well-rounded student-athlete experience through maintenance of competitive-level facilities, leadership programming, academic support, and resources consistent with program growth.





RESOLVE  
TO BE  
GOOD  
TODAY  
BUT  
BETTER  
TOMORROW.

Catherine McAuley, RSM  
Foundress, Sisters of Mercy



### Compass Point #3

## MISSION FULFILLMENT THROUGH REVENUE GENERATION AND DIVERSIFICATION

With the GCU mission and Mercy core values as its foundation and guiding principles, the university will empower students to experience and shape a just and compassionate world. It will promote a dynamic campus community based on sound financial principles necessary to continue its mission into the future. GCU seeks to become a 21<sup>st</sup>-century university providing access to education and filling underserved needs (e.g., degree completers, Hispanic population) through multiple modalities, including on-site and virtual courses. The university is committed to maintain well its main campus in Lakewood while seeking alternate sites as determined by program interest and availability. It commits to providing seamless services regardless of location. It will also engage all stakeholders in ensuring the university's viability through appropriate funding opportunities and revenue generation and diversification.





# EXPERIENCE AND SHAPE A JUST AND COMPASSIONATE WORLD

## Objectives

- 1** Increase enrollment to meet current capacity and develop a comprehensive plan for the main campus in demographics and programs that highlight the main campus as the flagship model for the Georgian Court mission.
- 2** Optimize new locations, sites, and delivery modalities where the mission and revenue opportunities are aligned.
- 3** Identify and partner with high schools, community colleges, other colleges and universities, community programs, and businesses/employers to meet their student needs as an educational partner.
- 4** Create a multiple-channel financial aid strategy to connect early packaging with admissions yield strategy. Utilize the packaging strategy to create an optimal class and net tuition revenue.
- 5** Increase alumni giving and participation, as well as the number of foundation and corporate partnerships.
- 6** Engage stakeholders of the institution, including board members, administration, faculty, staff, and alumni, in fund-raising efforts to build on the Georgian Court brand and develop connections to new funding sources.
- 7** Build capacity and launch a comprehensive campaign.



## Compass Point #4

# MISSION FULFILLMENT THROUGH OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND RESOURCE UTILIZATION

Operational efficiency, or offering the university's services in the most cost-effective manner, is a critical component of sustainability over time. This efficiency, coupled with effectiveness, applies to all aspects of the university, and entails regular and comprehensive review of unit effectiveness within academic, administrative, student services, and operational support areas. It also requires a level of proficiency in the use of technology across the university to allow for comprehensive communication of the university's mission, critical data, accomplishments, access to services, and events. The university will develop a strong brand that promotes its mission, outcomes, and shared experiences such that Georgian Court becomes a first-choice university for an increasing number of ambitious students.

### Objectives

- 1 Develop a collaborative operational and financial strategy for the next three years that integrates enrollment, student life, and academic strategic plans. This will be supported by new operating strategies, capital, and leased space development programs and the integration of the Facilities Conditions Assessment.
- 2 Create a comprehensive campus development plan that re-imagines the campus in support of the Strategic Compass. The comprehensive plan will make efficient and effective use of physical spaces on campus, establish the manner in which the university will provide innovative and progressive services to its students, faculty, staff, and alumni, and include crucial renewal and replacement programs.
- 3 Develop a campus master plan and a strategic technology master plan to support campus operations and expand satellite and virtual academic sites.
- 4 Utilize a process improvement model to evaluate each administrative service department in order to establish current best practices for university-wide service support.



## SUPPORT CAMPUS OPERATIONS AND EXPAND SATELLITE AND VIRTUAL ACADEMIC SITES

- 5 Through the coordination of business planning, business processes, and performance monitoring, implement institution-wide change initiatives and efficiencies that identify cost-savings opportunities and redesign business practices and management structures to maximize efficiency and effectiveness.
- 6 Develop an entrepreneurial university business model that will make the university more agile in a changing market, providing greater resource opportunities to become financially sustainable while enhancing and expanding its ability to provide quality education.



# THE STRATEGIC COMPASS SCORECARD

## PROGRESS & ACCOUNTABILITY

### Compass Point #1: Academic Excellence

OBJECTIVE	KEY RESULTS	2017-2018 BASELINE	ACHIEVED				GOAL BY:
			18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
1. New programs							
a. Undergraduate programs	Number of new programs	0					5
b. Undergraduate enrollment	Increased enrollment through new programs	0					270
c. Graduate programs	Number of new programs	0					3
d. Graduate enrollment	Increased enrollment through new programs	0					80
2. Student progress							
a. First-year retention rate	Percentage retained	75%					78%
b. Four-year graduation rate	Percentage graduating	50%					55%
c. Six-year graduation rate	Percentage graduating	67%					72%
3. Student satisfaction measures	NSSE or Ruffalo Noel Levitz survey results	Overall satisfaction 5.26/7					5.5/7
4. High-impact practices	Average participation rate	2.1					2.5
5. Graduate school attendance	Percentage attending within one year of graduating	Calculate baseline in 2018					10% over baseline
6. Employment	Percentage in degree-relevant employment within one year of graduating	Calculate baseline in 2018					10% over baseline
7. Academic space	Average utilization of academic space	Calculate baseline in 2018					75%

### Compass Point #2: Student Experience

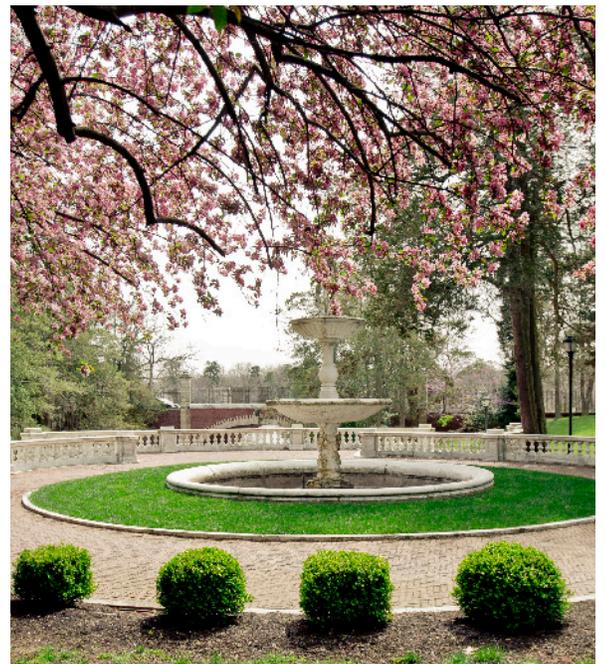
OBJECTIVE	KEY RESULTS	2017-2018 BASELINE	ACHIEVED				GOAL BY:
			18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
1. Retention rate	At least 75 percent	75%					78%
2. IT infrastructure	Wifi coverage/ smart classroom percent	/5.9%					/90%
3. Student space	Total useful/usable square feet gathering spaces	Calculate baseline in 2018					TBD
4. Student engagement	NSSE or Ruffalo Noel Levitz survey results	Overall satisfaction 5.26/7					5.5/7
5. Faith and spiritual experiences	Participation at mission-related events	2,185					3,000
6. Leadership experience	Participation rate in signature experience activities	28% (RNL SSI)					50%
7. Campus culture	Student attendance/student satisfaction survey results	5.26/7					5.5/7
8. Athletic experience	End-of-year athletic survey results	95%					99%

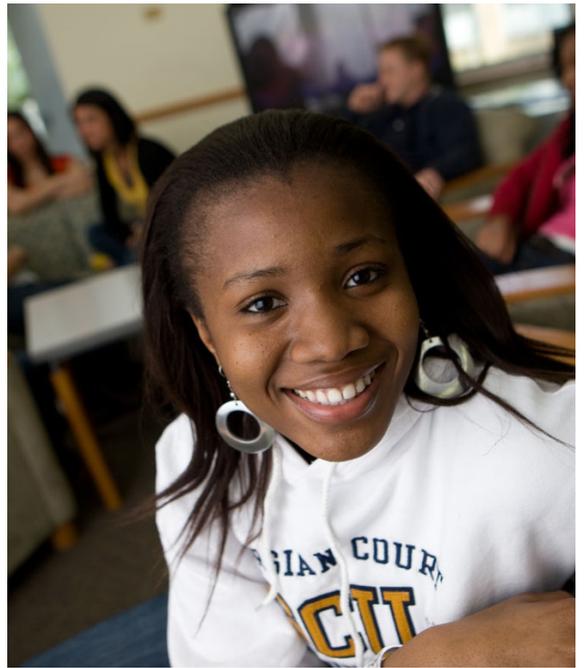
### Compass Point #3: Revenue Generation

OBJECTIVE	KEY RESULTS	2017–2018 BASELINE	ACHIEVED				GOAL BY:
			18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
1. Enrollment—Lakewood							
a. Undergraduate	FTEs/credit hours	1,250/18,178					1,645/23K
b. Graduate	FTEs/credit hours	310/3,017					340/3.3K
2. Enrollment—Beyond Lakewood							
a. Off-site	FTEs/credit hours	353/3,846					500/5.4K
b. Online	FTEs/credit hours	90/819 (as of Fall 2018)					TBD
3. Partnerships							
a. Educational	High schools/colleges	12/6					20/9
b. Enterprise income	Amount	Calculate baseline in 2018					TBD
c. Non-credit programming	Amount	Calculate baseline in 2018					TBD
4. Financial aid optimization	Overall discount rate	47%					<50%
5. University fund-raising							
a. Alumni giving	Amount/percentage of participation	\$294,085/7.59%					\$400K/10%
b. Foundations/ corporate partnerships	Amount/number of partnerships	\$466,682/30					TBD
c. Government grants	Amount/number of grants	\$801,010/3	\$969,586/3				\$1.2M
6. Stakeholder support							
a. Board of Trustees giving	Amount/percentage	\$185,109/100%					\$250K/ 100%
b. Employee giving	Amount/percentage	\$54,917/30%					\$65K/40%
7. Comprehensive campaign	Launch 2020	Calculate baseline in 2018					TBD

### Compass Point #4: Resource Efficiency and Utilization

OBJECTIVE	KEY RESULTS	2017–2018 BASELINE	ACHIEVED				GOAL BY:
			18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
1. Integrated financial plan							
a. Progress to balanced budget	Budget deficit/surplus	(\$3.6M)					\$1M
b. Capital and leased space development	Revenues and savings	\$0	\$250K				\$750K
2. Deferred maintenance spending	Dollar amount	\$100,000					\$15M
3. Physical space							
a. Master plan development	Completed by June 2019	Calculate baseline in 2018					TBD
b. Comprehensive IT plan	Completed by December 2020	Calculate baseline in 2018					TBD
4. Operations							
a. Process improvement program	Percentage savings/ number of projects	0	1 (Academic Operations)				5
b. Employee satisfaction	Survey results/retention	Calculate baseline in 2018					TBD
5. Revenue diversification	Tuition vs. other revenues	95:5					87:13







## **GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY**

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**THE MERCY UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY**

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