



Focusing Our Future
| 2025 |

Concordia University Chicago
Strategic Plan

The logo features a large, bold, maroon 'F' with a smaller, gold '2' to its upper right. Behind the letters is a white compass rose with eight points, set against a white circular background.

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Strategic Plan

Executive Summary

Focusing Our Future 2025 (F² for short) is an exciting and important step in Concordia University Chicago's pursuit of its vision. It is our five-year strategic plan to lay the critical groundwork that will position the university for a thriving future.

F² touches every aspect of university life in targeted ways that are both aspirational and achievable. The plan is strategic as a means of propelling Concordia-Chicago from the foundation of its mission to the goal of realizing its vision. It is tactical in its 30 specific, measurable initiatives. Each initiative has Key Performance Indicators associated with it so we can keep track of our successes and correct ourselves where needed. F² is about our students, our finances, our mission, and our community.

F² is vibrant and dynamic! It centers our work on clear steps that will have tangible results within five years. Some of those steps are large and some are small, but all are important for Concordia-Chicago. All are within our reach.

If you want to know more about Focusing Our Future 2025 and how you can partner with us in this exciting plan, please contact my office at 708-209-3003. The future is coming, and Concordia-Chicago is ready to lead the way!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Russell P. Dawn'.

Russell P. Dawn
President





Our Mission

Steadfast in Jesus Christ as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, Concordia University Chicago promotes academic rigor in its liberal arts and professional programs; grounds students in objective truth, integrity, and excellence; and practices faithfulness to the Confessional teachings of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, as it forms students for vocations in church, family, and the world.

Our Vision

Concordia University Chicago is a Christ-centered Lutheran university where truth, freedom, and vocation form students for lives of influence and service for the common good.

Our Core Values

As a Christian university of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, we, at Concordia University Chicago, value:

Christian Faith

The Christian faith is an integral part of our community.

The Individual

As a member of God's creation, each person is unique and is blessed with inherent worth.

Excellence

We strive for excellence in who we are and what we do.

Integrity

Our community demonstrates the accord between our beliefs and practices.

Service

Recognizing and addressing the needs of others is a response to God's love for us, and a reflection of God's love for them.

Theme

1

Formative Student Experience

The University will provide a formative student experience by promoting academics, co-curricular activities and pre-professional experiences that enable students to live out the University's Mission, Vision and Values.

Grounded in Truth, Equipped for Freedom and Vocation

Through a comprehensive educational experience grounded in Truth, students will be equipped to fully realize Freedom and Vocation. Rigorous academic programs will focus on missional distinctiveness with the goal of transforming students' lives within the context of the University mission. Comprehensive essential learning outcomes will guide a unified and measurable academic experience for all students, ensuring their preparedness to fully realize their vocations upon graduation.

Invest in Campus Facilities

A comprehensive master plan will guide short- and long-term investment in state-of-the-art facilities which will support robust academic learning experiences and engaging co-curricular activities. With the goal of improving aesthetics, longevity and campus functionality, deferred maintenance and capital projects alike will be realized through an aggressive, four-year strategic budget focused on the missional and market viability of academic programs and co-curricular activities. An annual Rapid Response Fund will also help the University realize low-cost, high-visibility campus improvement projects each year, demonstrating and celebrating the University's ongoing dedication to an excellent on-campus experience for students, faculty and staff alike.



High-Impact Learning Practices

As part of a robust core curriculum, centered on great works, all traditional undergraduates will engage in high-impact learning practices focused on the University's mission, vision and values. Similar opportunities will also be available for transfer and Accelerated Degree Completion students, with alternate requirements and relevancy. The academic experience will extend beyond the classroom and into every aspect of the on-campus experience as realized through new, themed living/learning communities.

Comprehensive Student Plan

The establishment of CU Learn, which will unite all student academic support services under a single umbrella, will significantly increase collaboration between these integral areas. Together, with a primary focus on student retention, this area will work to develop and revise curriculum, manage academic policies, and drive an institution-wide culture of continuous improvement and self-assessment. Students will also benefit from a clear pathway for determining, measuring and ensuring individual academic success. Significant enhancements to athletic and co-curricular programs will further augment enrollment growth by providing an engaging student experience built upon a foundational culture of caring and support.



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Theme

2

Fiscal Agility and Strength

The University prioritizes the strategic use of data, a commitment to best practices in enrollment management, the development of market-informed programs and acts of fiscal discipline as means of ensuring student completion and securing the University's future.

Invigorated Pathways for Learners

The University will work diligently toward achieving transfer-friendly status to best serve both traditional transfer students and non-traditional adult learners. A multi-faceted approach that encompasses new cultural, programmatic, curricular and technological resources is required to meet the needs of these unique populations. Immediate concerted effort will be also placed toward evaluating and developing alternate academic schedules that coincide with the varied schedules of today's transfer students. A fully online pathway will be developed to allow ADP students fulfill the University's General Education requirements.

Investing in Missional, Market-Focused Programs

All academic programs will closely correlate with the University's mission as well as market demand. In order to achieve this, an annual program review protocol will be developed and used to evaluate programs regularly. This will enable the creation of new academic programs sought out by the next generation of students, support the phase-out of those in less demand and guarantee that all coursework supports the mission. Long-term, the estimated growth or decline across all programs over the next four years will be analyzed, aiding tremendously in planning for the future. Strategic hiring will also be employed to best realize the establishment of new innovative programs.



Sustainable Business Model

Short- and long-term institutional viability depends on the creation of a sustainable financial model. Data-based decision making will be employed to evaluate current practices and procedures, and develop new ones that match current financial best practices that are specific to the University. A sustainable financial model will be built on data from the Marginal Revenue Analysis (MRA), the Academic Efficiency Report and a Strategic Budgeting tool.



Enhance the Welcome Experience

A centralized and collaborative enrollment management model will be developed to serve prospective students at all levels of study, from baccalaureate through doctoral. The new model will focus on implementation of best practices, including an enhanced “Welcome Experience” that ensures post-traditional students feel both adequately prepared and excited to begin their academic journey at Concordia-Chicago. The Enrollment Management teams will work together to recreate intake models and implement the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system fully, providing the best possible recruitment experience for all student populations.

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Theme

3

Partnerships for Mission & Excellence

The University will identify and carry out partnerships that benefit both the partner and the University, and contribute to the common good.

Mission-Focused Partners of Choice

External partnerships will become an integral component of successful operation. Advisory councils comprising key stakeholders will be established to provide regular and ongoing guidance to each of the academic colleges. Designed as reciprocal relationships, partnerships will be regularly evaluated to ensure quality, consistency and value. Similarly, partnerships will play a key role in connecting the University with significant external resources and the completion of an initial silent phase of a comprehensive fundraising campaign. Additionally, an increase in annual fundraising will help the organization to realize ambitious capital projects and significantly strengthen its balance sheet.

Connecting Students, Alumni and Partners

Fostering meaningful connections between current students at all academic levels and successful alumni will be the cornerstone of a sustainable mentoring program. Students will benefit from increased job prospects and professional relationships as the University strengthens connections with employers and business partners.

Strong community partnerships will play a significant role in the University's future growth.



Optimized for Advancement and Alumni Engagement

University leadership, at all levels, will create a culture of philanthropy by example, with 100% contributing gifts annually as a result of strengthened partnerships. That same culture will be fostered within the University's broad alumni population through the launch of a new Alumni Associate Membership program focused on increasing participation across all giving categories.

Developing and Organizing an Intentional Network of Friends

Strong community partnerships will play a significant role in the University's future growth. These relationships will be particularly relevant to the success of the academic colleges, each of which will identify two programs every year that will invite engagement with alumni and community partners alike.



Theme

4

Vibrant Unified Community

The University community strives to develop, live and share a common vision for our work together.

A Culture Rich in Planning, Collaboration and Action

Comprehensive and ongoing strategic planning will become part of the institutional culture, with a focus on collaboration and actionable outcomes. A dedicated office will provide leadership for the related planning processes as well as facilitation of institutional problem solving. Management, sharing and analysis of data will become a significant driver for strategic decision making.

Invest in our People and Marketing

A University functions most successfully and best serves its constituents when faculty and staff are provided with resources that facilitate personal and professional growth. New, employee-focused initiatives will ensure the University is able to retain its best workers and attract highly qualified new team members. Specific areas of focus include professional development opportunities, leadership growth, and fair and healthy compensation.

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Equipping Personnel to Lead and Thrive Faithfully

As an institution of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and Concordia University System, faith plays a primary role in defining the University's identity. Fully incorporating the University's Lutheran mission and identity into the faculty and staff hiring and development processes will ensure that all employees understand, support and live out these principles in all that they do.

Centralize Marketing Thinking and Resources

The University's Mission and Vision will be at the center of a revitalized marketing strategy, which will also focus on managing the University's reputation and relevance with all key stakeholders. A centralized marketing structure will consolidate resources, increase collaboration, and support the use of common visual and written communications institution-wide. A reconceptualization of both internal and external communications will ensure the right messages get to the right audiences using the right mediums.



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Truth ~ Freedom ~ Vocation

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