

# **Gustavus Adolphus College**

## **2023-24 Academic Affairs Goals**

The Provost's Office leadership team (Provost Kelly, Dean Chambers, Dean Conners, Dean Ruble and Interim Dean of Students Potts) have organized and prioritized our collective work to align with the three strategic imperatives of the College: deliver a transformational student experience, drive enrollment growth, and achieve financial sustainability.

We invite our divisional offices, departments, and programs to identify goals that align with the institutional priorities and these divisional goals as they consider their work for this academic year. In doing so, we invite them to follow the example of the Provost's Office leadership team as it identifies goals toward the aforementioned strategies.

In contrast to previous years, our goals do not include the regular work of the offices. We will continue to do the work necessary to provide an excellent educational experience for our students—that is not a goal, but an expectation. Rather than name what we regularly do, these goals respond to data and feedback indicating areas for improvement and indicate our plans for 2023-24 to improve the Gustavus experience for students, faculty, and staff. As offices, departments, and programs develop their own goals, we encourage you to identify those areas of focus that data and feedback indicate need improvement as we collectively work toward delivery of a transformational student experience, drive enrollment growth, and achieve financial sustainability.

### **I. Deliver a Transformational Student Experience**

#### **A. Communication**

1. Context: Students have reported poor and non-transparent communication, particularly regarding the processes and rationales for policy changes. Students also report not knowing how or if the feedback they give to administrative offices affects change.
2. Divisional Goal: Create clear, consistent, kind, and responsive communication with students about policies and process and provide regularized updates on initiatives undertaken in response to their feedback.
3. Goal/Tactic: Develop and implement a student communication plan that ensures consistent voice, utilizes different modes of communication, and establishes a regular cycle of communication.
4. Desired Outcomes: Communication plan implemented; student pulse survey indicates that students know when to expect communication from administrative offices and understand why policies or processes change or do not.

#### **B. Closing Student Satisfaction and Outcome Gaps**

1. Context: Multiple data sources, including surveys and retention data, show that satisfaction and outcomes vary based on demographic and identity groups. Students from underrepresented and/or marginalized groups have lower satisfaction and diminished outcomes relative to other students.
2. Divisional Goal: Create a culture oriented toward equity by adapting policy, practices, curricular and co-curricular offerings, and services to better meet the needs of today's student population, with focus on students currently less well-served by the College.

3. Goals/Tactics:
  - a. Share disaggregated data related to student success and outcomes and encourage departments, offices, and programs to make evidence-based decisions for improvement.
  - b. Work with departments and faculty committees to plan and schedule courses or programmatic activities that support student academic success.
  - c. Implement FTF proposal including components for more support for advising, student/faculty workload equity across courses, and opportunities for faculty to innovate with a new course schedule.
  - d. Identify Academic Bulletin policies and processes needing revision to be more inclusive and/or provide greater equity and access.
4. Desired Outcomes: Department, program, and offices have strategies for improvement ready for implementation by 2024-25 (short-term); smaller satisfaction and outcome gaps in students from marginalized and/or underrepresented groups over next four years (medium-term).

## C. Making Gustavus Systems More Transparent and Navigable for All Students

1. Context: Student, faculty, and staff feedback indicates that some of the systems and processes students must navigate in order to take care of basic tasks and transactions (e.g., housing, financial aid, registration) are onerous, confusing, and opaque. Navigating these systems takes time and energy that students could be putting into transformational curricular and co-curricular activities.
2. Divisional Goal: Create a culture of providing a “student-ready” campus by redesigning systems and processes for ease of student navigation.
3. Goals/Tactics:
  - a. Plan for 2024-25 implementation of a Student Success Hub that co-locates several student service offices and enhances student support
  - b. Lead the 2024-25 implementation of the online course catalog.
  - c. Identify Academic Bulletin policies and processes needing revision for greater transparency and ease of student navigation.
  - d. Begin implementation of the FTF proposal for Signature Experience, with a specific focus on communicating its value to current and prospective students, developing clear and simple processes for enrollment in the Signature Experience, and providing excellent advising and support for students’ engagement in the experience.
4. Desired Outcomes: Implemented Student Success Hub in 2024-25; piloting and measuring high satisfaction on better processes for basic tasks and transactions on advising day; implemented Coursera catalog and training; assessment of pilot programming related to Signature Experience; development of Student Life subdivisions.

## D. Improve Faculty and Staff Sense of Efficacy and Value

1. Context: Gallup data and feedback indicate that many faculty and staff do not feel valued in their work (even beyond concerns about compensation), do not know how to advance or grow in their professional life, and experience Gustavus as siloed and therefore less efficient and effective than it could be.
2. Divisional Goal: Build trust, transparency, and a sense of shared mission by regular communication, valuing expertise, supporting innovation and experimentation, providing growth opportunities, and reducing workload and/or redundancies in Gustavus faculty and staff.

3. Goals/Tactics:
  - a. Review staff job descriptions for accuracy and clarity.
  - b. Encourage development of goals and routine tasks with clear delineation of responsibilities for individuals, departments/programs/offices, committees.
  - c. Develop strategies that encourage and support innovation and collaboration across departments/offices.
  - d. Provide division-wide communication on goals and initiatives.
4. Desired Outcomes: Improved Gallup engagement scores; implemented projects by cross-divisional teams, including the Student Experience Core Team; self-reports of less work/more efficacious work on employee surveys; additional cross-trained employees.

For the Academic Affairs division, much of our work involves achieving the goals under “Deliver a Transformational Student Experience”. However, all divisions have a collective responsibility toward enrollment growth and achieving financial sustainability, thus, we have set a more limited set of goals for these areas below.

## II. Drive Enrollment Growth and Retention

### A. Offer a Distinctive Educational Experience

1. Context: Market feedback as well as feedback from prospective students and parents indicates that Gustavus lacks a distinctive identity. While we do offer an excellent educational experience, prospective students and parents are not clear how it differs from similar institutions or other regional ones.
2. Divisional Goal: Offer an educational experience distinguishable from others in the marketplace by our innovative curricular and co-curricular offerings, including the Signature Experience program and our student-ready campus.
3. Goals/Tactics:
  - a. Implement the FTF proposal, particularly the Signature Experience and modified scheduling grid.
  - b. Implement goals and tactics from I. above that make Gustavus student-ready.
  - c. Support the creation of high-demand programs that will appeal to students who would not otherwise choose Gustavus.
4. Desired Outcomes: Faculty approval of the of FTF proposal; implementation of 2-3 new programs by 2025-26 with robust student interest and participation; assessment of new programs to ensure financial sustainability and quality

### B. Communicate our Distinctive Educational Experience

1. Context: Market feedback as well as feedback from prospective students and parents indicates that Gustavus lacks a shared language to describe the education we provide, particularly around what makes Gustavus distinctive.
2. Divisional Goal: Partner with Admission to disseminate shared language and stories that highlight Gustavus’s distinctive identity.
3. Goals/Tactics:
  - a. Support the Faculty Admission Liaisons as they work with Admission to develop language that highlights and celebrates our distinction

- b. Work with divisional program, departments, and offices to make the new language familiar to all who interact with prospective and current students
- 4. Desired Outcomes: Admission reports that prospective students and families hear shared language and recognize the distinctiveness of Gustavus, marketing perception studies indicate a distinctive Gustavus identity.

### III. Attain Financial Sustainability

- 1. Context: The College currently has an unsustainable budget, based upon our current revenue and expenses. In order to be financially sustainable for the long term, we need to realign resources, create efficiencies, and make decisions toward improved budget stewardship.
- 2. Divisional Goal: Make data-informed decisions that center the student experience as we align budgets with current enrollment so that we can contribute to a financial model that allows us to meet our compensation goals for faculty (50th AAUP) and staff (per the staff compensation model).
- 3. Goals/Tactics:
  - a. Support the approval and implementation of the FTF proposal.
  - b. Review and redesign departmental budgets for sustainable academic excellence and enhanced student experience.
  - c. Provide budget guidance and conduct departmental/program budget review with eye towards equity and advancing strategic goals of the college, sustainable academic excellence and enhanced student experience.
  - d. Communicate about department-specific endowment funds, to increase understanding of the endowed resources to better support our students and programs.
- 4. Desired Outcomes: The academic program has reduced its expenses for FY25, toward achievement of a 2-3 year goal of \$3M; departments have a smaller amount of unspent funds (operating and endowed) by the end of FY24, departments develop a budget and programming plan for FY25 that includes fulfillment of operational needs and endowment yield expectation.