



EMPOWERING STUDENTS:

VISIONARY PLAN 2014-2024

INTRODUCTION

As we face the call for greater productivity and accountability amidst shrinking resources, the need for visionary planning takes on great significance. This new visionary plan serves as a road map to guide us in every major decision, as we become the premier student-centered college in Western New York.

Taking a transformational approach, the trustees, faculty, staff and other stakeholders have developed a pathway into the future that will make us more distinctive while holding steadfast to our roots and values. Structured with four pillars of success and including a wide array of bold initiatives, the plan allows us to capitalize on opportunities and address the challenges facing higher education now and into the future.

Building on our core values and ideals, our plan will empower students to succeed, and helps bridge the widening gap between high school college preparedness. With additional resources applied at every level to focus on student success,

I am confident that our visionary plan will generate the kind of excitement that will energize faculty and staff, galvanize the community, and attract new students eager to experience student life at Villa Maria College.

Sister Marcella Marie Garus,
President



Saint Francis of Assisi, Felician Sisters Complex.

MISSION

Villa Maria College, founded by the Felician Sisters, provides students a rigorous and enriching educational experience.

Offering academic programs with a broad core curriculum, the College transforms and empowers students to realize their intellectual, creative, professional, and spiritual potential. Inspired by a welcoming Catholic tradition and a dynamic Franciscan spirit, Villa Maria College offers individual attention and fosters compassion, justice, peace, respect for human dignity and a commitment to service.



VILLA MARIA
COLLEGE

CORE VALUES

Values provide the foundation for all academic, student, and community programs and activities. As a Felician Franciscan ministry, we espouse the following core values:

Respect for Human Dignity - Reverence for and commitment to promoting and protecting the dignity of all persons.

- Promote the sacredness of all human life
- Treat all people with dignity and respect
- Involve others in decisions that affect them
- Acknowledge each person's contribution

Compassion - Characterized by an empathetic consciousness toward others expressed in caring service.

- Demonstrate concern for the powerless and vulnerable
- Provide holistic services, responding to needs of body, mind and spirit
- Appreciate the needs and circumstances of others

Transformation - Encouraging open minds and hearts, leading to continuous improvement of the person and ministry.

- Place the common good above personal convenience
- Seek out and participate in opportunities for growth and development
- Accept, offer, and seek constructive feedback
- Take responsibility for and contribute to a positive environment

Solidarity with the Poor - Ensuring the needs of the poor and vulnerable are met through advocacy and action.

- Be wise stewards of resources and human talent
- Advocate for fairness regarding human rights for those without a voice in society
- Anticipate and respond to individual, group, and community needs

Justice and Peace - Forging right relationships, recreating a sustainable environment, promoting the common good all in the pursuit of peace.

- Utilize the mission and values for decision-making
- Reflect our Franciscan spirit by caring for the earth's resources
- Appreciate diversity in all its forms
- Advocate for social change that promotes respect for all persons

IDEALS

The seal of Villa Maria College is a graphic representation of the foundation upon which the College rests. The Holy Spirit, the Source of Eternal Wisdom, hovers above the triangle upon which are inscribed in Latin the ideals of the College:

Veritas - Truth: The ideal of truth is demonstrated and fostered by the values of honesty, objectivity, consistency and respect for diversity.

Caritas - Charity: The ideal of charity is demonstrated and fostered by the values of service, dignity, respect and social responsibility.


Unitas - Unity: The ideal of unity is demonstrated and fostered by the values of equity, sensitivity and collaboration.



Within the triangle symbolizing the Most Holy Trinity is the Immaculate Heart of Mary as depicted in the Seal of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Felix of Cantalice. The crossed arms of Christ and St. Francis of Assisi symbolize the Franciscan Rule of the Third Order Regular, with the Eucharistic Host placed upon the Cross depicting the Eucharistic and penitential character of the Felician Congregation.

The Latin inscription encircling these symbols reads: "Seal of Villa Maria College of Buffalo, New York" and includes the date (1961) of the chartering of the College.

OUR VISION



Villa Maria College will be the premier student-centered college in Western New York,

characterized by an unyielding commitment to serving the needs of individual learners, with:

- Cutting edge pedagogy guiding and empowering students through individual pathways to academic success;
- Compassionate and caring faculty members who nurture emerging talent;
- Robust student life experiences fusing academics and student life into a vibrant whole;
- Opportunities for the personal development of life skills that help students realize their full potential as human beings;
- Prudent fiscal management and servant stewardship in support of a Felician Franciscan environment and student-



THE FOUR PILLARS OF SUCCESS

Organized around four pillars of success—Felician Franciscan identity, academic excellence, student focus, and stewardship—the plan touches on every aspect of the college in support of serving individual student needs.

1 FELICIAN FRANCISCAN IDENTITY

VISION

Villa Maria College will live its dynamic Felician Franciscan spirit and Catholic tradition in all aspects of its ministry, to enrich and transform the lives of individuals and the community.

RATIONALE

The core values, ideals, and truths that Villa Maria College espouses are timeless, and are particularly relevant for our current culture and for the specific socioeconomic environment of Western New York. All learners deserve the opportunities and tools for personal success, socioeconomic advancement, and civic engagement. Villa Maria College will take advantage of its Felician Franciscan foundation and ongoing identity to be an institution that provides these tools to its students.

Blessed Mary Angela, Foundress of the Felician Sisters.

INITIATIVES

1. Spirituality:

Villa Maria College will continue to implement its far-reaching mission integration plan that promotes a values-based education and perpetuates the legacy of the Felician Franciscan Sisters.

2. Felician Franciscan Legacy and Sponsorship:

The college will promote the current model of governance that continues the Felician Franciscan legacy, Catholic tradition, and Felician Franciscan mission and spirit.

3. Service to the College and the Community:

The college will foster the Felician Franciscan spirit, Catholic identity, college ideals, and core values through service to the community. Administration and faculty will provide opportunities for service learning in academic and student programs, activities, and events. In its capacity as an agent for the promotion of civic good through service, Villa Maria College will change the lives of individuals and help shape the future of the local community.



2 ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

VISION

Villa Maria College will offer innovative academic programs and educational experiences that respond directly to the individual needs of a diverse community of learners.

RATIONALE

Today's students enter college with widely varying levels of academic experience and preparedness; financial, social, and personal readiness; and academic and professional ambitions. These students require a college experience structured to respond to their individual needs and aspirations, meeting them where they are academically and offering them curricular options and a learning environment that develops the skills and knowledge they need for personal and professional success.

INITIATIVES

1. Program Offerings

New academic programs will be created that are student-centered and sensitive to: student interest; market needs; institutional resources; the college mission; and intellectual, personal, and professional development. The college will continue to reinforce its arts and music niche, and target programs will be expanded in health sciences, business, and other disciplines emerging in Western New York.

2. Curriculum Advancement

Current curricular offerings will be revised to fully engage students, maximize academic success, encourage and facilitate student academic progression, provide degree offerings that meet student needs, and promote high quality academic achievement. A new core curriculum will increase student motivation, ensure a holistic education, and conclude with a capstone experience that immerses students in the local community.

3. Pedagogy and Instructional Delivery

Faculty members will embrace best practices for the student-centered classroom. Techniques will concentrate on active learning strategies, supplemental instruction, individualized attention, and “flipping the classroom.” New technology will be leveraged to enhance learning, and online and blended learning opportunities will be offered. The combination of face-to-face, personalized instruction and flexible learning options will give students of diverse academic backgrounds and learning styles a distinct array of options and experiences.

4. Signature Experience

A “signature experience” will be developed providing a dynamic new contour to the college’s education offerings. This signature experience will require students and faculty members to work across the curriculum on special projects, giving students the opportunity to develop many of the soft skills that are currently demanded by employers, tying into our core values, and providing the college a way to differentiate its graduates from those of its competition. The signature experience will also allow students to work with members of the local community, increasing their civic engagement and providing them valuable networking opportunities.



3 STUDENT FOCUS

VISION

Villa Maria College will provide student-centered experiences that support academic success, foster personal development, and build campus community.

RATIONALE

Villa Maria College will develop a robust array of experiences focused on promoting and enhancing student success. These student experiences will reflect the mission and core values of the college and will provide a safe, nurturing, and inspirational environment for learning.

INITIATIVES

1. Student Success Plan:

Villa Maria College will continue implementation of its new Student Success Plan, aimed at dramatically improving each student's prospects for enhanced academic performance, graduation, and career placement. The plan involves academic support, mentorship programs, financial aid education and counseling, comprehensive academic advisement, learning communities, career services, and a revitalized foundational education program.

2. Learning Differences Program:

Villa Maria College will develop a specialized learning differences program that provides extended academic support beyond what is required by law to students with learning differences. Students will receive extended tutoring, advanced training on adaptive equipment, specialized advising and coaching, priority registration, self-advocacy support, and progress reports, and will be offered social opportunities.

3. Co-curricular and Extracurricular Activity:

Villa Maria College will begin new co-curricular and extracurricular programs that will enhance student engagement, resulting in improved academic performance. These programs will also be instrumental in reinvigorating student life at the college.

Possible programs currently in development:

- Honors Program
- Enhanced Music Ensembles
- Campus Ministry and Service Scholarships
- Experiential Learning Endeavors
- Intercollegiate Athletics
- On-campus Residence



4 STEWARDSHIP AND GROWTH

VISION

Villa Maria College will grow through the prudent management of financial, development, human, and material resources and promote stewardship in support of a Felician Franciscan environment and student-centered atmosphere.

RATIONALE

To provide the educational experience today's learners require, the college will pursue prudent and targeted allocation of limited resources, particularly given the current challenges of financing higher education. As the college seeks to realize its vision, it will deploy resources to support student learning and to assure the fulfillment of its mission.

INITIATIVES

1. Financial Resources Plan:

Villa Maria College will leverage its assets to promote student learning and grow its enrollment.

2. Strategic Enrollment Management Plan:

In order to provide the necessary revenue for operational success, and fulfill its mission, the college will identify the optimal mix of students and use new techniques, current technology, and innovative enrollment strategies to recruit students.

3. Development:

Emphasizing major gift giving, the college will aggressively seek donors, and continue to reach out to foundations, and government programs that support its vision and role in helping to revitalize Western New York.

4. Human Resource Plan:

Building upon its outstanding and dedicated faculty and staff, the college will continue to grow staffing levels and compensation to meet the needs of the visionary plan.

5. Campus Facilities Plan:

The college will update the master plan with a focus on enhancing its facilities to aid in attracting and retaining students, offer innovative ways for faculty and staff to deliver services, and provide opportunities to engage alumni and friends.





where talent takes you

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VILLA MARIA COLLEGE IS A FELICIAN FRANCISCAN SPONSORED MINISTRY.