

## 2017 Community by Design Strategic Memo

June 30, 2017

Campus Community,

In August 2016, the campus started implementation of *Community by Design 2021* by working on specific plans for six initiatives. During faculty workshop week, I shared my first strategic memo, our five-year implementation plan and the specific initiative plans. We committed ourselves to continuing the spirit of community that worked during our strategic planning listening tour. As a result, we were focused on incremental progress by centering the initiatives around “experiments.” Those experiments were incorporated into our daily work. We spent the year attempting to systematically communicate progress and integrate the plan into our work.

The *Community by Design* documents can be found at: [www.mcpherson.edu/strategicplan](http://www.mcpherson.edu/strategicplan)

Many things went as planned, and there were some areas that needed adjustment. Overall it was a productive year with most initiatives making progress toward their end goals. We have two initiatives that exceeded expectations: *Grow academic programs modeled after recent program successes* and *Campus entry*. Two initiatives finished on track: *Create experiences that support career success and are connected with the curriculum* and *Create a plan to build a \$1 billion endowment*. One initiative was intentionally changed after some campus discussion: *Create a long-term vision for residential life*. One initiative was postponed: *Redefine the tuition revenue model*.

It was more difficult than expected to integrate some of the initiatives into the day-to-day operation. My office was not as intentional at creating regular updates among cabinet members and to the entire campus. In addition, year one of implementation was more siloed than the planning process.

However, one important accomplishment should be noted. The campus was focused—we didn’t get distracted by adding new projects. *Community by Design* drove decision making and much of the work we did over the last year. In addition, we did all this while balancing our operating budget with a 5.8% spending rate and maintaining our overall retention.

### 2017 Progress

Below you will find evidence of the campus’ good work this past year. What follows is a summary of the initiatives from 2016-17 and progress to date:

#### 1. **Grow academic programs modeled after recent program successes.**

**2017 Action:** Develop the framework for departments to make growth plans. (Visual Arts Experiment)

Departmental growth plans will define the next steps to nurture entrepreneurial faculty. Faculty will work to better define how they will plan in their departments and work with the institution to access resources. (Led by VP for Academic Affairs and Faculty.)

**Progress:** We successfully completed the experiment in modeling growth after success in automotive restoration—Visual Arts is executing a strategic growth plan, and Natural Sciences has completed a hybrid program review that included *the Community by Design* growth criteria. Also, other academic areas have started the planning processes. Additionally, admissions has reorganized their operation to be focused on efforts to support recruiting for academic growth. The traditional “admissions counselor” position has been redesigned with a focus on project management as they work in every area of recruiting general students. Partners Across Campus (PAC) was created to provide direction for faculty in the recruiting process. This area has exceeded expectations and is off to a fast start.

#### 2. **Create experiences that support career success and are connected with curriculum.**

**2017 Action:** Career Services Experience Framework (Explore, Experience, Engage Experiment)

Create a framework for Career Connections credit and other experiences outside the curriculum (including service, academic and co-curricular experiences that support career growth). In two years, faculty will work to incorporate curricular experiences like senior research into this framework.

**Progress:** The Enterprising MC Student model was created to give students a comprehensive framework for engaging in a variety of experiences in/out of the classroom that will lead to career placement. The model will be shared with students in the



fall and refined with faculty throughout the 2017-18 year. In addition, data will start to be tracked according to the three aspects of the model (Explore, Experience and Engage) to better understand and predict activity that leads to successful placement. This initiative is on track to meet our five-year goal to create experiences that support career success and are connected with curriculum. In addition, 69% of our students were placed in graduate school or with jobs prior to graduation, which is nearly 10% higher than last year and significantly above the national average.

### **3. Redefine the tuition revenue model to ensure affordability and institutional revenue.**

**2017 Action:** Debt Reduction Pilot Project (Debt Management vs. Price Reduction Experiment)

Five first-year students will be selected to participate in a program that guarantees they will graduate with less than \$15,000 of debt—half the national average. These students will participate in a one-hour financial planning workshop, which includes the creation of a personal budget; placed in a job (20-30 hours/week) receiving Career Connections credit; assigned a faculty academic advisor; connected with a student mentor; and must continue to stay in good standing with McPherson College.

**Progress:** This project was put on hold because it could not be implemented in the fall semester. A late start on initiative planning and turnover in the career services office prevented leadership from getting the program off the ground this year. Due to the nature of financial aid, this project is better suited to begin in the fall semester, so it was pushed off until fall 2018.

### **4. Create a long-term vision for residential life.**

**2017 Action:** Internal and External Analysis of Future of Residential Life at McPherson College (KLC Experiment)

Start with students and external data/literature. Spend time off campus at other campuses that are working to solve the same challenge. Use this topic as part of our KLC focus. The focus is on residential life living facilities but also on food, business model, co-curricular components and effects on academics.

**Progress:** After work started on this initiative it became clear that McPherson College needed to better define the student experience before attempting to create a long-term vision for residential life. Several KLC sessions yielded good feedback from campus, and the board of trustees will provide feedback during their July retreat. Leadership will work with campus to develop a student experience framework that will be used to create the long-term vision for student life

### **5. Campus Entry**

**2017 Action:** Phase One Campus Entry (Aesthetic Branding Experiment)

Complete the first phase of a campus entry that includes new lawn, streets, signage and landscaping. This is the first project in a new approach that will address the aesthetic brand at MC.

**Progress:** The campus entry project will be complete by mid-August. The entry project includes a new “landmark” sign and entryway as well as updated streets and landscaping. This project was a great example of the community working together to turn an idea of a sign into an attractive campus entry that will set the aesthetic tone for future building projects. This initiative was a priority for many on campus based on feedback from the listening tour. First-year progress has us in a good position to successfully complete our goal to plan and build facilities that nurture, sustain and welcome a growing community.

### **6. Create a plan to build a \$1 billion endowment through extensive planned giving efforts.**

**2017 Action:** Silent Phase Planned Giving Campaign Launch (\$1B Experiment)

Create and test a process to approach and get revocable planned giving commitments.

**Progress:** Much of this year was spent communicating the intention of this bold goal. There was a nice spread in *The Review* and many hours were spent in various settings explaining our efforts to build the \$1 billion plan. The message is clear and the next five years is not about raising \$1 billion; rather, it is about building the plan around estate planning. At the center of that plan will be building momentum with current and future donors sharing how much they plan to leave to McPherson College. Interviews ran behind due to the completion of the *Power the Future* comprehensive campaign; however, plans are in place to interview key constituents regarding planned giving and willingness to share information on their estates. These initial interviews will be used to structure a systematic approach at contacting our entire base of support. By July 2018 we hope to have an initial idea of what kind of support we have for our \$1 billion plan.

### **2018 Priorities**

Many of the initiatives from the previous year are scheduled to be in play for 2018. One initiative that was slotted for implementation this coming year, “Develop an ongoing campus education program that communicates our values and engages the campus community in important challenges to executing plans,” will be delayed one year while MC better positions its new public relations efforts. The public relations director position has been filled and a plan is in place for next year. The campus

education program will begin in summer 2018. As planned, the initiative entitled, "Engage young alumni and new friends in the tradition of *Bulldog Pride*" will be added into the mix this year.

Next steps for our seven initiatives for 2017-18 include:

**1. Grow academic programs modeled after recent program successes.**

Year two of implementation will be focused on supporting academic areas with strategic planning; aligning our admissions operations with academic department planning; and defining the relationship between academic strategic planning and program reviews.

**2017-18 Goal:** At least two additional academic programs complete strategic plans; documented relationship between academic strategic planning and program reviews.

**2. Create experiences that support career success and are connected with curriculum.**

The Enterprising MC Student model will be used with students and refined with feedback from faculty. The model will focus on engaging students who are not currently involved in some type of career experience and keeping our involved students focused on preparation to ensure career placement. Feedback through next year will be used to improve the model in 2018.

**2017-18 Goal:** 95% job/graduate school placement; 50% internship placement; and new data reporting from the Enterprising MC Student Model.

**3. Redefine the tuition revenue model to ensure affordability and institutional revenue.**

Planning is in place and six students have been selected for fall 2017. The one-hour financial planning workshop has been created and other coordination is in place with the career services office. Year one of the project will include students in six different economic situations and academic levels. Data collected will be used to inform the next year's program, which will include 15-20 students. If the project gets off the ground as projected this fall, this initiative should be back on track for successful completion in the next four years.

**2017-18 Goal:** Six students enrolled in the Student Debt Project; five of six students successfully complete year one; new data to inform 2018-19 Student Debt Project.

**4. Create a long-term vision for residential life.**

A student experience framework will be developed by the campus to provide a guide for creating the long-term vision for our residential campus. Next year's focus will be on applying the student experience framework to living and community spaces, as well as student life programming that encourages deeper engagement.

**2017-18 Goal:** Student Experience Framework in place; new initiatives created to impact living space and student life programming.

**5. Campus Entry and Campus Master Plan.**

A comprehensive campus entry plan will be developed (including a new student center), as well as an updated campus master plan. The campus will work together to provide some initial feedback on modifications to the existing campus plan, including the new student center.

**2017-18 Goal:** Campus master plan approved by the board of trustees, including a master entrance and student center plan.

**6. Create a plan to build a \$1 billion endowment through extensive planned giving efforts.**

Interviews with constituents will start in late summer/early fall. Progress will be reported to the campus and a new strategy for planned giving implemented in July 2018.

**2017-18 Goal:** Complete 20 interviews; over \$100M in estate commitments.

**7. Engage young alumni and new friends in the tradition of "Bulldog Pride."**

A comprehensive plan is in place to utilize social media, a student ambassador program, prospective student referral program, affinity areas like teacher education, expanded personal visits, targeted events, and enhanced Power Day to engage alumni.

**2017-18 Goal:** Execute comprehensive plan; 100 new young alumni donors.

***Next Steps...***

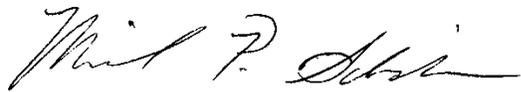
This fall will be focused on doing a better job integrating the work of our initiatives into the work of the campus. In addition, I am committed to working with leaders from across campus to find more impactful ways to keep everyone updated on progress and involved in year two's implementation.

I have a lot of confidence in each of you. Whether you sit on our board, teach in the classroom or provide a supporting role to the big ideas we are working to accomplish in *Community by Design*, you are making an impact.

No other college in the KCAC is ranked higher by *U.S. News & World Report* than MC. And for a third year in a row *The Chronicle of Higher Education* recognized us as a "Great College to Work For." Yet again, we are the only college in Kansas to receive this recognition and no other liberal arts college was recognized in more categories than McPherson College.

If we stay focused, working to make incremental progress each year, there is no question MC can be recognized as one of America's great small colleges. Thanks for your hard work and congratulations on a remarkable year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael P. Schneider". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "S".

Michael Schneider  
President