



St. Olaf Strategic Planning “Thriving” Innovation Team Charge

Co-Conveners: Diane LeBlanc and Nate Jacobi

Members: Jeff Bolton, Eskil Irgens '25, Norman Lee, Steve Lindley '08, Scott Okuno '85, Yolanda Pauly '25, Chang Dao Vang '11, Sungha Yun

Charge:

The four-year development plan for every Ole should combine the requisite support with excellent academic resources and thoughtful, intentional mentoring. Connecting it all from day one, and supporting it with a robust data and reporting infrastructure, will bring together classroom learning, advising and mentoring, engaged learning experiences, and postgraduate planning, preparation, and exploration. By emphasizing “thriving,” we signal our commitment to whole-person growth across curricular, co-curricular, residential, and off-campus opportunities. **The guiding question that this team will explore is core to who we are at St. Olaf: How do we ensure every Ole succeeds and reaches their potential?**

Key Tasks and Considerations:

1. Make visible the integrated approaches in place to support student success for all our students (work already underway through *For Every Ole* (now called The St. Olaf Pathway), past and current Retention Committees, the Academic Success Center, TRIO/SSS, and other stakeholders).
2. Support for staff, faculty, and students is part of this effort.
3. Consider taking a page from “Backwards Design” pedagogies and plan backwards from assessment. How will we know if we are successful? What are the milestones, benchmarks, and metrics that will inform our progress?

Connecting Themes:

1. **Mission:** Our mission statement is our promise to our students. Throughout our planning, our work will be mission-aligned. Our mission is:
“St. Olaf College challenges students to excel in the liberal arts, examine faith and values, and explore meaningful vocation in an inclusive, globally engaged community nourished by Lutheran tradition.”
2. **DEIB:** The recommendations will advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging efforts so all members of our St. Olaf community thrive and experience a genuine sense of belonging.
3. **Sustainability:** The recommendation will address a key question: how do we sustain St. Olaf’s bright future in light of multiple national and global headwinds? The proposed action steps will encompass:
 - strategies to address inequities locally and globally

- issues of environmental sustainability for this one precious Earth we inhabit
- a financially sustainable approach that reaffirms our commitment to meeting the financial needs of our students and that provides fair and equitable compensation and benefits for our employees
- the viability of our academic offerings
- attention to our built, digital, and energy production infrastructure that undergirds all that we do on the Hill.

Key Questions to be addressed by the Innovation Team:

1. How can we build on our current efforts to ensure that every Ole succeeds and reaches their potential?
2. What do students, faculty, and staff need to support student thriving?
3. If we are all mentors, how do we follow a student's co-curricular path, and how does it integrate with academic pursuits?
4. What resources — technologies, spaces, professional development opportunities, student support services — do students, faculty, and staff need to advance student thriving?
5. How can we better demonstrate and celebrate students, faculty, and staff thriving?
6. What will students' four-year pathways look like? How will we construct visual, flexible, and easy-to-follow representations of those pathways in a way that balances the prescriptive and descriptive?
7. What, if anything, does thriving at St. Olaf have to do with the thriving of our local, regional, national, and global neighbors?

Resources:

- Coordination Team (Susan Rundell Singer, Louis Epstein, Michael Kyle)
- Marci Sortor (Dean and Provost of the College)
- Hassel Morrison (Vice President for Student Life)
- Relevant constituencies: students, staff, faculty, alumni