

ILLIFF

— SCHOOL *of* THEOLOGY —
DENVER



Iliff School of Theology Strategic Plan

**First three-year timeframe:
2015—2018**



Introduction

During the academic year 2014-15, the community of the Iliff School of Theology committed to a year of active discernment that would lead to a new strategic plan. We launched a collaborative visioning process, and the mission, vision, core values, and priorities are the result of that work. Thus, these priorities are a collective call to action for the school as it seeks to live fully into the rapidly changing environment of theological education.

Throughout the discernment process, four functional values guided our work:

- A commitment to the **essence** of Iliff that, since its founding, has contributed an inherent wisdom to the world as the school engaged the critical issues of each era.
- A commitment to **inclusiveness** that incorporated many voices from across the field of Iliff's many internal and external relationships.
- An acknowledgment that **process is as important as product** and, therefore, the experience of creating this plan should be evident in the final document.
- A recognition that institutions of this era, while seeking to provide a well-articulated and thoughtful direction, must also function with **agility** that allows them to keep stride and maintain relevance in a world in which many cultural shifts are taking place.

Iliff is a small institution with a large purpose. It addresses complex problems in diverse settings with a historical commitment to diversities and justice and peace. This factor alone necessitated the inclusion of diverse voices in the planning process, both to inform our work and ensure deep and broad ownership of the priorities. More importantly, however, we believe that just as diversity within our community enriches the academic and communal experience of our students, a diversity of perspectives in setting these priorities enhances and informs our work in ways we may never have considered. For when we bring multiple perspectives, areas of expertise, and lived experiences together to bear on issues of common concern and theological significance, exciting ideas always—always—emerge.

As Gil Rendle of the former Alban Institute states, effective leadership does not ask “Are we doing things *right*?” but rather, “Are we doing the *right things*?” That is the question we sought to answer, and in doing so, it is essential that we listen to and involve individuals who have both insight into the world's issues and a deep interest in the future of Iliff. Throughout, we encouraged a thinking process that transcended notions of “turf” and blurred the boundaries from one area of experience to another, freeing participants to think in new, collaborative ways while simultaneously acknowledging the deep expertise each person and unit brings to their designated areas.

The strategic planning process, while future oriented, has a present moment quality to it as well. It embodies an opportunity to experience a way of being that relies on

the contribution of individuals' expertise through collaborative engagement that foreshadows our future. The greatest predictor of outcome is the frame that is chosen to view a situation, solve a problem, or initiate a new program (*Bolman and Deal, Reframing Organizations*). Bolman and Deal suggest that organizations typically negotiate their worlds from the perspective of four frames and typically align their identity with a dominant frame. All of the frames are important and always in function, but it is essential that an organization choose a frame that makes it possible for it to accomplish its mission with a coherent integrity. Considering our size and time in history, our strategic process and future way of being embraces a *human resource* frame that emphasizes a "sensitive understanding of people and their symbiotic relationship with organizations." Iliff is in the process of reaffirming its history and claiming anew an embodying of the values that will resonate with the organizations in which our students will spend their careers. We will not overlook the value of the *structural* frame committed to good organization and management. We will not cease to engage the inevitable pressures and interests that lead to the *political* frame. But through it all, our hope is that Iliff, and those it engages, can find an even deeper sense of the *symbolic* frame that reminds us that while our success as a theological school depends on quality shared leadership, we must never lose sight of "what is most important and what it means."

We chose not to focus on a fixed block of time (five years, for instance). Rapid change is now normative and can render a fixed block plan irrelevant before its implementation timeframe has expired. We will look ahead to a consistent three-year window. As we complete a year, we will annually add a new third year. In doing so, we are pursuing a new way of thinking strategically—one that builds on the agility necessary to respond effectively to unanticipated needs (for instance, economic changes or significant world events) and trends that increasingly characterize the "new normal" in theological education.

We are charting a clear direction, yes; but we are also acknowledging that even the best strategic efforts will undoubtedly fall short of anticipating every emerging need. By remaining open to the revelations and learning opportunities that surface "en route"—even as we keep our eyes on our chosen priorities—we preserve the agility needed to respond nimbly to emerging factors that could not have been anticipated, but when seen as emergent strategies, can serve as an alternative or a complement to our deliberate strategies that positively affect our mission and our ability to fully live it (*Mintzberg, Crafting Strategy, Harvard Business Review*).

Finally, this document provides collective guidance to the diverse functions and programs of the school while leaving the specific planning to individual units, special collaborative task groups, and other groups that will accomplish the priorities set forth in this document. A Strategic Assessment Team comprised of members of our community: staff, faculty, students, trustees, and alumni/ae, will assess the relevance and progress of our work annually, which may lead to new proposals, reaffirmation of direction, and, potentially, exploration of new

possibilities. This ongoing review, again, ensures that as we move toward fulfilling these priorities, we remain open to new insights and emergent needs.

We are deeply grateful to all who participated and provided leadership in this process. The results of their efforts will guide us as we continuously identify the important issues around our work, and provide strategic leadership and quality insight for Iliff.

Iliff's Current Internal and External Context

Iliff is not immune from the pressures that currently confront schools of theology. **Our most pressing issues are: *excessive tuition dependency, small endowment, shrinking market share, academic programs in need of development and expansion, and deferred maintenance.*** It should be noted that a differentiating factor Iliff shares among its peers is that *it has no financial debt.* However, *deferred maintenance has the same limiting effect on an institution's ability to grow* and must be addressed and strategized in ways as if it were debt.

Iliff School of Theology, like all theological schools, is living in a new environment created by significant demographic and social shifts. The mainline denominations it has historically served are in decline and new thinking is required to reimagine the Church. Within the North American culture, as denominationalism declines, there is an increasing interest and curiosity in learning about other faith traditions and in developing relationships between diverse religious groups. There is a growing number of individuals who claim to be spiritual but not religious. There is ever increasing interest in how the theological disciplines can be employed to inform new faith communities and complementary not-for-profit organizations. On a macro-level, these shifts indicate:

- Iliff's market share is less than one percent (.49%) of the total enrollment among the 232 accredited theological schools in the United States
- A 2% annual decline in enrollments nationwide (Colloquy, 2010)
- Increased competition for students and donors as potential pools decreased due to a lack of interest in religion (particularly among young adults). Currently, 23% of Americans consider themselves "unaffiliated" and 71% consider themselves "Christian" (many non-active), with rising numbers of Americans (6%) who identify themselves with non-Christian faiths (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life's U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, 2015)

In the realm of higher education, there was a time, within the span of our own memories, when institutions lived more neatly in peer groups. Seminaries compared themselves primarily with other seminaries. They shared information and analyzed data that pertained strictly to their cohort. This is no longer true. All institutions: large research, small liberal arts, community colleges, graduate schools such as Iliff, now exist in an ecology of institutions (*Kirst and Stevens, Remaking College: The Changing Ecology of Higher Education*). An event or action originating

from one institution has the potential to ripple through the entire ecology of institutions not just within the peer group. For instance, enrollment trends in heretofore schools that we did not consider relevant to Iliff may well need to be understood. With the ever emerging interdisciplinary emphasis among disciplines within and across institutions, Iliff will need to pay critical attention to collaborations with other graduate and undergraduate programs outside the traditional theological disciplines but with those that theology can make a substantive contribution when in relationship.

Higher education institutions have now adopted marketing strategies from outside its realm. Borrowing from corporate entities, schools seek to create new markets that overtake existing markets (*Christensen and Eyring, The Innovative University: Changing the DNA of Higher Education from the Inside Out*). In Iliff's own recent history, the creation of the degree in social change, now called Master of Arts in Social Justice and Ethics (MASJE), is such an example. It is important to state that in this climate, with its many fruitful possibilities, the decisions institutions need to make still must align with their core identity. It is all too easy to bow to the economic pressures of the day to enroll a class and preserve revenue by altering the curriculum beyond the mission. Thus, it is important for us to always hold in our collective awareness that, when the forms of our practice need to change, we carry a mixture of the energy and substance of our past traditions in complement with our contemporary insights forward so they can enrich each other in new ways and serve us into the future (*Greenman and Borman, Changing American Education: Recapturing the Past or Inventing the Future?*).

With all of these challenges in mind, let us not overlook that it is an exciting time to actively imagine where the new and uncontested markets exist for Iliff to live its mission. This is looking past the existing market competition and into the "blue ocean" of altogether new areas (*Kim and Mauborgne, Blue Ocean Strategy: How to Create Uncontested Market Space and Make the Competition Irrelevant*). As a discipline, theology has the inherent sense to look beyond itself to engage the deepest questions of meaning and purpose. There is no shortage of the need for that level of questioning. We live in an era when people have lost a sense of how to be in constructive conversation. Fear abounds about issues on which people cannot agree. Cultural wounds persist. Iliff can be a presence in the world to ask the critical questions and engage people and systems that struggle to find a human way forward.

Iliff is both an entity in the midst of contemporary religious culture and an institution of the current culture of higher education. As Iliff stands in these two realities, it is a fortuitous time to exist. While we are not immune from any of these forces, we are in a position to interact with them for good. These are challenging and meaningful days.

Iloff's Context and the Strategic Planning Process

The strategic planning process itself incorporated many goals designed to serve the growth of Iloff for the long term. Imagining the process, we wanted it to be an opportunity to energize all constituents and communicate a message of strength and future orientation to our broad audience. We wanted to arrive at a new set of priorities that has widespread ownership and conveys the distinctive strengths of Iloff along with new imagination for theological education. We wanted to energize our current donors and convey a message of meaningful direction and relevance of mission. We sought wisdom beyond our own internal community to express our interest in cultivating more and deeper relationships. We wanted it to be a real experience in dialogue and bear the marks of an educational process of public learning. In short, our strategic planning process was designed as a multifaceted opportunity to address immediate concerns and opportunities while seeking future direction.

As discussed in more length earlier in this document, the goals of the process were:

- To create a **continuous strategic planning process** that maintains a **three-year operational window**
- To create a succinct and contemporary **Mission Statement**, challenging **Vision Statement**, and set of **Core Values**
- To create a **set of strategic initiatives** prioritized for the first three-year operational window

The process formally began in the fall term by seeking feedback from all major constituent groups:

- General Community
- Students
- Faculty
- Retired Faculty
- Adjunct Faculty
- Staff
- Alumni/ae
- Senior Leadership
- Religious Partners
- Religious Leaders (including the interfaith community)
- Donors & Friends
- Board of Trustees

Data was collected in on campus gatherings held with each distinct group and facilitated by a team of four who rotated in pairs between gatherings with one serving as the facilitator and one as the recorder. All-community gatherings were

held so people could have open discussion across constituent groups. To include individuals of distant geographical locations, the questions were set into a link on the Iliff website and all alumni/ae were invited to participate. The strategic planning process was also created as a non-credit “course” on Canvas where any student from any location would be able to participate. In all, more than 400 respondents participated in the process.

The raw data were collected by the end of the fall term and in the New Year, two task forces began to do their work with the data. Each task force was comprised of two students, two faculty, two staff, two alumni/ae, and two trustees with attention to assuring diversity. Both task forces were given the charge to thoroughly engage the data and to garner the insights of the constituent groups. One task force was to draft new mission and vision statements and identify a set of core values. The other was to identify the major themes contained in the data that would be formulated into priority initiatives in a next phase. A draft document was created by each task force and sent out for review and comment to the community. After two weeks, the comments from the community went back to the task forces to consider. Another set of draft documents was prepared by the task forces and shared with the community for final comment. The task forces work was then concluded.

The President and the President’s Cabinet were then charged with integrating all contributing elements and creating priority initiatives from the themes that align with the new mission and vision statements. Additionally, their task was to set these priorities into the first three-year operational window. The President presented the Strategic Plan to the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees on September 1, 2015 for an initial review and then to the full Board of Trustees for approval at its fall retreat on September 24-25, 2015.

The President and President’s Cabinet will be primarily responsible for the implementation of the plan, including fiscal accountability, in conjunction with the direction of the Board of Trustees. A wide array of stakeholder groups and cross-functional teams from throughout the Iliff community will work to develop the initiatives. The President and the President’s Cabinet, in consultation with the Board of Trustees, will create a Strategic Assessment Team with wide representation of the Iliff community to assist with on-going discernment and assessment of current and next steps of the continuous strategic process for the ensuing years.

In reading through these data and bringing all of the strands together into a comprehensive document, a spirit for the future began to shine through. That spirit is described by the word “abundance.” There is an abundance of love for our students and a commitment to create a rich and wonderful learning environment. There is an abundance of pride in Iliff’s mission and purpose in the world. There is an abundance of interest and resolve to invest in the development of our staff and faculty and a reminder to all of us that Iliff is a learning community for all persons who enter its doors. This leads us to Iliff’s abundance of hospitality and its

intentions to share our rich resources with those beyond our community. And, most importantly, there is an abundance of belief that Iliff is an entity of significance and that it can impact the complex issues that perplex this hurting world, the world in which we live out its courageous mission.

Mission, Vision, and Core Values

Mission

Iliff educates and develops leaders with courageous theological imaginations and, because of its United Methodist heritage and relationships, is committed to social justice, inclusiveness, and religious diversity.

Vision

We transform the world by creating new and renewed local and global communities of inclusive justice by generating critical scholarship and engaging what is sacred.

Core Values

- We are a learning community that engages the whole person through mind, body, and spirit
- We value the differences in our community
- We value scholarship and the integration of theory and experience
- We align ourselves with social justice, equality, and wholeness
- We celebrate theological discernment and spiritual depth
- We promote honesty and transparency and maintain healthy relationships when in tension
- We strive to take care of each other as we journey together
- We strive to involve all affected constituents in decision-making processes
- We are an incubator for innovation
- We value our progressive theological heritage and how it finds expression in emerging forms of pedagogy and practice
- We value the creative and inspirational nature of our work: spiritual, intellectual, and vocational
- Our core values arise out of our United Methodist heritage

Strategic Framing: Major Questions

Our strategic discernment process was framed around three major questions:

- In what ways does Iliff need to **change or progress** to be the very best progressive theological school?
- What are or can be Iliff's **points of distinction** that allow us to gain a competitive advantage in recruiting talented students, staff, and faculty?

- Where does Iliff have an **opportunity for national, and international leadership?**

These questions provided guidance as we imagined our future work in relation to the areas of strategic focus shared in all settings and vehicles of data gathering. They are outlined and expanded upon in the next section. The major themes that emerged from the data and identified by the task force are: *Identity, Connections, Financial Aid and Financial Stability, Technology, Curriculum, People*. These themes are developed into strategies in the following section and reintegrated into the strategic areas identified at the outset of the process from which they were identified.

Areas of Strategic Focus

1—Strategic Focus: Sustaining and Enhancing Academic Excellence

Iliff's identity is about educating leaders for three primary publics: the world, the church, and the academy. Iliff refuses to choose between being a training home only for ministerial candidates, a center only for activists and scholar-activists, or a school only for academics - we believe all three are inseparable and enhance one another. Iliff situates itself in the world, and deliberately and critically operates out of the complexities of the world.

Strategy 1:

Reclaim Iliff's identity as a school of theology by encouraging and promoting an internal critical awareness of the importance of theological education in the modern world.

The world's religious landscape is changing and there is much at stake. Iliff has much to contribute by offering the major areas of study and learning in its recently revised curriculum (Comparative Religious Traditions; Constructive Theology; Historical Development and Historical Expressions of Religious Traditions; Sacred Texts; Social and Contextual Analysis; Theology & Religious Practices), and how this approach to teaching and research stands in a spirit of respectful dialogue, inclusive relationship, and constructive actions.

Tactics:

- Generate an internal culture of discussion and critical engagement on the "theological" and the work of the "theological" both in religious communities as well as in society
- Develop an explicitly interfaith course or augment existing Identity Power and Difference (IPD) courses as recommended by the Curriculum Committee and in consultation with the respective area faculty, through which students

will not only learn about different faith expressions, but how their own faith identity can interact with an *ethic of respect*. Iliff faculty will engage each other and their students, and those from the wider world, in discussion and debate on the nature and role of authentic inter-religious engagement in order to create an environment that is explicitly welcoming of different theological perspectives

- The Methodist-affiliated faculty will serve to advance new lines of theological thought and critical scholarship within Methodism and beyond

Strategy 2:

Invest in the academic infrastructure by improving physical space and technology along with the necessary updating of training of faculty and staff.

From 2008 to 2010, Iliff set the standard for critically engaged, on-line theological education and many other theological schools have used it as a model. As we continue to advance our on-line presence in the field and particularly for our students and life-long learners, Iliff will define “space” to include on-line teaching and learning as being as normative to the processes of teaching and learning as the physical classroom.

Tactic:

- As we design new programs and renovate physical classroom spaces, our teams of faculty and IT staff will expand our mindset as to how these improvements will positively impact both traditional classroom and on-line teaching and learning experiences.

Iliff has already begun to develop a multiple stage plan to address deferred maintenance and needed renovations. With the restoration of the agreement in 2015 by the University of Denver to grant full access to their library resources including the full digital resources collection for our students, faculty, staff, trustees, and retired faculty, it became clear that the first priority should be a reconceptualization of the library along with a renovation of the space.

Tactic:

- Reconceptualization of the Taylor Library to include IT and creation of a center for learning, new interactive commons space, and space for individual and group study

Iliff Hall is the original historic building that symbolizes the school’s history. Student surveys have consistently reported that they feel a strong connection to the space because in its walls they feel its courageous history and substance. It is important to prioritize that space for the academic mission with the Chapel, on the third floor, serving as a symbol and anchor in partnership with that mission.

Tactic:

- Prioritize the spaces of Iliff Hall as Academic Center
 - Classroom renovations incorporating leading technology
 - Consolidation of faculty office clusters
 - Enhancement of the Chapel to more effectively serve as a space for worship, special convocations and community gatherings, worship and preaching classroom

Strategy 3:

Invest in new program offerings.

There is a strong demand among Iliff's students and constituencies for chaplains and counselors to serve in diverse settings such as hospitals, hospice settings, counseling and spiritual guidance centers, and congregations. The MAPSC is one of Iliff's growing programs that holds significant national prominence and thus requires continued investment. A search for a new faculty member following the retirement of Larry Graham has been approved and will be conducted in the 15-16 academic year.

Tactic:

- Conduct a tenure-track, national search to fill the faculty vacancy in Pastoral Theology and Care that will serve the MAPSC Program and other related areas of the curriculum and degree programs

Tactic:

- Discern the feasibility of establishing an auxiliary relationship with the SPIRIT Program as it transfers out of the Samaritan Institute

A major theme in the early discernment of the strategic planning process coming from congregational leaders and those working in non-traditional settings is a call for a program that will educate students to effectively provide cutting-edge leadership and organizational development in a host of settings.

Tactic:

- Through the faculty governance and curriculum committee leadership process, develop a new master's degree program, approved by the Faculty Council and the Board of Trustees, in leadership and organizational development that integrates three contexts: pastoral, not-for-profit, and community organizing

The data gathered in our strategic process indicated a strong hunger for there to be an integration of spirituality into our curriculum.

Tactic:

- Through the faculty governance process, the Faculty Council will discern new directions for integrating the study and role of “mysticism” and “spirituality” in our curriculum that engages students in discussions that spirituality, the supernatural, God, and critical academic analysis are not mutually exclusive

Iloff has a need to introduce new educational programs to provide a destination for both new students and life-long learners and expand our appeal within the continuing education market.

Tactic:

- Expand existing and create new programs
--Military Program (this builds off of our already strong reputation in working with military persons suffering with PTSD and expands to addressing the full array of needs within military families)

Strategy 4:

Invest in faculty development

One of Iloff's greatest assets is its faculty: tenured and tenure track, term contract, and adjunct. The academic mission and the overall reputation of the school depend on a strong, diverse faculty that is aligned with Iloff's academic priorities.

Tactics:

- Continue enhancing annual support of special research projects, travel abroad to special collections and international conferences, and develop new teaching strategies or modalities with Iloff's endowed Faculty Development funds
- Work with the Dean of the Faculty, the Faculty Personnel Committee (FPC) and Faculty Council, and the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board to create and update the plan for hiring faculty in alignment with curriculum development and with Iloff's existing and potential, new degree programs
- Continue to fully integrate and support Adjunct Faculty into Iloff's shared academic culture and intellectual community
- Fully understand the role and purpose of term-contract faculty appointments and strategically deploy faculty serving in this capacity

Strategy 5:

Continue expanding Iliff's professional formation and contextual education programs

Students need to be grounded in a deep theological education and prepared to serve in a wide array of settings. Most graduates will serve in a variety of contexts due to denominational shifts in the ability to provide full-time traditional church appointments and due to new, expanding non-traditional contexts for using a theological degree such as the not-for-profit sector.

Tactic:

- Continue to develop new models of formation and contextual education by expanding the Office of Professional Formation
- Fully integrate the Career Services Center into the Office of Professional Formation

2—Strategic Focus:

Attracting and Graduating a Diverse, Meaningfully Engaged, High-Achieving Student Body

Iliff will create a renewed reputation for being a student-centered environment in partnership with students to collectively work to build into its culture an ownership for observing and seeking to understand and mitigate the issues our students' experience that impede their academic progress and ability to live fully into their vocations.

Strategy 1:

Invest in student resources for financing their educations

Student debt is a national crisis. Iliff will invest time and resources to address the systemic and operational issues regarding funding graduate education.

Tactics:

- Grow and expand Iliff's Matching Scholarship program both in terms of monetary match and percentage of student body participating
- Develop comprehensive funds development program to assist students with raising initial portion of Matching Scholarship
- Expand the SIFR to all students and seek significant philanthropic partners for additional matching funds

- Develop a comprehensive scholarship program drawing from and creating new scholarships: Bridge Scholarship, Matching Scholarship, new endowment gifts for named scholarships, incentive scholarships for high achieving students, low income students, students of color

Strategy 2:

Enhance Iliff's reputation for a quality student experience

Iliff's current student governance model does not fully engage Journey Program students and students from a broad spectrum of lived experiences and a wide range of generations. A new model would create a stronger presence of advocacy for the student experience.

Tactics:

- With the current Student Senate leadership and the Office of Student Support, work to create a new more inclusive model of student governance
- Implement a Student Senate training to motivate civil principles, community building, and student leadership within the organization
- Invite student participation in leadership opportunities beyond the elected student senate offices

Strategy 3:

Create new recruiting pipelines

The national market for recruiting new students for traditional programs is shrinking at a rate of 2% per year. This requires two strategic actions: Create new academic programs that appeal to a broader demographic and create new pipelines with agreements that bridge Iliff to feeder schools and other entities.

Tactics:

- Strengthen denominational connections
 - Using our experience with developing and maintaining the Anglican Studies program, create similar models with other relevant denominations
- Build relationships with colleges and universities
 - Create partnerships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities to create pathways to Iliff

In process: Develop with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of the UMC a HANA Scholarship MOU with Wylie College to recruit Hispanic students

--Cultivate ongoing recruitment and partnership presence on college campuses that are likely feeder schools in the U.S.

- Develop a comprehensive strategy for recruiting and retaining students of color
 - Continue to build on experiences similar to hosting the Spanish Speaking Licensing School training
 - Hosting conferences such as SRER as a means for communicating our institutional commitments to diversity and inclusion

Strategy 4:

Develop new marketing strategies

Create a new level of coordinated marketing with continued consultation across all constituent groups in order to discover deeper connections in existing markets and imagine new “blue ocean” opportunities for programs and marketing.

Tactics:

- Expand support of new academic programs, as well as life-long learning opportunities, through integrated marketing communications efforts
- Create awareness for Iliff to reach student and donor prospects via tactics that introduce Iliff in a non-threatening way
- Foster opportunities to push constituencies to segmented media platforms and pull existing constituencies via integrated marketing tactics, such as developing a greater presence through social media/deeper web content
- Continue to develop and expand the posting of career stories of Iliff alumni/ae, communicate what Iliff teaches and focus on the difference that Iliff made in their lives and the impact on the diverse array of communities they serve
- Work with and across departments to identify/establish beneficial institutional partnerships

3—Strategic Focus:

Preparing and Sustaining Graduates in Lives of Leadership and Service

One of the themes from the discernment process identified the importance of restoring and building new connections that will serve various communities of people related to

the school. Beginning at enrollment, Iliff will be proactively engaged in life-long learning with its students and continuing into their careers, and throughout their complete life span.

Strategy 1:

A Life-long commitment: Iliff will create a program of continuous engagement with our students and alumni/ae from their enrollment, during their formal education, into the critical points in their careers, and throughout their retirement years.

For Iliff to develop an active and supportive alumni/ae base it has to shift its mindset from, "You need to support us" to "How can we support you?" The quality of the on-going relationship we have with our students-alumni/ae must always be our first priority. This will result in giving back out of a deeper sense of purposeful connection.

Tactics:

- Create a process for developing intentional student/faculty relationships both for classic residential and for distance learners
- Better integrate meaningful faculty interaction into alumni focused events (for example, have faculty participate on panels at the annual lectures event)
- Create intentional opportunities for students and early career alumni/ae to be mentored by seasoned alumni/ae for sharing wisdom as a means of addressing career development and support
- Creation of short-term gatherings around a theme that grows from a regular process of communication we will develop with our alumni/ae (for example, the Iliff week of lectures, book clubs, church and nonprofit leadership workshops covering issues involving evangelism, missions and finance)
- Establish a predictable and regular pattern of regional alumni/ae events around the country (for example, meetings at theatre and sporting events and in homes and restaurants)

Strategy 2:

Build the technology for live on-line engagement

Our on-line program for students has raised the expectation among our alumni/ae and friends to be given access to the same opportunity.

Tactics:

- Create the infrastructure and program opportunities to support on-going live engagement with alumni/ae and other constituencies (for example, using existing broad-based social media platforms, such as Pinterest, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn to provide and receive communications from alumni/ae. Our newly remodeled library services program will also provide new platforms for vital mutual engagement with alumni/ae).
- As part of renovations, create reverse classrooms with the capacity to shift the gaze outward to engage external communities across the globe (for example, using Live streaming and/or Periscope to provide virtual access to Iliff lectures, workshops and conferences for people physically unable to travel to campus and to create a platform for linking the classroom to engage live settings around the globe.

Strategy 3:

Create a plan for annual offerings aimed at bringing alumni/ae together in person and virtually to strengthen relationships across student generations that enhance their connection to Iliff

Last year Iliff brought back an event that resembled the popular Iliff Week of Lectures of the past. It was very well received and the feedback was constructive with strong support for continuing it.

Tactics:

- Continue to develop a new version of the Iliff Week of Lectures (new name TBD) that focuses on strengthening alumni/ae relationships with each other and the school, facilitating the sharing of professional wisdom, and strategically relevant offerings sensitive to multiple contexts
- Continue to develop new opportunities via workshops, reading clubs, and/or lectures for alumni/ae to continue their education through Iliff

4—Strategic Focus

Discerning the Role of Faith, Community, and Academic Leaders as Stewards of the Relationships of a Complex World

Recognizing that authentic and discerning inclusion means embracing the “oecumene,” the global world, Iliff will develop an intentional internationalization program that recognizes that we live in a global world, a program that acknowledges that in today’s global world the local and global are intertwined.

Strategy 1:

Internationalization of Iliff

Iliff has the opportunity to expand its horizon and look to build international relationships. With these initiatives comes the opportunity to express our mission in a way that transforms the colonial model from earlier decades of the Church's history and higher education institutions toward creating relationships that consciously reflect the inclusive justice that is the hallmark of Iliff. Much of this work is to expand current work and claim it as a priority for our academic mission.

Tactics:

- Develop relationships with schools and organizations to facilitate recruiting international students to join us for a full degree or for shorter time frames and certificate programs
- Develop relationships with schools and organizations to create study abroad programs
- Build immersion experiences into the formal curriculum
 - International and domestic sites for student engagement and expanding the influence of Iliff
 - Co-sponsor immersion experiences with undergraduate programs so potential students can have an authentic Iliff experience (possibly for credit) prior to their applying for enrollment
- Promote and create connections for faculty and student exchange
- Create global internships
- Seek international relationships with higher education institutions and organizations
 - President's involvement with International Association of Methodist Schools, Colleges, and Universities (IAMSCU)
 - Africa University
 - Faculty member international networks

Strategy 2:

Expand Iliff's influence beyond its immediate region

A combination of influences redefines the old notions of "regional." Our faculty expresses their research in guilds of study that are not limited to the walls of the institution in which they teach. Our students are currently engaged in our programs from near and far locations possible through on-line education. The educational interests of Iliff are not limited only to the western United States. Thus, Iliff has the opportunity to more fully live into the larger sphere that in many ways it already participates.

Tactics:

- Create a Board of Advisors with individuals beyond Iliff's immediate region who are influencers in areas of Iliff's interests
- Create a plan for celebrating the 125th anniversary of Iliff to be observed during the calendar year 2017 with emphasis on highlighting Iliff's history, influence, and future
- Engage in nationally significant events with other collaborators
 - In process: MLK Viet Nam Speech and Riverside Church
- Intentionally seek ways to contribute Iliff's brain trust to national conversations
 - Faculty commenting on national events
 - Continued support for faculty presentations at national conferences

Strategy 3:

Create an academic network between Iliff and other higher education institutions and programs

Iliff has much to share with institutions of higher education that will raise awareness of its presence and reputation while serving its academic mission.

Tactics:

- Course provider MOUs with other theological schools
 - United Methodist History and Doctrine courses
 - Courses of interest for undergraduates in institutions that cannot offer those courses
 - Courses offered to international schools
- Interdisciplinary programs
 - Example idea: Create new programs with Daniels School of Business and/or Korbel School of Citizenship

5—Strategic Focus

Identifying New Paradigms Impacting Traditional and Emerging Faith Communities

Iliff will develop new and renew existing relationships that work together to explore new points of relevance and engagement for theological education.

Strategy 1:

Become a center for social justice that would run different interlinked programs. The center will be distinguished by its interdisciplinary approach and its focus on global justice, peace, and sustainability

There is a call for Iliff to live more fully and consistently its focus on justice and peace as a point of distinction of the school.

Tactic:

- Create a Center for Social Justice that could be inclusive of the areas such as: Diversity Studies; Womanist Studies; Social Justice Advocacy; Environment; Food, Food Security and Justice; Peace, Reconciliation, and Conflict Resolution; Race, Sexuality, and Gender Justice; Economics, Politics, and Religion; Criminal Justice; Religion and Science; Civility and Dialogue in the Public Square; Disability Justice

Strategy 2:

Build a network of relationships that explore new directions and contexts for theological education

The external shifts in culture and religious demographics require Iliff to build new relationships and explore new contexts of relevance for theological education.

Tactics:

- Creation of an incubator network and possible on-campus facility for creating collaborations with like-minded not-for-profits, church, and community organizing groups
- Strengthen Authentic Engagement as a point of contact with the outside world: business, government, churches, higher education
- Visiting professors/scholars representing specialty areas across traditions of spirituality and diverse faith traditions (John Philip Newell)
- Create a renewed collaboration with Veterans of Hope

6—Strategic Focus: Financing Our Future

With renewed organization and confidence in its mission, Iliff will create a healthy fiscal equilibrium through endowment growth, tuition growth, new resources of revenue, assessment of current operations, addressing deferred maintenance, maintaining a commitment to balanced budgets, and reduced dependency on the

quasi-endowment. Funding for any strategic or capital projects will be discussed on an individual basis.

Strategy 1:

Create a long-term funding structure that is not dependent on student tuition

In order to grow as an institution, Iliff needs to address increasing its capacity for fundraising.

Tactics:

- Develop an improved “Case for Iliff” aligned with the new strategic plan
- Improve communications with donors and alumni/ae to improve sense of connection to the institution
- Expand donor base to new “friends” (both individuals and institutions) of Iliff
- Improve our funds development operations and systems to provide increasing annual funding in a sustainable manner
- Build broader and deeper fundraising capacity by balancing annual fund/budget-relieving goals with long-term endowment growth

Strategy 2:

Address deferred maintenance

While Iliff has no debt, it does have 6 million dollars of deferred maintenance that inhibits its ability to grow. Reducing the amount of deferred maintenance frees resources that will significantly contribute to establishing a new healthy financial equilibrium.

Tactics:

- Continue to refine a timeline and strategy for a series of capital campaigns to address deferred maintenance through renovation
 - Schlessman Hall demolition and consideration of formal entry court from the new Iliff address on Iliff Avenue.
 - Library renovation and consideration of relocation of some administrative offices to the Bacon Education wing
 - Iliff Hall as a dedicated academic center
- Develop a multi-year, multi-campaign plan for deferred maintenance/facility renovations including a focused capital campaign for the 2017 125th anniversary celebration

Strategy 3:
Explore new sources of revenue

New sources of revenue are essential to the restoration of a healthy fiscal equilibrium.

Tactics:

- Create a plan identifying new sources of revenue
--In process: a trial of external customer pay-per-use parking
- Develop significant new enrollment-related revenue streams
In process: Course provider concept; work towards enhancement of expanded programming via UMC courses and the Military Program

Strategy 4:
Expand Iliff's presence with major grant agencies

With a new strategic plan and a greater clarity as to our mission and identity as an institution, there is a more compelling story to tell about Iliff as it intentionally seeks out new relationships with major granting agencies.

Tactics:

- Introduce Iliff and its mission through in-person introductory visits by the President and Vice President of IA to the nation's major granting agencies
- Extend and expand our grant funding for the SIFR program
- Pursuing granting agencies for significant funding for our Military Program
- Seek grant funding for budget relieving elements of Iliff's annual operations

7—Strategic Focus: Internal Operations

Iliff will continue to enhance internal operations that serve toward building a strong and healthy environment for all students, employees, and visitors.

Strategy 1:
Continue to restore and enhance internal operational support for employees and students

Over the years, during times of extremely limited resources, difficult decisions had to be made related to servicing day-to-day operations. These decisions represent budgetary sacrifices that were made to preserve the academic mission of the school. As resources are available, it is essential to restore and improve upon these services.

Tactics:

- Enhance Human Resource personnel (currently underway)
- Create a program for new staff orientation
- Security and Crisis Management (currently underway)
--Develop a Threat Assessment Tool and an Assessment Behavioral Intervention Protocol as part of our Security Policy
- On-going diversity training (currently underway)
- Revise and update Title IX Policies and Reporting Procedures (currently underway)
- Provide on-going Title IX training for all sectors of the Iliff community (currently underway)
- Ensure ADA compliance through revising and updating ADA Compliance Policies and provide on-going ADA training for all sectors of the Iliff community

Strategy 2:

Create an environment that strategically welcomes and is organized for hosting or co-sponsoring events with external groups

Many groups within the region of the Front Range have requested space to hold events. These requests come from internal and external groups that want to align themselves with Iliff and its mission. Iliff's reputation will benefit by being able to discern strategically how to be host to group events. Iliff can benefit greatly by its affiliation with these groups.

Tactics:

- Develop a committee to create and oversee a Three-Year Calendar for Academic and Event Planning (underway)
- Continue to upgrade technology into venues with the capacity to stream live and record for later website postings

- Identify resources to coordinate hospitality and event planning



INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES

Year 2015-16

Academic Excellence

- Complete a plan for and initiate the first phases of the reconceptualization of the library incorporating the new access given by the University of Denver
- As part of a comprehensive plan for addressing deferred maintenance through renovations, develop a plan and timeframe for the renovation of Iliff Hall as the Academic Center including technology interface
- Complete a tenure-track national search to fill the faculty vacancy in Pastoral Theology and Care
- Discern the feasibility of establishing a relationship with the SPIRIT Program as it transfers out of the Samaritan Institute
- Conceptualize a new master's degree program in leadership and organizational development
- Begin to expand and identify new programs as differentiators of Iliff in the market place
- Continue to fully integrate and support members of the adjunct faculty into the shared academic culture and intellectual community
- Continue to expand Iliff's professional formation and contextual education programs including integrating Career Services Center

Attracting and Graduating a Diverse, Meaningfully Engaged, High-Achieving Student Body

- Develop and integrate a multidimensional plan for addressing student debt through scholarship support, student agency, and education
- Create a new student governance model and introduce within the academic year
- Begin to identify new recruiting pipelines with colleges and universities including Historically Black Colleges
- Explore new market areas for seeking potential students and assess places of alignment with Iliff's mission

Preparing and Sustaining Graduates in Lives of Leadership and Service

- Begin to conceptualize a multidimensional strategy for establishing Iliff's commitment to supporting life-long learning for its students-alumni/ae from enrollment through retirement
- Enhance the technology that connects our alumni/ae to Iliff to support our life-long learning commitment

Discerning the role of Faith, Community, and Academic Leaders as Stewards of the Relationships of a Complex World

- Begin to open new international relationships with institutions, organizations, and networks that offer possibilities for enhancing Iliff's academic mission and student experience
- Create a process for building immersion experiences into the formal curriculum
- Begin to gather together a Board of Advisors with individuals beyond Iliff's immediate geographical region who are influencers in areas of Iliff's interests
- Activate a 125th Anniversary Committee to plan a strategic year-long anniversary for calendar year 2017
- Engage in nationally significant events with other collaborators: Continue planning the April 4, 2017 event with Riverside Church for the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's delivery of the Viet Nam speech authored by Dr. Vincent Harding
- Establish course provider program partnerships with other institutions

Identifying New Paradigms Impacting Traditional and Emerging Faith Communities

- Begin to conceptualize an interdisciplinary Center for Social Justice
- Begin to identify networks of relationships that explore new directions and contexts for theological education

Financing our Future

- Develop a new "Case for Iliff" aligned with the new strategic plan
- Continue to refine a short-term bridge strategy and long-term plan to increase Iliff's capacity for fundraising and endowment growth
- Finalize a multi-year/phase plan to address deferred maintenance through renovation that is linked to a parallel strategy of mini-campaigns to fund each phase
- Utilizing the formula for creating a new healthy equilibrium, determine new sources of revenue
- Introduce Iliff and its mission through in-person introductory visits by the President and Vice President of Institutional Advancement to the nation's major granting agencies

Internal Operations

- Continue to restore and enhance internal operational support for employees and students
- Create an environment that strategically welcomes and is organized for hosting or co-sponsoring events with external groups

Year 2016-17

- Continue to develop and mature the priorities of 2015-16

Academic Excellence

- Develop an interfaith course
- Discern new directions for integrating the study and role of “mysticism” and “spirituality” in our curriculum
- Fully understand the role and purpose of term-contract faculty appointments

Attracting and Graduating a Diverse, Meaningfully Engaged, High-Achieving Student Body

- Strengthen denominational connections by promoting and creating models similar to the Anglican Studies Program
- Develop a comprehensive strategy for recruiting and retaining students of color: Continue to work with GBHEM on the HANA Scholarship pipeline program and MOU between Iliff and Wiley College

Preparing and Sustaining Graduates in Lives of Leadership and Service

- Continue to mature the annual Iliff alumni/ae gathering event
- Institutionalize, similar to branding, our life-long learning commitment
- Establish a mentor program between seasoned and new alumni/ae

Discerning the role of Faith, Community, and Academic Leaders as Stewards of the Relationships of a Complex World

- Seek possible interdisciplinary programs with other graduate schools
- Develop new pathways for contributing Iliff’s brain trust in national conversations
- Promote faculty and student exchange programs
- Begin to establish global student internships

Identifying New Paradigms Impacting Traditional and Emerging Faith Communities

- Refine a network of relationships of like-minded organizations as an incubator-type think tank
- Continue to develop the presence of visiting scholars
- Renew Iliff’s relationship with Veterans of Hope

Financing our Future

- Bring on-line new enrollment sources of revenue: course provider, etc.
- Extend and expand the grant funding for the SIFR program
- Pursue granting agencies for the Military program

Internal Operations

- Operationalize a new program for staff orientation
- Enhance human resource personnel
- Operationalize diversity training
- Begin regular Title IX training for all sectors of the Iliff community
- Complete revisions for ADA compliance: policies and training

- Operationalize a Threat Assessment Tool and Assessment Behavioral Intervention Protocol
- Institutionalize the Three-Year Calendar Committee for Academic and Event Planning

Year 2017-18

- Continue to develop and mature the priorities of 2016-17

Academic Excellence

- Reflect with the Methodist faculty regarding advancing new lines of theological thought and critical scholarship within Methodism and beyond
- Continue to create new academic programs

Attracting and Graduating a Diverse, Meaningfully Engaged, High-Achieving Student Body

- Continue to expand college and university relationships as recruiting pipelines
- Continue to expand new markets that inform and align with new educational directions

Preparing and Sustaining Graduates in Lives of Leadership and Service

- Continue strengthening a series of short term learning engagements with alumni/ae
- Establish regular and predictable regional alumni/ae gatherings

Discerning the role of Faith, Community, and Academic Leaders As Stewards of the Relationships of a Complex World

- Explore the possibilities of sharing immersion experiences with undergraduate programs
- Develop relationships with schools and organizations to create study abroad programs

Identifying New Paradigms Impacting Traditional and Emerging Faith Communities

- Study the feasibility of an on-campus facility to house an incubator network

Financing our Future

- Continue to seek grant funding for budget-relieving elements of annual operations

Internal Operations

- Sustain on-going diversity training
- Continue to identify resources to coordinate hospitality and event planning



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