

# Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School

## Strategic Plan 2020-2024

### A Time of New Beginnings

#### **Introduction**

The global nature of a pandemic amplifies challenges in higher education in general and theological education in particular. Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School (CRCDS) commenced work in August 2019 with Dixon Schwabl relative to strategic research, brand foundation and identity. This work, which complements standard strategic planning processes, included the following constituency input and research conducted by Dixon Schwabl in collaboration with CRCDS' Vice President for Institutional Advancement:

1. SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) and core values exercise completed by eight employee volunteers (44%) and one governing trustee;
2. 13 individual interviews with seven stakeholders (trustees, faculty, administrators);
3. 6 interviews with current students (3), alumni/ae (1), and prospects (2);
4. marketing assessments of 7 competitors; and
5. review and analysis of publicly available information on the state of religious education in the U.S. and the overall perception of churches.

At the October 2019 Board meeting, the president facilitated a discussion of the school's previous strategic plan, as summarized in her State of the School Report. In February 2020, Dixon Schwabl provided an overview of work-in-progress at the CRCDS board meeting and facilitated a brand workshop attended by six stakeholders. Conversations were held with members of the executive leadership team and with all employees, with a draft of the plan provided to the Board's Executive Committee members for review and comment during April; and, with students in May.

Challenges in theological education require that CRCDS position itself to redefine its value and its purpose and to be a relevant resource / entity for matters of peace and justice and financially sustainable while maintaining a distinctive Christian identity. The strategic plan will guide CRCDS in our efforts to strengthen our infrastructure and create a culture that allows for the reimagining of theological education that connects employees to the school's mission. This emphasis on mission reinforces the importance of focusing on institutional assessment and measurable objectives which will be rewarded with success. The rewards are gradual, building momentum to achieve significant gains so CRCDS realizes both immediate and sustainable benefits.

Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School has a rich history of educating socially conscious and socially active students to respond to the needs of communities in which they serve. For more than 200 years, CRCDS has served as one of the world's leading progressive theological schools and has prioritized cultivating a culture of academic excellence and rigor, while building interfaith and interreligious relationships. CRCDS is resilient and working together, we will achieve the ambitious goals and priorities before us. Our collective commitment will position CRCDS to be a vibrant and sustainable institution that is focused on providing quality service to our students, employees, alumni/ae, and broader community.

This plan describes a school whose identity is informed by an always evolving understanding of what is required to stand on the side of justice. The heart of this plan is contained in the four strategic priorities and the goals associated with them. Implementation of the strategic plan will be an ongoing process that monitors, reviews, and updates the results. There will be quarterly and annual strategic reviews that will include assessments and committee meetings for plan review and quarterly dashboard reporting. A method by which to communicate (and archive) progress will be established. These actions will afford us the opportunity to drive the success of our school's priorities and achieve long term viability and sustainability for Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School.

**The Strategic Plan was approved by the Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School Board of Trustees May 18, 2020.**

## ***A Time of New Beginnings: CRCDS 2020-2024 Strategic Plan***

This strategic plan is rooted in the purpose, mission, vision, and values of Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School.

### **Purpose**

As stipulated in our charter, the purpose of Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School *is to furnish ... education to those who are preparing for the Christian ministry and other forms of Christian service.*

### **Mission**

Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School forms *students in theological and multi-religious studies to serve, care, and advocate for all peoples and the earth.*

### **Vision**

CRCDS will be faithful to its distinctive Christian identity as the institution becomes *a seminary of and for the community, committed to practices of peace, service, and justice.*

### **Core Values**

Core values define CRCDS' belief system and norms:

- Community
- Collaboration
- Compassion
- Flexibility
- Respect

### **Ongoing Commitments**

Current projects, services, activities, obligations, and policies to which we remain committed:

- **Competitive and Equitable Pay:** achieving faculty and staff internal pay equity and competitive salaries
- **Safety:** ensuring a safe and secure environment for our students, faculty, and staff

### **Strategic Priorities**

- Enhance Academic Excellence
- Achieve Financial Sustainability
- Improve Efficiency and Effectiveness
- Engage the Community

## Strategic Goals

- Advance student success through transformation and innovation in teaching and learning, enhanced by the use of technology.
- Achieve financial sustainability through fundraising, asset management, transparent communication, and operational accountability.
- Improve efficiency and effectiveness through operational excellence, compliance, and shared leadership.
- Engage our *community* through outreach and partnerships while cultivating an ethos of friendship, respect, and collaboration.

## Strategic Priority 1: Academic Excellence

Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School will advance academic excellence by strategically developing and growing programs to meet the needs of our students and the communities they serve. We are committed to supporting faculty, research, and achieving academic excellence by promoting innovative pedagogy and by investing in our faculty and our academic programs.

**Goal 1:** We will advance student success through transformation and innovation in teaching and learning, enhanced by the use of technology.

## Objectives

- Academic programs
  - Conduct and complete curriculum review of current degree programs
  - Develop and implement a plan to deliver programs in multiple course delivery options
  - Financially invest in and promote programs that attract students to CRCDS.
  - Complete capital campaign to reestablish programs in Women and Gender Studies and Black Church Studies
  - Develop a community-based contextual education model such that our students are poised to propose and implement theologically informed responses to a particular issue
  - Develop mutually beneficial partnership with an ATS accredited school in our immediate region to coordinate delivery of denominational specific degree requirements
  - Develop mutually beneficial partnerships with Rochester area colleges to expand the school's curricular and extra-curricular offerings
  - Allocate resources to explore the viability of seeking partnerships with international entities as well as with Spanish-speaking organizations so as to create certificate non-English language programs
- Student recruitment, retention, and access
  - Create a strategic enrollment plan
  - Develop an inclusive strategic enrollment process ensuring collaboration across each functional area of the school
  - Create new and support existing programs, activities, and services designed to assist students to adjust to and succeed in a non-residential learning environment and to broaden their understanding of ministry / service

- Develop and implement programming and services to enhance student wellbeing, health and wellness, community engagement, and personal growth
- Ensure school resources, including student financial aid, are sufficient to support the enrollment management plan
- Complete capital campaign to increase need and merit-based funding in all degree and certificate programs to increase access and ensure a CRCDS education is affordable for all students, in turn reducing the amount of indebtedness a student may incur
- Faculty and staff professional development
  - Complete capital campaign to support faculty and staff professional development
  - Build academic leadership capacity among faculty

## **Strategic Priority 2: Achieve Financial Sustainability**

Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School will operate from a position of financial strength by becoming as efficient as possible in our spending and maximizing resource generation.

**Goal 2:** We will achieve financial sustainability through fundraising, asset management, transparent communication, and operational accountability.

### **Objectives**

- Fundraising
  - Increase revenue from private sources by engaging alumni, friends, and corporate partners to expand support for CRCDS' students, employees, and programs
  - Enhance resources through grants from governmental agencies, corporations, and foundations
  - Complete capital campaign to support student scholarships, faculty and staff professional development, and reestablish programs in Women and Gender Studies and *Black Church Studies*
  - Implement strategies to increase alumni/ae engagement, and increase alumni/ae giving rate to 18%
  - Increase number of major donors by 10% annually
  - Build a stronger and younger donor base, with the objective of adding 5-10 new donors annually
- Endowment growth
  - Reduce draw on investments to 5%
  - Increase the endowment to \$25M to increase support for student scholarships, professional development, and program investments
  - Focus on strengthening the Planned Giving Program with appropriate initiatives
- Communication
  - Build an expansive network of advocates, partners, and friends for CRCDS through effective messaging and providing opportunities for them to participate meaningfully in the life of the school
- Operational accountability
  - Ensure quality and efficiency in all functional areas by implementing baseline budgeting focused on strategic initiatives and strengthening programs

### **Strategic Priority 3: Improve Efficiency & Effectiveness**

Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School will operate efficiently and effectively across all areas of the institution.

**Goal 3:** We will improve efficiency and effectiveness through operational excellence, compliance, and shared leadership.

#### **Objectives**

- Operational excellence
  - Implement quarterly dashboard review and assessment of key measures
  - Invest in a college management software system that will improve operational effectiveness by reducing redundancy and enhance quality of service to internal and external constituents
- Compliance
  - Regularly review the effectiveness and efficiency of administrative, operational, and academic processes to ensure compliance with regulatory and accreditation agencies
  - Obtain full regional accreditation from Middle States Commission on Higher Education
- Shared leadership
  - Cultivate a culture of collaboration where community stakeholders share new ideas, methods and processes to increase productivity, improve efficiency, reduce costs and manage the assets of the school towards a sustainable future
  - Review and update Board, Faculty, Staff, and Community Handbooks

### **Strategic Priority 4: Engage the Community**

Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School will respond to issues of peace and justice to communicate awareness of local and global issues that align with the school's mission and vision.

**Goal 4:** We will engage our *community* through outreach and partnerships while cultivating an ethos of friendship, respect, and collaboration.

#### **Objectives**

- Community engagement
  - Host *Engage Rochester* gatherings with civic and religious organizations as a way to expand the school's reach through strategic listening sessions
  - Increase awareness of and participation in initiatives that promote diverse perspectives
  - Establish CRCDS as a voice that offers a quick and regular response to issues of peace and justice
- Partnerships
  - Enhance relationships with churches and not-for-profit organizations
  - Encourage CRCDS community members to provide service and leadership to organizations that have complimentary missions