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## Learning for Life - A Vision for Messiah University

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## **2019 STATE OF THE COLLEGE**

Kim S. Phipps

August 27, 2019

### **Learning for Life**

*A Vision for Messiah University*

Growing up in New York City, my experience with nature was somewhat limited. For the most part, trees grew in my neighborhood only where they were deliberately planted—between square sections of sidewalk or in small neighborhood parks. Imagine how green and lush the Pennsylvania landscape seemed when I joined the Messiah community in 1998 to serve as the academic dean. Unfortunately, living here has not improved my lack of a green thumb – don’t believe the marketing – you can kill both succulents and air plants!

In this season of opportunity and challenge, let’s consider how Messiah College—much like a tree—needs to adapt to its changing surroundings. This is a risky metaphor for me to employ given the recent removal of some well-loved trees from our campus. Trees are iconic to landscapes, and that’s certainly true here. When a tree has towered in a spot for many years, its absence is noticed and missed.

And because we understand their value, beauty and meaning to our campus community, these trees will be replaced at a 2:1 ratio as we expand our central campus green space and construct the new Admissions and Welcome Center. It is our hope that this green space and additional plantings will benefit current and future generations of Messiah students, employees and campus guests.

This morning, I invite you to embrace a rich, visual metaphor of our college as a firmly rooted tree enduring consequential challenges from its surrounding environment. I am indebted to Professor David Foster, woodsman extraordinaire, and William Gunning, campus arborist, for expanding my knowledge of trees for the purpose of this speech!

Consider how a tree might represent our institution, beginning with the roots—the life-source of any plant. Messiah College’s roots are the educational mission, boldly articulated in a declaration of “Christ Preeminent” and embodied in the commitment to educate women and men toward maturity of intellect, character and Christian faith in preparation for lives of service, leadership and reconciliation in church and society. This is accomplished by providing quality, Christ-centered education in the liberal and applied arts and sciences.

Our 110-year history is represented by a strong and mature tree trunk—expanding and stretching towards the sky as it seeks sunlight. Think about how Messiah College has changed and developed—

- From a missionary training home and Bible school to an institution just one year away from implementing university status.
- From 12 graduates in its first class to more than 3,200 undergraduate and graduate students.
- From one building to 37 buildings located on an expansive 470-acre Grantham campus and a neighboring state-of-the-art facility at Winding Hill.

We—the employees of Messiah College—are the arborists collectively specializing in the care of our tree. According to the International Society of Arboriculture, “Proper long-term care is essential to maximize the benefits a tree has to offer”<sup>1</sup> and “is an investment that can lead to substantial returns.”<sup>2</sup> We know this to be true, right? Messiah College succeeds as each one of us, within our specific assignments and distinct roles, nurtures the tree’s health and wellbeing.

One way to determine a tree’s health is by monitoring its leaves. As a tree matures, its branches spread out and create a canopy. Messiah’s burgeoning canopy is a combination of programmatic innovations—depicted by the branches—and tens of thousands of talented students and alumni represented by the leaves. Imagine our students and alumni scattered like leaves, reflecting the mission and values of Messiah College in their vocations, communities, churches and families.

The current external environment demands that we build on our solid roots and the substantial trunk of our tradition by engaging in some difficult but strategic pruning. We know tree branches are often not permanent and they differ in size, scope and reach. A walk through a neighborhood following a storm can demonstrate that branches break when subjected to intense pressure or changes in environmental conditions. Pruning of existing branches and grafting new growth may be necessary to preserve the overall health of a tree. To secure Messiah’s future we need to engage in metaphorical grafting by broadening our definition of a typical Messiah student to include individuals of different ages and stages of life. For Messiah to prosper in the future, we must understand that our educational mission is relevant for *any* person pursuing education—whether a recent high school graduate, a young scholar or an older adult seeking personal and professional development.

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<sup>1</sup> International Society of Arboriculture. “TreesAreGood.org.” *TreesAreGood.org*, 2018. [www.treesaregood.org](http://www.treesaregood.org). Accessed 15 Aug 2019.

<sup>2</sup> International Society of Arboriculture. “Why Hire an Arborist?” *TreesAreGood.org*, 2009. [www.treesaregood.org/treeowner/whyhireanarborist](http://www.treesaregood.org/treeowner/whyhireanarborist). Accessed 15 Aug 2019.

According to *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, “Nearly 44 million Americans ages 25 to 64 hold only a high school degree or equivalent. . . . More than 35 million people have attended college but never earned a degree. Higher education may not be in the cards for everybody. But when nearly 80 million people—half the country’s adult working-age population—are prospective students, colleges would be wise to pay them more attention.”<sup>3</sup> With 98 million people in the United States considered post-traditional adult learners, this population segment represents an important area of potential growth for Messiah.

Moreover, expanding our vision and mission in new ways is consonant with our highest ideals as educators. An individual’s intellectual life must not be bounded by the contours of only a four-year traditional residential college program or physical campus. Now is the time for Messiah College to offer the opportunity for both young and older adults to engage in learning for life.

Supporting an expanded vision for Messiah College requires courage. Last spring’s Undergraduate Commencement Speaker Nicole Baker Fulghum told our students that they needed “unparalleled bravery and audacity” to navigate the complexities and possibilities of today’s globalized world.<sup>4</sup> This declaration is also true for us; sustaining and strengthening the College will require thoughtful decision-making that preserves Messiah’s core values and commitments while taking action to ensure our institution’s long-term viability and strength. As a community, we must practice creativity and avoid the tendency to proclaim, “That’s not how we’ve always done it” or “The way we are doing it now is the best way or the only way to do it.” Instead, let us challenge ourselves to bravely accept necessary institutional change while fulfilling our individual responsibilities to help Messiah flourish.

We need to embrace a model of learning that allows for a broader audience to participate in a Messiah education. Scholar Cathy N. Davidson writes, “The new education must prepare our students to thrive in a world of flux, to be ready no matter what comes next. It must empower them to be leaders of innovation and to be able not only to adapt to a changing world but also to change the world.”<sup>5</sup>

I firmly believe that our world will be influenced for the good by the addition of more Messiah graduates. The “new education” for Messiah entails extending our distinct mission for an expanded audience of traditional and post-traditional adult students who will make a difference in their spheres of influence and service.

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<sup>3</sup> Blumenstyk, Goldie. *The Adult Student*. The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2018, pp. 13-14.

<sup>4</sup> Fulgham, Nicole Baker. “Messiah College Commencement Address.” Messiah College, 18 May 2019, Messiah College, Mechanicsburg, PA. Keynote Address.

<sup>5</sup> Davidson, Cathy N. *The New Education: How to Revolutionize the University to Prepare Students for a World in Flux*. Basic Books, 2017, pp. 255.

## Our Context

As identified in previous campus updates and forums, several key factors are causing instability and disruption for higher education. Responding to any one of these factors is daunting. Bundle them all together and it's undeniable that a storm is upon us and we cannot ignore its impact. The changing environment demands our attention and a well-planned, proactive and timely response.

U.S. population trends anticipate a more than 10% reduction in college enrollment of traditional-aged college students by the end of this decade. This precipitous decline has implications for structures and programs at higher education institutions across the nation.<sup>6</sup> Our region will experience this demographic shift most acutely due to population migration patterns. Messiah is not exempt from this undergraduate enrollment decline; since 2008 our undergraduate student number is 136 less.

Gen Z's attitude toward learning also presents a challenge. They are "practical and cautious, clear-eyed, economic pragmatists," according to a recent *Newsweek* article.<sup>7</sup> Outcomes are top of mind for this generation of students who grew up during the Great Recession and saw parents and neighbors lose their jobs, homes and maybe even their life savings. Gen Z sees education primarily as a path to gainful employment and financial security.<sup>8</sup>

We know that families weigh a host of issues when choosing a college. Cost is always a part of that equation, and, in recent years, public and private colleges and universities have witnessed cost becoming the primary factor in decision-making. *Inside Higher Education* determined that nearly 40% of students who turned down their college of first choice did so for cost-related reasons.<sup>9</sup> Sensitivity to cost is a strong influence regardless of SAT scores, background or ethnicity. David Walker, vice president of finance and planning, notes, "We know that families are identifying the price they are willing to pay for the value they perceive their student will get. They are asking, 'Is the outcome worth the investment?'" Our response to this question must involve effectively communicating the impressive outcomes of a Messiah education while simultaneously participating in a comprehensive effort to reduce our costs, minimize tuition increases and offer student loan alternatives such as the recently launched Income Share Agreement program.

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<sup>6</sup> Grawe, Nathan. "Demographic Changes Pose Challenges for Higher Education." *Econofact*, 29 July 2018. [www.econofact.org/demographic-changes-pose-challenges-for-higher-education](http://www.econofact.org/demographic-changes-pose-challenges-for-higher-education). Accessed 15 Aug 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Piore, Adam. "Generation Z Gets to Work." *Newsweek*, 21 June 2019.

<sup>8</sup> Selingo, Jeffrey J. *The New Generation of Students*. The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2018, pp. 8.

<sup>9</sup> Seltzer, Rick. "Turning Down Top Choices." *Inside Higher Ed*. 23 Mar 2017. [www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/03/23/study-shows-how-price-sensitive-students-are-selecting-colleges](http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/03/23/study-shows-how-price-sensitive-students-are-selecting-colleges). Accessed 10 June 2019.

“We’re living at a moment of low support for higher education, even as the need and demand for college are higher than ever,” writes Cathy N. Davidson.<sup>10</sup> As dedicated employees of Messiah College, this is hard to understand, isn’t it? We have front row seats to the transformative difference education produces in the lives of our students, and we know how much the world needs Messiah graduates. But, the national dialogue about higher education is characterized by a cynical critique that has permeated every sector of the media. Higher education is no longer considered a public good, despite the fact that baccalaureate degree holders are in the top income quartile and 42% of them volunteer, in contrast to 17% of high school graduates.<sup>11</sup>

This is our sobering context. But, it is also our “Kairos” moment – it is our time to pursue opportunities by making decisions that draw upon our communal courage, creativity and collaboration.

Revisiting our tree metaphor, let’s watch a brief video clip; the ground literally swells, but notice the trees do not topple.<sup>12</sup>

This is a dramatic portrayal of a tree withstanding a storm. Messiah’s historic mission and faith rootedness have allowed this institution to remain strong during prior threats and storms (the Great Depression, WWII, societal unrest of the 1960s, the 2008 recession). We responded to these turbulent times by expanding our educational programs to meet societal needs. I am confident that we will withstand this current storm and successfully address our challenges.

On July 1, 2020, Messiah College will become Messiah University, a natural progression to a status that more accurately reflects our student body composition, academic structure, national visibility and global impact. The moniker change is about more than perceived status; it reflects our institutional identity for the present and the future.

In his recent volume, *21 Lessons for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Yuval Noah Harari declares, “Humankind is facing unprecedented revolutions, all our old stories are crumbling, and no new story has so far emerged to replace them. How can we prepare ourselves and our children for a world of such unprecedented transformations and radical uncertainties?”<sup>13</sup> Of course, humans have never accurately predicted the future, but we do know quite a bit about the landscape which surrounds us. Messiah University must provide a Christian education rooted in the liberal arts to

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<sup>10</sup> Davidson 10

<sup>11</sup> McNair, Tia, et al. *Becoming a Student-Ready College: A New Culture of Leadership for Student Success*. Jossey-Bass, 2016, pp. 15.

<sup>12</sup> See video:

<http://0103.static.prezi.com.s3.amazonaws.com/media/b/9/8/17576e1e2fb3435d009f10ff679fb42adb1c0.mp4>

<sup>13</sup> Harari, Yuval Noah. *21 Lessons for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Vintage, 2019, pp. 263.

students of all ages so that they will develop the intellect and the character to understand the landscape and offer solutions to complicated 21<sup>st</sup> century problems.

All trees have branches of varying size and reach that create the tree's shape. Messiah's extensive canopy of branches represents our educational programs and institutional distinctives—including unwavering commitments to faith formation, academic quality and inclusive excellence.

#### Messiah Distinctive: Commitment to Faith Formation

Since our founding, Christian faith formation has been a hallmark of a Messiah education. Faith formation is intentionally and thoughtfully integrated into the undergraduate curricular and co-curricular experience. According to the results of our institutional Senior Survey, our spiritual development efforts are producing growth and maturity in our students.<sup>14</sup>

Some have questioned whether expanding Messiah's educational programs to include graduate and other student populations makes it less feasible to integrate Christian faith perspectives. The answer to that question is a simple "No." Faculty in our graduate programs are very intentional about integrating faith into coursework and student learning. In this brief video, MBA student Laura Bomberger '20 shares how she has experienced and appreciated the infusion of Scriptural teaching and examples into her academic coursework.<sup>15</sup>

*(video)*

#### Messiah Distinctive: Commitment to Academic Quality

At Messiah, we understand that academic quality and faith integration co-exist as substantial branches of our tree. As we help students learn to love the Lord with all their heart, soul and mind, we encourage them to be humble, curious, and open to diverse perspectives.

During our last Middle States Review, the evaluation team offered the following commendations of educational quality:

- To the faculty: for not only delivering a high-quality education but also for their commitment to engaging and mentoring students. Students regularly reported that faculty spent time with them outside the classroom.
- Messiah's education programs have enviable student outcomes as students regularly score above the national average in almost all nationally ranked standardized exams.

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<sup>14</sup> Cooperative Institutional Research Program at the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA. "2016 College Senior Survey." 2016.

<sup>15</sup> See video:

<http://0103.static.prezi.com.s3.amazonaws.com/media/0/c/3/73326a3346eb1964d5ea4aec48b3c81c9465.mp4>

- The Division of Student Affairs is a model of co-curricular education that is a best practice in higher education.<sup>16</sup>

Another indicator of Messiah academic quality is the number of students receiving prestigious scholarships, attending highly ranked graduate schools and securing post-graduation employment. These outcomes demonstrate that our commitment to student learning has produced fruit in the lives of our graduates.

We purposefully infuse elements into our undergraduate educational program that are considered high impact practices, including first-year seminar, study abroad, community engagement, internships and undergraduate research. Here are just a few representative examples of guided student research:

- Students in Professor Robert Reyes' Adult Development course collaborated with the Salvation Army of the Harrisburg Capital Region to conduct a program evaluation study to understand the experience of low-income men transitioning from unemployment to employment.
- Dr. David Pettegrew and Messiah's digital humanities students have fostered the common good by combing through federal census records, city directories and newspaper archives to uncover the history of Harrisburg's old eighth ward.
- Under the leadership of Collaboratory student project manager Katie Prelog and faculty advisor Tim Howell, student researchers are studying how a dynamic brace for a child born with a clubfoot can improve mobility and stem cultural marginalization for affected children in developing nations.<sup>17</sup>
- This summer, nine students in the School of Science, Engineering and Health pursued research projects under the mentorship of seven faculty members. Junior biochemistry major Sarah Codd and faculty mentor Dr. Anne Reeve worked together to synthesize several new organic molecules that are potential inhibitors—and thus drug targets—for diabetes and obesity.
- In the School of the Arts, theatre majors are required to complete a senior research project and performance. Craig Terrell studied the Black Lives Matter movement with Professor Daniel Inouye and blended current events with a narrative drawn from the life of Emmett Till, who was murdered in 1955. Craig's research and creativity resulted in a powerful artistic performance.

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<sup>16</sup> Middle States Commission on Higher Education report to Messiah College, 2013.

<sup>17</sup> Mammano, Sara. "Cunningham Brace Could Revolutionize a Treatment for Club Foot." *Dokimoi Ergatai*, 2019. [www.messiah.edu/download/downloads/id/7247/Final\\_\\_19\\_1007\\_Collaboratory\\_Newsletter\\_Spring\\_2019\\_5.pdf](http://www.messiah.edu/download/downloads/id/7247/Final__19_1007_Collaboratory_Newsletter_Spring_2019_5.pdf). 10 July 2019.



Mentoring happens across our campus between students and faculty, residence life staff, coaches, and work-study and internship supervisors. 85% of Messiah graduates express satisfaction with their ability to find a campus mentor.<sup>18</sup> The National Survey of Student Engagement Report confirms that Messiah students are mentored well: they describe their interactions with campus mentors as “high quality.”<sup>19</sup>

Mentoring relationships are key to our students’ academic experience and personal growth. Allow me to share two examples. This past spring, a student wrote these words to Gregg Hurley: “You have constantly managed to push my faith and my ability to express myself through dance. Your belief in me and encouragement has shaped me, and my time at Messiah was changed for the better.”<sup>20</sup>

Second, while serving as a graduate assistant in the Intercultural Office, Orlando Williams was mentored by Cherisse Daniels, assistant director of multicultural student programs. Together they discussed the need to increase retention of diverse students by providing a vehicle for them to build deep friendships with one another. Meaningful peer relationships are an important contributing factor to a student’s overall academic success and persistence. Orlando and Cherisse created a mentoring group for male students of color. Let’s watch this brief video where they explain the reasons for initiating this gathering.<sup>21</sup>

(video)

The work that colleagues are engaging in with young men of color highlights our campus’ dedication to mentoring and providing a quality educational experience for all students. For Messiah’s community ethos to be one where all students thrive, we must accurately assess the strengths and weaknesses of our present efforts towards student success. Under the leadership of Kris Hansen-Kieffer, vice provost for student success and engagement, we are now coordinating offices and services not only to ensure that students persist through graduation, but to better understand *how* they persist. Did they attain the desired learning outcomes and establish lifelong learning habits? Did they experience a sense of meaningful engagement?

According to the volume, *Becoming a Student-Ready College*, “To ensure that higher education works well for students, the system needs to adapt to the students’ needs and realities. There has never been a time when all students enrolled in college were academically prepared, when no students required additional supports to promote their college success or when the

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<sup>18</sup> CIRP at the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA.

<sup>19</sup> National Survey of Student Engagement. “Annual Results 2017.” Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, report provided by Christian Consortium of Colleges & Universities. 2017.

<sup>20</sup> Sollenberger, Laura. Note to Gregg Hurley, May 2019.

<sup>21</sup> See video:

<http://0103.static.prezi.com.s3.amazonaws.com/media/a/e/a/17e0c25ac20457eb7fb876c0eee49ef308e22.mp4>

transition from high school to college was seamless for all students.”<sup>22</sup> While every employee fulfills an essential role in nurturing student success, the reorganized Division of Student Success and Engagement will serve as the hub for unifying academic success, curricular and co-curricular connections and promoting student engagement and support.

### Messiah Distinctive: Commitment to Inclusive Excellence

As our institutional Strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusive Excellence articulates, we must be diligent in our efforts until inclusive excellence is hardwired throughout the Messiah College community.<sup>23</sup> Pursuing inclusive excellence at Messiah is rooted in our calling to the ministry of reconciliation. Because God reconciled all things to himself through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, we are called to the work of restoring broken relationships and systems until they exist as God intended them.

Messiah’s distinctive heritage promotes values and practices shaped by our core beliefs. Now, in a national climate where racism and nationalism are being mistakenly treated as normative, our shared Christian faith must counter that belief by proclaiming that all people are image-bearers of creator God and that Jesus clearly taught that how we treat our neighbors is a reflection of how well we love Him.<sup>24</sup> Our deep faith and resulting moral code and actions should be evident to others as we practice hospitality and live according to our Christ-centered values and educational commitment toward inclusive excellence.

Much of today’s public rhetoric stands in stark contrast to Messiah’s moral and spiritual values of hospitality, humility and compassion. Our nation needs Messiah graduates whose education in the liberal arts and applied arts and sciences has molded them to be thoughtful citizens and faithful Christians who take seriously the calling to love God and neighbor by promoting the common good. There is no room for hatred, vitriol, racism or xenophobia in the life of our campus community or the life of our nation.

At Messiah, we are engaged in a long-term, and at times, arduous journey. In 2017-2018, we conducted a Campus Climate Survey and shared the initial results with campus. Last spring we engaged Dr. David Guthrie and a team of higher education graduate students from Penn State University to assist with analyzing the survey findings, providing leadership to focus groups and formulating action steps to improve our campus climate. I want to thank Amanda Coffey, vice president of human resources and compliance; Todd Allen, special assistant to the president and provost for diversity affairs; Inger Blount, director of human resources; and the members of the Campus Climate Action Team for their diligence and oversight of this salient initiative.

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<sup>22</sup> McNair et al 13.

<sup>23</sup> “Building Pathways: Strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusive Excellence.” Messiah College, 2018.

<sup>24</sup> *The Holy Bible*. New Revised Standard Version, HarperCollins, 2007, Matt. 22:37-39.

I must confess that reading some of the personal testimonies included in the Campus Climate Report was disturbing and painful. The stories of individuals whose lived experiences at Messiah are counter to the values of a Christ-centered culture of love and belonging serve as a transparent reminder of the change we need to pursue. As a community we must acknowledge the voices of those who experience a lack of belonging, seek forgiveness for our individual and institutional failures, and implement stronger measures of accountability. We must become a community where all our members are able to thrive.

Cornel West once told his interviewer Henry Louis Gates, “I am not optimistic but I have never been optimistic about humankind or America. The evidence never looks so good in terms of forces of good actually becoming prominent. But I am a prisoner of hope, and that’s very different.” When pressed about what gave him hope, West added, “...good, decent people willing to fight, willing to serve.”<sup>25</sup>

Messiah College is a community comprised of good, decent people, and that gives me hope that we will take significant steps toward becoming an inclusively excellent community. Beginning this fall, supported by a financial grant from NetVUE, Cynthia Wells, associate professor of higher education, will lead 10 faculty members in a professional development experience to examine climate, course content and pedagogy in the classroom through the lens of inclusive excellence. Participating educators will be invited to share findings with their colleagues at the conclusion of the academic year.

Also, I am pleased to note that we achieved our 2020 strategic plan goal for recruiting an incoming class that is 20% diverse. Now, we must do all we can to embrace, nurture and prepare these students.

These Messiah distinctives are excellent resources we must draw on as we meet the challenge of our surrounding environment. While we remain firmly committed to these distinctives as foundational to the traditional, undergraduate, residential educational experience, we must also be willing to apply these resources in new ways as we confront fiscal realities. As you learned from previous Campus Updates and April’s Budget Forum, traditional, undergraduate enrollment is not increasing for Messiah and many other institutions in our region. We are starting this academic year with fewer students than originally planned, and we are 5 students short of the revised and budgeted undergraduate recruitment target.

For all the reasons previously mentioned—fewer traditionally-aged college students in our primary region; skepticism about the value of college; concern about college affordability; declining interest in religion; and generational tendencies—traditional residential undergraduate

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<sup>25</sup> West, Cornel. Interview by Henry Louis Gates. PBS, 1998.  
[www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/race/interviews/west.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/race/interviews/west.html). Accessed 16 June 2019.

education as it has been historically offered is not enough to propel Messiah College sustainably into the next decade.

Futurist Bob Johansen writes, “If you don’t have some fear about the future, you’re not paying attention. Fear is not a bad thing. It’s what you *do* with your fear that can turn bad.”<sup>26</sup> We must not allow ourselves to be immobilized by fear of the future or stubborn resistance to change. We must not insist that Messiah College is sufficient, or even excellent, just as it is, rather, we must assess the threatening environmental conditions and respond with initiatives that move us forward.

### Messiah Opportunity: Post-traditional Adult Education

One way Messiah College should respond is by the addition of educational programs designed for post-traditional adult learners. Thinking of our institution as a tree, let’s consider how the ancient procedure of grafting maximizes fruitfulness in trees, especially fruit-bearing ones. For example, an orchard that has historically produced Red Delicious apples might endeavor to grow Honeycrisp apples – a popular choice among consumers. A graft begins with a cutting from a related tree. The farmer uses a sharp knife and significant pressure to make the insertion and carefully align the vascular tissue of the graft and the rootstock so the new growth has the best fruit-bearing potential. Grafting allows a farmer to innovate by using existing resources instead of starting over with seedlings.

The addition of post-traditional adult learning programs is one example of possible grafting for Messiah College. Adult education is in demand nationally and we possess a strong infrastructure and resource base to offer the education that adults need to enhance their intellectual and spiritual growth and further their professional careers. For Messiah, offering undergraduate online certificates, continuing education classes and degree pathways for post-traditional adult learners will provide much needed revenue, but even more, fulfill a compelling opportunity to extend our mission to an expanded population – enabling us to have an even greater impact on church and society.

Additionally, regardless of how much education someone brings into his or her vocation, the rapid pace of change and technology will require a vast majority of Americans to pursue additional education, training and experience to remain relevant in their careers. The Institute for the Future predicts that 85% of the jobs that today’s students will be performing in 2030, do not exist yet.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Johansen, Bob. *The New Leadership Literacies: Thriving in a Future of Extreme Disruption and Distributed Everything*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2017, pp. 39.

<sup>27</sup> Institute for the Future. *The Next Era of Human-Machine Partnerships: Emerging Technologies’ Impact on Society & Work in 2030*. Institute for the Future, 2017,

By offering programs for post-traditional adult learners, we embrace the opportunity to fulfill an important role in shaping our nation’s workforce. Brandon Busted, president of Kaplan University Partners, says, “We can’t possibly prepare people for all the jobs that are ahead. What we need to start doing is creating the scaffolding to create an ecosystem where people are constantly being educated and retooled to stay relevant in their jobs.”<sup>28</sup>

The scaffolding Busted references needs to be constructed at Messiah starting now. Grafting post-traditional adult programs onto our tree will follow a process similar to our implementation of graduate programming. At tomorrow’s COE retreat, educators will engage in a discussion of post-traditional adult education as we begin to pursue the governance deliberations in support of this initiative.

Although tension can, and often does, exist between the tradition of the liberal arts and the process of expanding educational offerings to meet career-focused goals and objectives, Messiah College’s tradition of sustaining liberal and applied arts and sciences in a common Christ-centered educational mission provides us with some unique opportunities to address the current educational needs of our society. A Council for Independent Colleges report asserts that, “We must balance expectations for job preparation with the preparation of students for full lives as educated citizens.”<sup>29</sup> Indeed, Messiah College will proceed with precision and care as we implement new post-traditional adult programs, so that all Messiah graduates continue to embody our mission, values and desired educational outcomes.

#### Messiah Opportunity: Graduate Education

Messiah’s graduate programs will continue to grow in response to market demands and societal needs. This fall, we welcome our first cohort of students in the MSAT—a five-year accelerated program for students that earns participants a bachelor’s degree in applied health science and a master’s in athletic training. Last Thursday, our first cohort of Doctor of Physical Therapy students began their studies at our Winding Hill campus.

After being approached by a regional healthcare organization, we are conducting a feasibility study to collaborate efforts toward designing a Doctor of Nurse Practice degree leading to certification for nurse anesthetist.

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[www.delltechnologies.com/content/dam/delltechnologies/assets/perspectives/2030/pdf/SR1940\\_IFFTforDeIITechnologies\\_Human-Machine\\_070517\\_readerhigh-res.pdf](http://www.delltechnologies.com/content/dam/delltechnologies/assets/perspectives/2030/pdf/SR1940_IFFTforDeIITechnologies_Human-Machine_070517_readerhigh-res.pdf). Accessed 17 June 2019, pp. 14.

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Frazee, Gretchen. “How Colleges Are Preparing Students for Jobs That Don’t Exist Yet.” *PBS NewsHour*. 6 Dec 2018. [www.pbs.org/newshour/economy/making-sense/how-colleges-are-preparing-students-for-jobs-that-dont-exist-yet](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/economy/making-sense/how-colleges-are-preparing-students-for-jobs-that-dont-exist-yet). 17 June 2019.

<sup>29</sup> “Career Preparation and the Liberal Arts.” *The Council of Independent Colleges*, 2015, [www.cic.edu/r/cd/Pages/Career-Preparation-2015.aspx](http://www.cic.edu/r/cd/Pages/Career-Preparation-2015.aspx). 6 Aug 2019.

These new programs—limbs of our graduate school’s expanding branch—supplement our current portfolio of nine master’s degrees, two doctoral degrees and a variety of graduate and post-master’s certificates. Graduate enrollment for FY20 is progressing well.

#### Messiah Opportunity: Pre-College Dual Enrollment

At Messiah, one means of engaging local high school students in learning for life is through the dual enrollment program. Qualified high school juniors and seniors can satisfy high school graduation requirements and earn college credits at the Grantham campus or via our online course platform. 106 high school students are presently enrolled at Messiah.

In addition, this year we are providing an inaugural experience to future doctors, nurses and physical therapists. Twenty-one academically qualified high school seniors will enroll in Messiah College biology courses and participate in a series of community-related healthcare activities as part of a school district-funded Emerging Health Professions program. This is just one example of how we can creatively engage more high school-aged learners at Messiah.

#### Messiah Opportunity: Strategic Prioritization and Planning

Tending our branches will require us to engage in program prioritization to reduce long-term institutional costs and ensure the College’s financial vitality. President’s Cabinet and Provost’s Cabinet have worked throughout the summer to monitor financial and enrollment trends, gather important data and develop guiding parameters in order to develop specific strategies for reaching the board-designated \$5 million savings target by FY 24.

The higher education firm CREDO is partnering with us to conduct a full campus audit which will include prioritization review, brand perception research and a full-scale assessment of enrollment management strategies and practices. Prioritization review will occur in a very concentrated time frame—September 2019 through February 2020—and final recommendations will be presented to the board of trustees in May 2020. The full implementation of these decisions must be completed by June 30, 2023. Campus task forces will work alongside CREDO to examine key questions, assumptions, institutional and comparative data and develop recommendations for action. On September 16, members of President’s Cabinet and I will lead two Strategic Prioritization and Planning employee forums to offer more detailed information and respond to your questions. I promise that the prioritization process will be undergirded by careful analysis, appropriate transparency and heartfelt prayer.

Later this spring, CREDO will also assist us with initiating the next phase of institutional strategic planning. Based on our work this summer, senior leadership has determined that we should plan for a Messiah University that enrolls 2400 undergraduate students; 1000 graduate students; and 300 post-traditional adult learners in 2025. The achievement of these enrollment goals accompanied by disciplined fiscal stewardship and successful revenue generation will help secure Messiah’s future.

In the volume *Deep Change*, Robert Quinn, professor and consultant, critiques the unwillingness to change at personal and corporate levels, noting, “Responsive organizations need responsive people. In an age of continuous change, organizations must match their environments by being more responsive, and people must match their organization by being more responsive.”<sup>30</sup> Change is inevitable but it can also be invigorating. Take a look at this photo collage - some of you have definitely changed – but you keep improving!

Some of the positive changes we anticipate for the upcoming academic year include:

- Implementing new undergraduate enrollment strategies & activities:
  - Use of the Common Application which will help us cast a wider net and increase our national visibility.
  - Continued planning and revitalization of admissions events including summer Falcon Fridays.
  - Increased financial aid investment to fund more student scholarships and Income Share Agreements.
  - The launch of an esports club team to engage more prospective students. National high school student interest in competitive collegiate video gaming, known popularly as esports, has increased exponentially and many colleges now offer co-curricular esports programs at the club or varsity level. We are grateful for a generous donor who recently stepped forward to fund an esports club program at Messiah.
  - And, of course, the positive impact a new Admissions and Welcome Center and campus green will have on the “all-important” campus visit experience beginning early next fall.
- Enhancing our College Honors Program, including the initiation of a residential student honors house and the planning for an FY21 “book of the year” initiative which includes a May cross-cultural in Rome.
- Initiating more accelerated programs, a proposal for an accelerated Masters in Occupational Therapy program will be presented for governance approval in the fall semester. Students who enroll in the MOT will attend Messiah for five years and graduate with a Bachelor’s and a Masters in OT.
- Designing and approving undergraduate certificates, baccalaureate degree pathways and continuing education for post-traditional adult students; Assistant Dean of Nursing Kim Fenstermacher and a team of colleagues are already at work designing an RN-BSN degree program.
- Continuing our efforts to increase non-tuition revenue:

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<sup>30</sup> Quinn, Robert E. *Deep Change: Discovering the Leader Within*. Jossey-Bass, 1996, pp. 6.

- Initiating the development of Oakwood Hills residential phase 2 and the future commercial phase.
- Meeting fundraising goals particularly in support of student scholarships and increasing the number of legacy gifts to the College.
- Planning for the Messiah University launch – we dare not miss this moment to communicate the Messiah story in fresh and compelling ways. Last spring, the Visual Identity Subcommittee of the University Implementation Team conducted a series of focus groups to seek stakeholder input regarding potential new logo designs, which were created by Messiah’s graphic design team, led by Creative Director Nancy Soulliard.

A clear consensus emerged from the focus groups—and I’m pleased to share that design with you today. Before I do, however, I’d like to ask your cooperation by treating the new logo as privileged and confidential information because we are still navigating final refinements and trademark processes prior to its public release on July 1, 2020.

Let’s preview the new logo for Messiah University – notice how it artistically reflects both movement and possibility!

### Call to Action

As metaphorical arborists, we are deeply invested in this institution’s sustainability and growth. The talent and dedication represented in this room is remarkable, and we can fulfill the vision of Messiah University as an institution that offers learning for life. In the upcoming academic year, I invite you to do the following:

1. Embrace change as necessary, and filled with potential! Consider how change can increase efficiency and positively propel Messiah into the future.
2. Extend yourself and learn to know students and employees from different backgrounds and experiences. Take the opportunity to listen deeply to each other’s stories.
3. Engage with student recruitment events. Thank you for all the ways so many of you are already helping to recruit students when they visit campus, including the wonderful support you provided for this summer’s events. You may notice I’m wearing a new “First Generation” button developed by Enrollment Management to encourage prospective first generation students and their families during campus visits. If you are the first person in your family to graduate from college, celebrate by picking up your lapel button as you leave the High Center today and be sure to wear it to admissions events.
4. Express ideas and suggestions for cost savings and the development of new programs by sending your ideas to [campusstewardship@messiah.edu](mailto:campusstewardship@messiah.edu)
5. Finally, Encourage one another and be kind. By assigning the best motives to one another and, dare I say, even our leaders, we can foster a healthy campus ethos even in the midst of change and challenge.



When I was inaugurated as Messiah College's eighth president in October 2005, my friend Professor Richard Hughes offered a meaningful charge. After espousing the characteristics of Messiah College—a place where, according to Richard, conviction, conversation, principles, openness and truth all have a place—he implored me, “If you take care to nurture these roots, the tree of this college will grow tall and strong and become a force for cross-centered living and community building wherever its branches extend.”

He concluded by saying, “If you take care to nurture those roots, Messiah College will conform itself more and more to the Messiah for whom it is named.”<sup>31</sup>

I am more convinced than ever that we must nurture our roots and diligently seek to conform our institution to its namesake. I am more convinced than ever that we are called to develop the intellect, character and faith of our students – and that calling must be broadened to include women and men across the adult life span. Our world needs Messiah graduates who will positively influence every segment of society.

In Psalm 52, David compares himself to an olive tree. References to olive trees in Scripture often represent longevity. Let me conclude by reading a passage from the Psalmist David.

“But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; I trust in God's unfailing love for ever and ever. I will praise you forever for what you have done: in your name I will hope, for your name is good.”<sup>32</sup>

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, for the Creator's steadfast faithfulness to Messiah College—past and present—and to Messiah University's hope-filled and promising future!

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<sup>31</sup> Hughes, Richard T. “Nurture These Roots.” Inauguration of Messiah College's Eighth President Kim S. Phipps, 14 Oct 2005, Messiah College, Grantham, PA. Address.

<sup>32</sup> *The Bible*. New International Version, Tyndale House Publishers, 1991, Ps. 52:8-9

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