CHARTING THE FUTURE:
A PLAN FOR SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY
2012—2017

www.suffolk.edu/strategicplan
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A Letter from the President

October 11, 2012

Suffolk University is a student-centered institution that nurtures the tremendous capacity for intellectual and professional growth in each of its students. We are passionate about the powerful role education plays in bettering lives. Our collective commitment to engaging, preparing, and supporting each student is one of our greatest strengths.

Our challenge is to take that ethic and build a cohesive organization that best serves our students, our alumni, and the wider community in a rapidly changing and highly competitive higher education climate.

With gratitude to the talented group of faculty, administrators, and students who make up the University’s Strategic Planning Committee, I am delighted to present our strategic plan, Charting the Future: A Plan for Suffolk University. With input from the campus community, the committee created a blueprint for success over the next five years.

This plan builds on our history as a student-centered institution and identifies our highest priorities and key areas of focus. It positions us to provide students with exceptional and seamless support from the time they first consider Suffolk, throughout a rich academic experience here, into successful careers, and as committed and engaged members of our alumni community. It confirms our commitment to faculty as teacher-scholars who bring cutting-edge knowledge into the classroom and the laboratory. It is a forward-looking plan that preserves the traditional student-faculty relationship while encouraging the strategic
use of new technology and innovative pedagogy. It leverages our location in the heart of downtown Boston and promotes a deepened sense of who we are and who we want to be as a university.

The plan provides an updated mission and vision for the University. It identifies the core values that reflect who we are as a community. And it identifies seven strategic imperatives—those key priorities and objectives that will help us fulfill our mission and achieve our vision. The plan will serve as the platform upon which we build more specific implementation plans for each of the next five academic years. This mode of continuous decision-oriented planning allows for rapid action in a changing environment and enhances accountability. The annual implementation plans that will accompany this plan will contain explicit metrics against which the plan may be assessed.

As we have for more than a century, Suffolk University will continue to respond to the evolving needs of society and the workplace by providing a transformative, supportive, and experiential education that inspires students and prepares them for successful careers and fulfilling lives.

Sincerely,

James McCarthy, President
Suffolk University has been unleashing the potential of promising students since 1906, when founder Gleason Archer first taught evening law classes to working adults in his Roxbury home. In its earliest incarnation, Suffolk was a beacon of hope to immigrants and others trying to better their lives through education.

Suffolk’s Beacon Hill presence dates back to 1914, when the Law School opened its first building at 45 Mount Vernon Street. The University’s College of Arts and Sciences was founded in 1934 to ensure equality of opportunity for working people seeking a college education. That was followed in 1937 by the University’s newest professional department, a school of management that stressed the value of combining educational theory with work experience and would in 1995 become the Sawyer Business School.
Suffolk’s presence grew along Temple Street on Beacon Hill and, in recent decades, along Tremont and lower Washington streets in Boston’s downtown corridor. Today, the University’s location in the heart of Boston positions us at the crossroads of city and state government and ties us to Boston’s business, legal, and cultural communities, giving our students extraordinary access to experiential learning, research opportunities, and internships. Students experience the pulse of the city in an urban campus without boundaries. Our urban environment also extends to Madrid, where Suffolk students can study for a semester or as long as two years. With bases in two of the world’s great cities, Suffolk is truly a university whose students become global citizens.

Suffolk University was founded on the principle that educational opportunity should not be reserved for the wealthy. The University today remains committed to offering an affordable and high-quality education that provides paths to success for people of all economic backgrounds. At a time when rising costs of higher education nationally have created financial burdens for many students and their families, Suffolk University seeks to ease those burdens and provide economic value by operating according to sound financial practices and focusing on those areas and programs that most benefit our students.
Suffolk University is a talent catalyst that recognizes and develops student potential. Leveraging our location in the heart of Boston, our faculty, staff, and alumni work together to provide a student-centered experience. This diverse community builds on its dedication and excellence in education and scholarship to empower graduates to be successful locally, regionally, and globally.
Suffolk University will be recognized as a dynamic institution that fosters engaged learning, rigorous scholarship, innovative thinking, and community collaboration across disciplines.

We will ensure that Suffolk graduates are versatile and prepared for modern society and the new world market. We will provide rich curricula, experiential learning opportunities, and professional mentoring through increased collaboration with alumni and community partners. We will recruit, mentor, and support a diverse faculty of teacher-scholars who are passionately committed to preparing our students to be leaders in the global community. We will inspire investment in a Suffolk community that is built on ethical, forward-thinking leadership, teamwork, and cooperation.
Core Values

Student Centered
Suffolk University believes in providing a student-centered experience that includes offering pedagogically appropriate class sizes and personal mentoring relationships with faculty and staff. We are committed to providing an integrated educational experience that builds confidence and empowers our students to become successful contributors to our global world.

Opportunity
Suffolk University provides the opportunity for an enriching education to academically qualified students. We are committed to creating opportunities for students to pursue an education that will help them to achieve their personal and career goals.

Scholarly and Professional Excellence
Suffolk University believes in a teacher-scholar model that fosters excellence in teaching and scholarship across multiple academic domains. We are committed to academic freedom, the intellectual exchange of ideas, and the development of knowledge that is practical and relevant locally, nationally, and globally.

Sound Financial Management
Suffolk University is committed to managing its resources and operations in the most fiscally prudent manner so as to enhance the University’s goal of providing an excellent, focused educational experience at the most reasonable cost.
Community Engagement
Suffolk University actively promotes relationships with the community to exchange knowledge and provide pathways for internships, career development, and job placement. We engage with our students, alumni, and the broader community in collaborative relationships that promote local and global connections enhancing learning and scholarship.

Social Responsibility
Suffolk University believes in the integration of civic engagement and service learning throughout the curriculum to foster the development of responsible global citizens. We are committed to acting ethically, professionally, and collaboratively.

Diversity
Suffolk University values an inclusive community and supports diversity among our students, faculty, and staff. We believe that our community is enriched by people of different backgrounds and cultures, and we are committed to building a culture of cooperation among diverse groups.

Integrity
Suffolk University respects and empowers students, faculty, and staff to provide accurate and comprehensive information to all constituents. We are committed to an ethical and effective governance structure based on transparency and the free flow of information among administration, faculty, and the larger University community.
Engaged students succeed with the combined support of Suffolk University faculty, administrators, and staff.
Provide an integrated, student-centered experience, highlighted by strong mentoring relationships that develop students’ full potential.

- Attract, enroll, retain, and graduate an increasingly selective student body
- Provide increased financial aid
- Increase the number of cohort-shared experiences through new initiatives aimed at developing community and cohesion within classes
- Increase opportunities for student-driven involvement and engagement
- Maintain small undergraduate class sizes while allowing for size flexibility when pedagogically or technologically appropriate
- Increase the percentage of introductory undergraduate classes taught by full-time faculty
- Increase the percentage of courses taught as part of living-learning communities
- Develop an integrated general-education curriculum for undergraduate students in the College and Business School to ensure fulfillment of core learning competencies and facilitate seamless movement between the two schools
- Reinforce programs for student health, including robust intramural, recreational, fitness, and wellness programs
A diverse curriculum that is both theoretical and practical provides students with global understanding.
Offer an education that blends theory and practice and prepares students to be innovative thinkers who can succeed in a rapidly evolving employment landscape and in an increasingly global community.

- Focus the curriculum and enhance co-curricular opportunities to nurture entrepreneurial and innovative thinking

- Reinforce the University’s commitment to provide all undergraduate students with a core liberal arts foundation

- Integrate professional education with the development of critical thinking skills, critical reading skills, problem-solving skills, and communication skills to create flexible and versatile students prepared for a dynamic, fast-changing work environment

- Focus resources in areas of traditional strength, emerging growth, and interdisciplinary opportunity, including: public interest, public policy, government, and urban studies; communications; psychology and sociology; international studies; management, marketing, entrepreneurship, accounting, finance, and global business; advocacy, business law, and litigation; intellectual property and innovation

- Infuse multicultural competencies and diversity into the curriculum using a broad approach

- Provide enhanced opportunities for students to grow their global understanding and outreach through expanded global seminars, study tours, study-abroad experiences, and global service-learning options
Internships and learning opportunities provided by partners such as NECN help students choose and find success in their careers.

SUFFOLK AND ITS CAREER FOCUS:

Forging Partnerships in Boston and Around the World
Leverage our borderless campus located in Boston to develop local, national, and global experiential learning and career opportunities for our students.

- Develop strategic partnerships among our advancement office; alumni; the City of Boston; regional, national and global for-profit and non-profit organizations; and government agencies to promote mentorship, internship, and career opportunities

- Develop specialized career services offices, with administrative oversight, to obtain strategic partnerships, internships, networking opportunities, and job placements for students

- Encourage faculty to develop local, regional, national, and global relationships leading to internship and career opportunities

- Develop curriculum and programs that utilize our alumni and strategic partners while preparing our students for their career searches

- Develop and mandate a yearly curricular module that prepares students for their career searches, focusing on career planning, résumé building, internship and job search techniques, interviewing skills, professionalism, and the impact of social media

- Require an experiential learning component, including internships, clinics, and practica, with local, regional, national, or global organizations
Suffolk and the Teacher-Scholar Model:
Promoting Rigorous Teaching and Scholarship

The University recognizes and supports its outstanding teacher-scholars such as Alasdair Roberts, Rappaport Professor of Law and Public Policy.
Develop, recognize, and reward excellence in teaching and in scholarship.

- Recruit teacher-scholars in areas of strength, emerging growth, and interdisciplinary opportunities
- Encourage a culture of continuous innovation in teaching and scholarship across the University community
- Provide support and encourage professional development opportunities for faculty to improve teaching and scholarship
- Promote interdisciplinary course development and scholarship
- Improve financial, logistical, and facility support for faculty and student scholarship
- Promote continuous review of faculty teaching and scholarship
- Raise the University’s research profile and expectations so that faculty will be recognized for excellence in teaching and scholarship
- Support grant-writing initiatives to increase external funding
- Require ongoing review and improvement of the curriculum
SUFFOLK AND ITS COMMUNITY:

Building a Cohesive University

The University and its educational units are united in their efforts to provide a student-centered experience that prepares graduates for success.
Integrate the Suffolk University community to build unity among students, faculty, staff, and alumni across the University.

- Create and promote an integrated Suffolk University brand to be used consistently by the University and the schools in all communications, including website, marketing, media, and alumni relations.
- Integrate and streamline functions across campus to ensure excellent service and reduce or eliminate redundancy.
- Develop an integrated undergraduate student experience across the University through initiatives that include centralized academic support services, cross-listing of classes, University-wide advising, and consistent credit hours for courses.
- Centralize information and access for students by redesigning registration, student accounts, and financial aid processes, utilizing technology to provide seamless integration.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive University technology plan.
- Build and renovate the facilities needed to encourage unity and identity within the Suffolk community, including space for a student center.
- Create a Suffolk community that values and promotes alumni engagement through programmatic initiatives such as alumni mentoring of students, institutional partnerships, and job placement.
SUFFOLK AND ITS INFRASTRUCTURE:

Strategic Imperative

Strengthening Professional Governance and Fiscal Responsibility

A transparent and professional governance structure keeps stakeholders informed.
Professionalize the governance of Suffolk University to include consultation with stakeholders about major decisions and transparency in management and operations. Manage resources and operations with the utmost fiscal prudence to support the goal of providing educational excellence at a reasonable cost.

- Implement management systems and organizational structures to enhance professionalism, transparency, and integration in University governance
- Develop a culture that uses data-driven decision-making, emphasizing broad consultation
- Establish an institutional research and planning office
- Redesign the budget process to align with the strategic plan and encourage appropriate transparency in management and the budgeting process

- Enhance programmatic accountability and fiscal responsibility through reporting and community involvement
- Allocate resources according to substantive areas of traditional strength, emerging growth, and interdisciplinary opportunity for each academic unit
- Achieve and sustain financial stability through increased fund-raising, a larger endowment, and a diversified revenue mix
- Strengthen advancement initiatives through engagement with Suffolk alumni to lessen tuition revenue dependency and advance University goals
Twenty-first century technology offers opportunities to expand upon the traditional Suffolk University education and offer students more of the tools they need to succeed.
Maintain the traditional nature of a Suffolk education while strategically advancing the use of new technology and innovative pedagogy.

- Expand the number of classrooms to include flexible classroom space and laboratories
- Expand new online educational opportunities by launching eSuffolk to provide a University-wide integrated online educational experience
- Enhance information technology systems, including network infrastructure, design and systems development and support, and academic technology resources to respond to faculty and student needs
- Provide accelerated learning opportunities for undergraduate and graduate programs; explore opportunities for additional classes during the summer and winter break sessions
- Expand the number of courses, majors, and academic degree programs utilizing technologically and pedagogically advanced techniques, including online formats and hybrid platforms
- Examine opportunities for a University-wide professional and continuing education office and programs focusing on lifelong learners
Conclusion

This strategic plan sets a clear direction for the University. It embraces our history as a student-centered institution focused on developing student potential. It emphasizes our commitment to excellence in teaching and scholarship and bringing innovation to the learning experience. The core values laid out in the plan are Suffolk values. The strategic imperatives within the plan provide critical focus and will be the driver for resource allocation and budget decisions.

The plan, however, is only the beginning. It can only work if it is linked to specific, measurable goals and strategies. These specific, measurable goals and strategies will be presented in a series of annual implementation plans, which will serve as essential companions to the overall strategic plan. Signaling both the importance of these annual implementation plans and Suffolk’s commitment to moving ahead immediately on each of the “Strategic Initiatives” presented above, we are releasing our first annual implementation plan simultaneously with the release of this strategic plan. We commit to the release of subsequent annual implementation plans, and we invite all constituencies interested in the future success of Suffolk University to participate actively as we develop and implement these plans. Constant input and reactions from all concerned with Suffolk’s future are essential if the mode of continuous decision-oriented planning we have adopted is to succeed.