

Strategic Agenda: *Dateline 2007-2012* Summary of Progress

February, 2012

VISION: *Defining the contemporary Cabrinian education through excellence, social justice, and transformational learning*

In the strategic plan 2007 – 2012, the College set five goals to be accomplished.

MISSION & IDENTITY: We will clarify our mission, define our identity and establish our brand in the marketplace

TEACHING & LEARNING: We will create a contemporary, innovative teaching and learning environment

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT: We will provide a vibrant, engaging, campus environment and attract and retain a talented and diverse student body

CABRINIAN CULTURE: We will cultivate a Cabrinian culture of leadership, collaboration, communication, diversity and community development

STEWARDSHIP: We will steward our resources while investing wisely in our future

Shortly after the Strategic Agenda was approved, Antoinette Iadarola, Ph.D, who had been President of Cabrini College for 16 years, announced her retirement. The Board of Trustees launched a national search and ultimately selected Marie Angelella George, Ph.D as her successor. President George was inaugurated in 2008 and became the seventh President of the College. From the beginning of her presidency, Dr. George declared her commitment to reach the goals set out in the *Dateline 2007 – 2012* plan. Over the past four years, she has led the efforts to successfully fulfill that commitment.

The following report summarizes key accomplishments in meeting the strategic vision and five strategic goals set out in the Strategic Plan *Dateline 2007–2012* document.

MISSION & IDENTITY: The College has achieved significant progress on this goal. Through a college-wide effort and with the recommendation of the Board Mission & Identity Committee, the Board of Trustees unanimously approved a re-articulated Mission Statement for the College which concisely defines the mission in terms of a contemporary Cabrinian education. President George launched the President’s Initiative for Mission Integration, a two-year initiative to engage the community in reflection, dialogue and action on the mission. Further, she emphasized mission integration as a shared responsibility and placed mission leadership in the

portfolio of the Vice President for Institutional Planning and Effectiveness, a new position for the College that is also responsible for Human Resources and diversity/inclusion, to insure that the mission is the basis for all that we do as a community. The Task Force launched a number of initiatives including the Faculty Academy, addressing Catholic Social Teaching and the new *Justice Matters* curriculum, the Staff Summer Institute on Mission, Identity and Catholic Social Teaching; the publication of an updated edition of the Cabrini Prayer book and the launch of the *Justice Matters* website and *Mission Matters* feature. A White Paper proposing a framework for ongoing mission integration will be produced at the conclusion of their work to provide direction for the future.

A new branding program was initiated focusing on the tagline 'Do Something Extraordinary', including the complete redesign of the look, content, and navigation of the College website, and new marketing materials. Following the re-branding initiative, a program to measure the impact of the broad-based image campaign annually over the next five years was implemented. The capstone of this work was the 2011 external price elasticity and brand value survey that heavily influenced the subsequent decision to reduce undergraduate tuition. This survey will continue to impact strategic decisions going forward. Additionally, mission-related partnerships have been routinely highlighted in Admissions' materials, internal documents, and marketing and branding materials. Also, an integrated marketing plan was developed and has begun implementation. Moreover, an integrated marketing function now links enrollment and advancement to the overall college marketing and messaging strategies.

Partnerships have also grown over this period. A renewed partnership with Cabrini Ministries, the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus mission in Swaziland, southern Africa, was forged in June 2010 to establish a sustained relationship with the mission and to enhance the educational experiences of Cabrini students and faculty. Faculty and Trustees have traveled there along with the President to determine what the needs are and how the partnership might develop further. Following a three-year partnership plan, two delegations from the Mission in Swaziland have visited campus and a growing number of faculty and staff have visited with very specific results. For instance, there has been significant development of the Mission staff by Cabrini Education faculty over the past two years. Cabrini Marketing & Communications staff led a trip with professional videographers and produced a video that will assist the MSCs in marketing and fundraising for Cabrini Ministries. The partnership has led to enrichment of the *Justice Matters* curriculum related to orphans and vulnerable children.

Cabrini also strengthened the partnership with Mother Cabrini High School in New York. Each year, two students are awarded full scholarships to the College. In addition, plans have been solidified for a summer science program funded by the Cabrini Mission Foundation and organized and designed by science department faculty. The goals of the program are to equip

the young women of Mother Cabrini High School (MCHS) with scientific knowledge and skills, to mentor and inspire them to consider majoring in science, and to build their confidence as women professionals. As a result of an expressed desire on the part of MCHS administrators, members of the faculty are working with the Dean to assist MCHS to incorporate a justice focus similar to *Justice Matters* in their curriculum. The relationship with Cabrini High School in New Orleans has also been enriched, with faculty visiting for immersion trips and joint student service projects on the horizon.

The initial five-year partnership with Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the international relief and development agency of the US Catholic community, was renewed during this time and a new memorandum of understanding was signed. This relationship has also expanded with the establishment of a CRS Ambassador Program for students, regular visits from CRS staff, the development of the Global Solidarity Network that links Cabrini students with CRS staff in virtual discussions, and a campus-wide CRS Advisory Group supported by the Wolfington Center.

Closer to home, expanded outreach with Norristown, our primary local community partner, has led to sustained faculty and student engagement that built upon work done by faculty prior to 2007. Currently, one-third of our full time faculty and 600 students each year are involved in community research, service, and experiential learning with over 40 community agencies and organizations in Norristown. The Norristown Municipal Council presented President George with a resolution commending the success of the partnership, praising Cabrini's faculty, staff, and students for their "outstanding contribution to the community," and recognizing Cabrini as an "advocate for social justice and change in Norristown and other older, urban communities."

In a bold yet strategic decision, the Board of Trustees approved an undergraduate tuition reduction and cap on tuition and fees of \$29,000, guaranteed until 2015. This was a mission response to the rising cost of higher education and the challenging economic times, but is also expected to have a positive impact on recruitment and retention. Cabrini has received public attention for this bold move as the issues of access and affordability are important topics under consideration in the news and in the White House.

TEACHING & LEARNING: Significant progress has also been attained in the area of Teaching and Learning. In an effort to improve student learning outcomes, and with a \$2,000,000 Federal Title III grant spanning five years (2006 – 2011), Cabrini created The Center for Teaching and Learning which offers academic assistance to all students to strengthen skills in math, writing, and across the many disciplines. With its many facets for student support, the Center has had a positive impact on student success and retention. Additionally, 'Living and Learning Communities' (LLCs) were established. Of the seven theme-based communities, most are residential learning groups of about 20 students who share common interests, live on the same residence hall floor, take classes, and participate in other activities around the chosen themes.

LLCs, which are a first-year initiative, have also demonstrated a positive impact on student satisfaction and retention and now involve one third of each first-year class. The expanded Honors Program, which welcomes students who seek additional challenge, is an example of an LLC. Through a one-year extension of the Title III grant, work is currently underway to launch an e-portfolio system that will strengthen academic advisement and the measurement of student learning outcomes, and help students market themselves better to prospective employers and/or graduate schools.

The College launched the ground-breaking new core curriculum, *Justice Matters*, which includes a sequence of developmentally linked writing intensive courses taken in the first through third years and a capstone project in the fourth year. Springing from the mission commitment to social justice, the *Justice Matters* curriculum develops a core of knowledge and helps students acquire skills that will advance their careers and enable them to meet and solve real world problems on behalf of the common good. The faculty has embraced this curriculum and has integrated it into their scholarship in creative and important ways.

The campus also embraced an initiative to end domestic violence through education. Faculty have developed a curriculum for educators in the primary and secondary schools with funding from a \$100,000 grant over three years from the US Department of Justice to support the development of courses and training on the impact of domestic violence on children. The College also held the first annual Domestic Violence Symposium headlined by Lynn Rosenthal, White House Advisor on Violence against Women. Nearly 200 social service workers, teachers, policy makers, students, community activists, and others gathered around this important issue. Two major donors established a fully funded \$100,000 endowment to support this work for the longer term.

A new Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs was hired to give leadership to the academic programs and insure the delivery of the 21st century Catholic Cabrini education characterized by academic excellence, leadership development, and a commitment to social justice. The number of full-time faculty increased to a total of 71 in 2011, with the percentage of faculty holding the highest degree in their field up from 77% to 83%. Additionally, substantial faculty development programs have been implemented and a transition was made to a culture of student learning assessment. A new model of faculty governance was established. As planned, after the first three years of implementation, both an internal and external review of the model is nearing completion. This evaluation will guide continuous improvement.

The Wolfington Center was realigned under the Provost and the leader elevated to Executive Director. This change was made in order to raise the Center's stature, ensure support for the faculty as they roll out the *Justice Matters* curriculum, and continue to build strong local,

national, and international partnerships. The Center also works to strengthen Cabrini's reputation for community-based and experiential learning, solidarity, and advocacy.

During this same time period, the College experienced explosive growth in the new model of graduate education of providing off-campus, cohort-based programs. This growth presented both significant opportunities, but also some challenges, including ensuring compliance with standards from our regional accreditor, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, and the need for two commencement ceremonies. Consequently, the Graduate Studies program was re-envisioned in an effort to insure greater integration into the academic life and mission of the College. To that end, a strategic plan for Graduate Studies, grounded in market research and environmental scanning, was completed and endorsed by the Board of Trustees. The plan focuses on positioning, strengthening, and diversifying the program mix, adding and developing full-time faculty to provide a strong academic foundation for the programs, integrating the graduate program with the life of the College, examining current partnerships, cultivating new ones, and insuring the Mission, Vision and Core Values of the College form the framework for all graduate programs. A new Dean for Graduate Studies was hired to lead the implementation of this important plan on behalf of the College.

Marketing and Communications continued efforts to communicate the elements of a distinctive Catholic Cabrinian education, to influence public perception of Cabrini, and to establish our distinct brand in the marketplace.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT: The third strategic priority focused on the campus environment and both recruitment and retention efforts. Again, substantial progress has been achieved. A study was completed that determined the 'right size' of the undergraduate student body at 1500 students. The new Vice President of Enrollment Management developed an Annual Admissions Plan and a multi-year Retention Plan designed to reach both recruitment and retention goals. The recruitment and admissions functions were reorganized to improve results. A program, put in place to outreach to Catholic audiences in New York, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Baltimore, MD, and Wilmington, DE has generated more applications, increased diversity of the applicant pool and produced a more diverse student body. Additional retention efforts were launched including implementation of the MAP-Works student retention survey that enables early identification and intervention with at risk first year students, establishment of the Cabrini Retention Outreach Working Group (CROW), and launching the First Year Experience Program. All are showing promising results with first-time, full time Fall to Fall student retention increasing from 66% in 2006-2007 to over 73% in 2010-2011.

A 'one stop' center, the Cavalier Express Center, was created that centralized student accounting, financial aid, and registrar functions to make it more convenient for students to access these services and to provide seamless service in all three areas. Other enhancements

were made to the campus to increase student satisfaction with campus life and encourage greater involvement, including renovations to the dining hall now known as 'Cav's Corner.'

The Center for Student Engagement and Leadership was created to provide opportunities for involvement that encourage students to become leaders and active members of the campus community. The Center launched a new structured student leadership development program based on the 'Social Change Model' to complement the College's commitment to advance the common good. Additionally, the new position of Director of Student Diversity Initiatives was created to sponsor programming, training, and events that promote a welcoming and inclusive campus environment and that celebrate the different gifts of community members. An analysis of campus student diversity programs was conducted which yielded important recommendations for the future. Acceptance of these recommendations for follow-up actions is currently pending a discussion by the President and the Cabinet.

The College invested in and cultivated several new community traditions, including a Black & White Student Gala in the Mansion which has become a key annual event after it was first held at the Inauguration of President George. In addition, the Athletic Hall of Fame was inaugurated and anchored within Family Weekend. The tradition of a week of activities to celebrate Cabrini was revived as Cabrini Day was expanded to Cabrini Spirit Week. Anchored by a full day of presentations on faculty and student research, presentation by the Summer Reading author, discussion and dialogue, and situated within a week of events both "spiritual" and "spirited," the campus now engages for a week brimming full of activities each fall. 'Cabrini Night at the Phillies' launched in 2007, has become an annual fall tradition that attracts attendance from all facets of the College community, including the entire freshman class.

The Campus Ministry department was realigned under Student Development. The position of Director of Campus Ministry was created to provide renewed purpose and direction for the College's spiritual outreach and development programs for students, resulting in a diversification of program offerings and increased student engagement. Service learning and participation in partnership activity have also increased through additional opportunities in the Wolfington Center.

CATHOLIC CABRINIAN CULTURE: The College has made good strides in cultivating a stronger Catholic Cabrinian culture. The campus as a whole has been committed to increasing inclusivity, enhancing diversity, and community building. The many cross-campus committees and task forces which have been initiated have sparked intra-community collaboration. Additionally, the College has forged a closer relationship with the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus through strengthened communication and collaboration, which has helped to reinforce the founding spirit and charism. Substantive updates in 2009 to the College's By-Laws and Articles of Incorporation approved in 2005 have been well received by

all, and contribute to continued strong positive relationship between the Order and the College. The President, members of the administration and faculty, are routinely invited into the Missionary Sister's Provincial Assembly, to engage in dialogue, fellowship and planning. The Cabrini Mission Corps, housed on campus, enhances the College community's link with the Missionary Sisters. For example, for the first time, Cabrini Missioners (who are deployed at Cabrini Missions around the world) are spending a year on Campus working directly with students, one each in the Wolfington Center and in Campus Ministry.

At the same time, the College re-examined the elements of the goal around the Cabrinian Culture and found opportunities to enhance and streamline its components. Moreover, some of the issues of an organizational and governance nature no longer exist. Consequently, the goal was subsumed under Mission & Identity and focused on increasing the diversity of the community. President George made addressing the importance of diversity one of her priorities, along with mission, and established a campus-wide Diversity Task Force which completed an analysis of diversity at Cabrini. The Task Force made 16 recommendations to the President and Cabinet, 15 of which were assigned to divisions for implementation. The comprehensive report was shared with the Board of Trustees who decided that diversity was so important to the mission and identity of the College that they adopted it as one of their priorities. The Board requested at least an annual update on progress against the recommendations put forward in the report. As part of the implementation process, President George commissioned a new standing council with responsibility to monitor and oversee the College's efforts toward becoming a more inclusive community. The Inclusivity Council represents the ongoing commitment of Cabrini to move beyond only considerations of differences to focus on the unique gifts and talents each member of the community possesses and contributes to the common good.

STEWARDSHIP: The final goal of the Strategic Agenda: Dateline 2007-2012 called for the College to steward its resources and invest wisely in the future. Despite the severe and continuing downturn in the national economy, Cabrini's financial health has been strong. The College has maintained a balanced budget and enjoyed financial surpluses during the past five years. A new multi-year financial model was developed and implemented that has enabled greater accuracy, adaptability, and transparency in the budgeting process. Cabrini has also secured new sources of revenue from foundations, corporations, government programs, and generous donors. During this time, three major endowed programs were established – The Jolyon Pitt Girard Distinguished Scholar-in-Residence Fund, created in honor of Jolyon P. Girard, Ph.D, Professor of History and Political Science, the President Antoinette Iadarola Endowed Fund which was established to honor the former President, and the Dr. Joseph Romano Endowed Scholarship to celebrate his 50 years of service to the College. The objective of the Romano scholarship is to recognize outstanding and dedicated students who are in need of

additional financial aid to complete their Cabrini education. Established through the generosity of alumni, faculty, family, and colleagues, the fund has more than 120 donors and raised over \$50,000. All three of these programs are intended to support the academic life of the College, enrich the student experience, and strengthen the focus on developing leaders for the common good.

To enable more data-driven planning and decision-making, Cabrini also invested heavily in improving the integrity of financial information. The Strategic Planning and Budgeting Council instituted an annual budgeting and planning process that tied departmental budgets to the institutional goals of the Strategic Plan. The Council also established a consistent annual reporting format and process for both academic and administrative departments and developed a dashboard of key institutional indicators that the Cabinet reviews monthly. From FY2007–2011, the operating budget grew from \$51,111,839 to \$72,002,963 and the total market value of Cabrini’s long-term investments and endowment increased from \$28,466,767 to \$35,955,136. In addition, the College has accumulated working capital of approximately \$37,000,000 that can be used for needed capital expansion and other program-supporting initiatives.

To augment the College’s efforts at cost containment and revenue generation, Cabrini entered into several outsourcing and collaborative opportunities. One notable example is the partnership with ‘K-12 Teachers Alliance’ to market our graduate education programs at off-site locations. Second, a collaborative alliance with regional peer institutions has resulted in significant energy savings.

Monitoring the environment for land acquisition, the College purchased a property very near the campus, on Berwyn Circle, referred to as the Guest House, to accommodate visitors for short- and long-term stays in a cost-effective way. In addition, the Board of Trustees purchased a property to replace the official residence of the President. “Cabrini House” on nearby West Matsonford Road meets the evolving needs of the College to provide an off-campus, but easily accessible facility for meetings with donors, alumni, faculty, staff, and students.

The Board of Trustees approved a new Master Plan for the College in 2011. This plan calls for major infrastructure improvements including a new multi-layered Gateway to the College (off Eagle Road) that will help create a more pedestrian-friendly campus and free major portions of the campus property for new construction; a Campus Center that will serve as a focal point for student co-curricular and social life, additions to the Dixon Center, new spaces for staff, administration and faculty to gather informally, and a late night venue for students conveniently located near the residence halls. The plan includes a new dining hall and a major renovation to restore Grace Hall’s historic detail. To support and showcase Cabrini’s hallmark engaged pedagogies, new and renovated academic space will be arranged in ‘academic

neighborhoods' in which faculty offices and classrooms are located together. Finally, renovations to the Holy Spirit Library will reflect 21st century means of accessing information and provide spaces for collaborative work. Plans to construct the new Gateway are now moving through the necessary legal and regulatory processes for township approval and are the first step in the implementation of the overall Master Plan.

The Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees, with the support of the Finance staff, has adopted several policies and benchmarking tools to evaluate the College's financial position and help frame future financial decisions. In addition, a consultant with expertise in higher education information technology, assessed the efficiency of Cabrini's current contract with Drexel University which provides the vast majority of the College's IT services and concluded that the arrangement provides a better value to Cabrini than it could deliver on its own.

Since 2010, a College-wide 'Green Team' has been working on major initiatives in the areas of education about energy consumption, recycling, and campus awareness about sustainability. A \$1.5 million grant was received from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Redevelopment Capital Assistance Program for improvements to the Iadarola Center. The grant helped complete construction of the third floor by building a new space for the Mathematics Department, the Center for Teaching and Learning, and the Math Resource Center. The funding also helped create a new classroom and clinical training space for the Exercise Science and Health Promotion Department and provided more energy efficient enhancements such as a green roof and motion-sensitive lighting.

Investments in fiscal, physical, and human capital have each contributed to the overall health of the College. To this end, major investments have been made in the Institutional Advancement Office, including the hiring of a more experienced staff. A comprehensive study was completed to expand the donor base that focused on the current state of annual giving, alumni and parent giving, and building a culture of philanthropy. A Parent Council was established and a new program to connect alumni with admissions has been launched. As part of the College's celebration of its 50th anniversary, a successful \$16.5 million campaign was completed. A draft strategic plan for Institutional Advancement was developed and is pending Board of Trustee discussion.

CONCLUSION: These are but a sample of the accomplishments Cabrini achieved over the five years guided by the *Strategic Agenda: Dateline 2007 -2012*. It is important to note that for various reasons other goals and objectives articulated in the plan were not addressed:

- Institute for Catholic Social Teaching: While part of the original plan, this institute was not created, since more fundamental work was done to establish a foundation in social justice in the curriculum, co-curricular activities, and across the campus community.

- Formation of ‘Signature Initiatives’: Although several specific initiatives, including a Center for the Engaged Humanities, were mentioned as possibilities, these were deferred as well, in favor of a more concentrated focus on revising and enriching the core curriculum .
- Developing human capital: An analysis of employee functions and staffing levels was deferred until after the completion of a comprehensive salary study which is nearing completion.

Cabrini has achieved significant results against the overall agenda within a mission-driven culture of collaboration. Clearly, during this time, through the *Justice Matters* core curriculum, a firm grounding in the Catholic Intellectual tradition and the principles of Catholic Social Thought, a new engaged pedagogy, and an emphasis on life-long, experiential learning, the College community has succeeded in *defining the contemporary Cabrinian education through excellence, social justice, and transformational learning*.

Though the path has been challenging, the progress has been steady. Now, as we near the close of this very productive period, the College stands ready to take the next steps into the future. With an excellent faculty, ground-breaking core curriculum, an institution-wide commitment to social justice, and an educational experience that develops leaders who are engaged citizens of the world, Cabrini is ready to embark on the next leg of the journey toward becoming a college of first choice and a model for forming leaders to advance the common good.