A MESSAGE FROM LOUIS W. STARK,
VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS

When I began at Case Western Reserve University in July 2013, the university was launching their second five-year strategic plan. Within my first month, we set in motion a deliberative process to understand and evaluate the Division of Student Affairs, which ultimately culminated in our current three-year strategic plan. Due to the rapidly changing demographics and needs of the student population, this shorter timeline was selected to make our plan more agile and responsive.

The first year of planning examined the divisional mission, vision and values statement, engaging the executive staff in a process of self-evaluation. Each department was asked to complete a Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Challenges Analysis and Program Outcomes Model. These resources provided me and the divisional leadership with a clearer picture of the critical issues facing our division and our students. The three-year divisional plan supports the University strategic plan, and is supported by departmental goals, outcomes and strategies.

As we have reached the midway point of our strategic plan, it is not only time to start looking forward again to the next three-year plan, but to reflect on the success of our current efforts. In response to the evolving needs of our student populations, we have adjusted our approach in many areas, increasing collaborations both within our division and with our campus partners. As the second year of this plan comes to a close, we are eager to build on our achievements and continue the trend of collaboration and responsiveness to community needs.

In the first year of our plan, we focused on a theme of “community spirit and pride.” We at Case Western Reserve University have plenty to be proud of, from the outstanding academic and research achievements of our students and faculty, to the impactful social justice work being done through meaningful campus collaborations and outstanding co-curricular opportunities. Our goal was to activate this sense of common spirit by emphasizing what is truly unique about our community. This year, we have taken this concept even further, emphasizing connections and collaborations that will help enhance our community.

Through these last years, and well into the future, we plan to exemplify not only what it means to be a Spartan, but to embody CWRU’s motto: “think beyond the possible.” We are making it easier than ever for CWRU students to find resources that will help them succeed on campus and beyond.
TELLING THE STUDENT AFFAIRS STORY

ELIMINATING SILOS WITHIN OUR DIVISION BEGINS WITH RETHINKING HOW WE COMMUNICATE OUR WORK

Although each department makes significant and unique contributions to the division and the university, there are common themes that run through all of our work. The first step toward rethinking divisional impact was to completely revamp our website, which is the most public representation of the division. This process began by collecting exhaustive information about all programs, events and services provided by each department, and reorganizing them to reveal common themes. Representatives from each department were engaged in reviewing the information and properly labeling each theme for maximum clarity. Through this collaborative process, we were left with eight distinct, unique themes. These themes extend beyond the border of the division, encompassing the experiences available through any of the student services office across campus. Our goal is to provide easily accessible, accurate information to our students, regardless of administrative structures.

Focus on Collaboration

Our efforts to reorganize our website presence were made possible by the implementation of a new student engagement platform, OrgSync. The homepage features a community calendar comprised of events from a variety of portals, including student groups, athletic events and popular traditions. That is where the power of this platform can truly be seen, in its ability to connect all areas of campus for a seamless student experience. Notably, many of our campus partners have used this technology to bring enhanced publicity to their existing programs. The Kelvin Smith Library has utilized OrgSync for their personal librarian program, while Case for Community Day’s registration was streamlined using OrgSync’s unique event management feature.

The connections formed within OrgSync will also allow us to further our divisional assessment goals. The ability to link our learning outcomes to individual events and programs will provide insight into factors that affect student retention, and will allow us to evaluate our effectiveness toward this end.

This organizational scheme makes it easier to find exactly what you need, or discover something you never knew existed. When all the options are transparent, it’s easier to find where you belong on campus.
YEAR AFTER YEAR, OUR CWRU TRADITIONS AND SPACES KEEP STUDENTS, ALUMNI, FACULTY AND STAFF CONNECTED TO A COMMON FEELING OF PRIDE AND SCHOOL SPIRIT

BLUE CWRU BLOWOUT
ATHLETIC APPAREL SALE AND SPIRIT CELEBRATION

For the first time in fall 2015, the #BlueCWRU student organization teamed up with Physical Education & Athletics, Student Activities & Leadership, and the Tinkham Veale University Center to organize a fundraiser and spirit event. All CWRU community members were able to acquire retired athletic apparel to show their pride on #BlueCWRUFridays, experience performances by the pep band, spirit decorations and banners, and the debut of the Fight Song contest.

WYANT ATHLETIC AND WELLNESS CENTER
MORE THAN JUST AN ATHLETIC FACILITY

Made possible by a generous gift from James Wyant (CIT ’64), the Wyant Athletic and Wellness Center is more than just a building. The center provides study and meeting spaces for the entire CWRU community as well as state of the art fitness equipment for any level of recreational enthusiast. It represents the priorities of our varsity student athletes and the support they receive from coaches and the university. The strategic location of this gorgeous new facility provides access to students, faculty and staff on the north end of campus making the Wyant Center an ideal addition to the CWRU landscape.

THWING CENTER REFRESH
ROUNDING OUT THE CENTER OF CAMPUS

The opening of the Tinkham Veale University Center created a fantastic opportunity for the surrounding facilities to form a cohesive programmatic hub for CWRU students. After welcoming several new offices, including Residence Life and University Housing, Thwing Center was primed for a refresh which highlights the building’s unique marriage of history and forward thinking. Improvements, both cosmetic and functional, make it a welcome complement to the Tink.

Hudson Relays
A CLASS TRADITION SINCE 1910

Beginning in 1910, the Hudson Relays was created to commemorate the campus move from Hudson to Cleveland, Ohio. The Hudson Relays is a race among the four undergraduate classes, a graduate student team and an alumni team. Each team competes in a 26-mile relay around campus. As per tradition, if the same class wins all four years in a row, they are treated to a steak and champagne dinner, courtesy of the President and the Provost.

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#BlueCWRU

Through the Student Affairs Professional Development Committee (PDC) is to bring opportunities for education to divisional staff, as well as to create a collaborative environment between departments. Since the creation of the strategic plan, the PDC has aligned its regular offerings with the yearly themes. The first year, our staff attended a webinar on creating a unique school spirit environment for our campus, rather than borrowing traditions from other institutions. Later that semester, a coffee chat allowed staff from across the division to share ideas about how to foster CWRU pride among the different student groups we advise.

In the first year of our strategic plan, we focused on a theme of school spirit and pride. Although students, faculty and staff at CWRU have many accomplishments and accolades of which to be proud, the manifestation of this pride often looks different than at a Division I school. This theme expanded in the past year to focus on collaboration and connection. Nowhere has the combination of these two key themes been more visible than in the area of student pride.

We have been incredibly proud to have our students take on this cause as their own by founding the #BlueCWRU organization. They are dedicated to improving school spirit through support of our athletic teams and programs. Their active presence both on campus and through social media keeps all students connected to the accomplishments of their peers. Attendance at both home and away athletic competitions has been enhanced by the efforts of this spirited, energetic group.

One of the most visible initiatives to celebrate school spirit has been #BlueCWRUFridays. Students, faculty and staff are all encouraged to wear their Spartan apparel each Friday as a widespread show of solidarity and spirit.

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DIVERSITY EDUCATION
Diversity 360 highlights the University’s commitment to inclusion and diversity, engages participants in authentic dialogue, equips students with knowledge of key diversity concepts and provides skills to interrupt exclusionary behavior.

QUALITY MENTORING OPPORTUNITIES
The Collegiate Connections mentoring program brings together sixty mentors and mentees each school year to ensure that incoming students receive the guidance they need in their first year.

STUDENT ACTIVISM
Alongside other movements on campus such as #WeBelongHere, the CWRU Convening seeks to build safe, sustainable, intergenerational, intersectional and unapologetically black spaces at CWRU for members of the African Diaspora.

UNDERGRADUATE DIVERSITY COLLABORATIVE
The Undergraduate Diversity Collaborative is an umbrella organization that aims to support organizations which advocate for the advancement of diversity and inclusion at CWRU.

SUSTAINED DIALOGUE
“DIALOGUE is a process of genuine interaction through which human beings LISTEN to each other deeply enough to be changed by what they learn.”

CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS
Events like the African Student Association cultural show bring all members of the campus community together to learn about and celebrate traditions from the vast number of cultures represented at CWRU.

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The Office of Multicultural Affairs and the LGBTQ office are both doing outstanding work on campus that is student focused and gives us places to connect with faculty, administration, and staff.

CWRU STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY
The Center for Civic Engagement and Learning (CCEL) has established a Leadership Lattice as a visual representation of the various experiential leadership roles within CCEL. These leaders facilitate service opportunities, lead reflection with other students following service initiatives, and assist CCEL staff in planning and promoting civic engagement programs.

CCEL implements trainings for student leaders with attention placed on social justice, ethical service, working in a community, and understanding the forms of civic engagement. Revisions to the learning outcomes for the CCEL Fellows’ program have enhanced the leadership development focus of the program, with the goal of developing student leaders who are active citizens. CCEL is developing a new pre-service training/orientation for students to complete before a service experience to improve their skills as leaders working with diverse clients.

Connections to the wider Cleveland community are also a source of pride at Case Western Reserve. Outreach programming through the CCEL and the Facilitated Outreach for Community and University Success (FOCUS) Group fosters a “sense of place” both internally and with the surrounding area. In addition, events such as CCEL Week and Graduate Student Service Day highlight meaningful involvements through undergraduate and graduate campus organizations.

The Interreligious Council (IRC) is comprised of the staffs of the five campus ministries serving the institutions of higher education in University Circle. The IRC sponsors programs and events throughout the year including Interfaith dialogue series, panel discussions, Seder Meals, Lenten services, spiritual retreats, community service projects, and programs unique to their own organizations. The IRC operates out of The InterFaith Plaza, located on the right of the Church of the Covenant, 11205 Euclid Avenue, and out of the Cleveland Hillel Foundation, located at 11291 Euclid Avenue.

CCEL has also been selected as a partnership “campus champion” with the Andrew Goodman Foundation’s Vote Everywhere Program, which is a nonpartisan, experiential program that recruits, trains, and supports emerging leaders at America’s colleges and universities. The new partnership with Health Leads—a national nonprofit that utilizes volunteer student advocates to work with patients at University Hospitals to access community resources and benefits—provides students with ongoing leadership development sessions throughout their year of service to improve their skills as leaders working with diverse clients.

The Center for Civic Engagement & Learning distributes mini-grants to support a variety of student organizations in the implementation of projects and activities which promote principles of civic engagement and actively engage the campus community. All of this grant activity ensures a high level of learning among our students and in the surrounding community.

A sample of our grant activity in Student Affairs includes Trio Programs (Upward Bound), a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration grant for suicide prevention, a state grant for Title IX, United Way grants for community-based school initiatives, community service grants through the Center for Civic Engagement & Learning, LaunchNet through the Career Center funded by the Burton D. Morgan Foundation, some federal grants through the Office of the Provost area and several smaller local government, corporate and foundation grants for community outreach programs.

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Case Western Reserve… has given me great opportunities to get involved in community service and in research. Over the past two summers I’ve had internships at CWRU, and I’ll likely be able to get a co-op because of my experiences here.

CWRU STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY
IDENTIFYING LEADERSHIP

LEADERSHIP AT CWRU TAKES MANY FORMS. EACH OF THE DEPARTMENTS IN STUDENT AFFAIRS CONTRIBUTES TO LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THEIR PROGRAMS, FORMAL ADVISING OF STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND INFORMAL MENTORSHIP OF STUDENT LEADERS.

This year, an interdepartmental task force comprised of members from both inside and outside of the division reviewed all divisional leadership programs and effort to determine if they meet our high expectations.

The first act of this newly convened group was to send out a comprehensive survey to staff in order to collect data on current leadership programs, audience and outcomes. Their extensive efforts have aligned our work, assessment and marketing with the same goals and learning outcomes.

A discussion on the language we use to describe “leadership on campus” was key in learning how to describe the type of leaders we want on campus. A review of our peer institutions and an internal audit of our current training were the final steps to define and advise the next steps for CWRU leadership.

Spotlight on Entrepreneurship

As a member of the Burton D. Morgan NEO LaunchNet community, the CWRU LaunchNet pursues its mission to help students and alumni turn their ideas into products and services. Students and alumni who engage with the CWRU LaunchNet are encouraged to explore entrepreneurship as complementary or alternative to traditional career paths.

The CWRU LaunchNet serves all academic disciplines of Case Western Reserve University, the Cleveland Institute of Art, and the Cleveland Institute of Music.

From 2012 to date, the CWRU LaunchNet has assisted more than 500 members of its community to research and establish enterprises that have collectively won competitions and raised investments of more than $3 million.

Leveraging and consolidating resources both on the CWRU campus and through the wider regional, national, and international entrepreneurship and innovation community, the CWRU LaunchNet has helped teams and individuals establish products and services across a variety of industries.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT CHANGES

THE PAST FEW YEARS HAVE SEEN SOME KEY ADJUSTMENTS TO THE WAY OUR GOVERNING STUDENT BODIES FUNCTION. THESE ARE VALUABLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CWRU STUDENTS TO PUT THEIR LEADERSHIP SKILLS TO THE TEST.

- Combining the Graduate Student Senate and the Graduate and Professional Council into the Graduate Student Council better represents the interests of all graduate and professional students, streamlining their efforts and communication.
- The Undergraduate Diversity Collaborative (UDC) was established as a new organization within the Student Executive Council (SEC) in a quest to support our diversity organizations and make CWRU more inclusive.
- The SEC will have a new constitution go into effect Fall 2016 in an effort to bring forth reforms. SEC will still oversee the allocation of the Student Activity Fee, with guaranteed funding for Boards and the creation of a SEC Reserve, which the Undergraduate Student Government Finance Committee will be entrusted to allocate. A Student Presidents’ Roundtable will also be established to continue collaboration and sustain dialogue between the boards of the represented organizations.

Discovering Strengths

In keeping with the importance of leaders gaining a strong sense of self-understanding, the development of a leadership and talent identification tool, StrengthsQuest was introduced as a curricular addition to the leadership development menu. This training is currently in place for undergraduate and graduate students and is offered as both a stand-alone leadership development tool and in classroom training formats.

ASK ME ABOUT MY STRENGTHS
RETHINKING THE RESIDENTIAL MODEL

STUDENT PERSPECTIVES PLAY A KEY ROLE IN REVIEWING A TIME-TESTED MODEL

Since the residential experiences model has been in place for over a decade, Residence Life has undergone a review of the programming model. In the First-Year Experience, a consideration of the residential college model focused on the perspectives of students as members of the community. They found that students remain committed to and excited about the Residential Colleges themselves, showing spirit and affiliation with the names, colors, and crests of Cedar, Juniper, Magnolia, and Mistletoe, even years after they resided in the areas. However, there was less connection to the “theme” of each residential college, such as the arts or sustainability. Students and other stakeholders saw the themes as artificially applied, and not necessarily representative of the group culture. As a result, Residence Life staff are transitioning to retain the visual artifacts of each of the residential colleges, but shift the programming to emphasize the five Student Affairs learning outcomes, encourage programming across residential colleges, and to re-focus on each community as being mostly shaped by the unique constellation of individuals who live in it and their work to build a new community each year.

In the Upperclass Experience, the review resulted in a restructuring of student staff, and creating the position of upperclass Resident Assistant (RA). The upperclass RA is an advanced student with significant student leadership experience who will be a peer leader in the apartment complexes. The first set of this staff have been selected and will begin their training in August 2016, also utilizing the Student Affairs learning outcomes. In the Second-Year Experience, continuation of building a class spirit, tailoring interventions to smaller suite communities, and coaching RAs to focus on small group interactions lends itself to incorporation of the Student Affairs learning outcomes.

The review affirmed the success of the strong collaboration between Residence Life and Undergraduate Studies, in which the First-Year Coordinators co-report to both offices and respective supervisors work closely together to lead the holistic approach to first-year student life. Students may access the resources of both offices through the coordinator, and both offices benefit from the coordinator’s immersed perspective on students. Although Coordinators in the Second-Year Experience do not co-report, enhancement of the model also includes more collaboration and communication between the Second-Year Coordinators and the Office of Undergraduate Studies.

EVALUATING GREEK EXCELLENCE

The Pytte Cup is a framework supported by the Interfraternity Congress, Panhellenic Council, Office of Greek Life and Order of Omega that encourages chapters to provide a holistic membership experience based on the pillars of Greek Life—Leadership, Citizenship, Scholarship and Ritual. There are two parts to the overall Pytte Cup process—Community Standards and Chapter Development.

The Community Standards portion is a requirement of all chapters and incorporates the essential elements to be a successful organization at Case Western Reserve University. In order to be eligible for awards through the Chapter Development portion, chapters must fulfill all expectations outlined in Community Standards.

The Chapter Development portion utilizes Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning as the basis for evaluation and recognition. The Pytte Cup recognizes chapters based on four benchmarks that represent increasingly complex thinking and application of themes which comprise the four pillars of Greek Life. Each theme has an assigned theme advisor from across the university that assists the chapters in preparing for the application process. These advisors are also instrumental in evaluating and providing feedback to the participating organization. The overall purpose of the Pytte Cup is to challenge each individual chapter to grow to their greatest potential through intentional development and support.

FACULTY FRIDAYS

The Greek Life Office invites all students to take part in Faculty Fridays, a weekly event in which one faculty member and 15 students gather to discuss a predetermined topic over lunch. The events are open to all students and provide a forum for undergraduates to interact with peers, meet faculty members, and find new areas of interest. Faculty Fridays was recognized as an Outstanding Student Union, Student Activities, Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), earning a Bronze Award.

Bystander 101

The Panhellenic Council and Interfraternity Congress, in partnership with the Cleveland Rape Crisis Center, have created and implemented Bystander 101, a program for new members of Greek Life. Bystander 101 focuses on how to intervene in potentially problematic situations involving mental health, substance abuse and sexual assault. This year, 360 Greek students were educated through this program. When participants were asked if they would intervene when they saw a warning sign of one of these issues, 88 percent agreed or strongly agreed, and 87 percent of participants said they would recommend the program to their chapter members.
One of the most significant areas of improved collaboration between Health, Counseling and Educational Services for Students has been through communication and information sharing. Using Point and Click, our existing health services system, information regarding a student’s overall wellness is available to all practitioners on campus who require this information, and a new privacy notice for all students accessing care was enacted.

This coordination has been enhanced by the integration of University Health Services with University Counseling Service in the fall of 2015. The joint administrative team is better able to collaborate as a wellness unit with other offices. For example, Disability Resources has developed an interdepartmental referral form to ensure transparency between professionals, and therefore better care for students. With this joint office now represented in the Students of Concern meetings, these types of interactions ensure continued improvement.

This year, new and renewed groups, such as those for treatment teams, ADD, eating disorders and students in crisis, have been implemented by University Health and Counseling Services. The office also coordinates training for the Greek SMART leaders as well as chapter presidents. The new Collaborative Care Committee ensures the continuation of integrative care across wellness units. For high risk students, we have also added a new Clinical Care Manager position to coordinate with the Dean of Students in order to increase student success and retention through a case management process.

Moving forward, we aim to place primary importance on the holistic wellness experience for all of our students. By connecting with areas across the university, we will improve access to both mental and physical health resources. This diligent commitment to collaboration, paired with the expansion of facilities and human resources, will enhance our responsiveness to student needs.

I am deeply appreciative for Disability Resources’ assistance with transportation and explanation to teachers; it has made managing both health and schoolwork much more feasible than before.

CWRU STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY
NEXT STEPS
GEARING UP FOR PHASE II

AS WE WIND DOWN OUR CURRENT PLAN, IT’S TIME TO BUILD ON OUR SUCCESS

Although we are at the midway point of our current strategic plan, we must start thinking about the next steps. In order to remain agile and responsive to the needs of our students, we will again be aiming for a renewed three-year plan. What remains to be seen is which goals from this round will be expanded and continued, and which new priorities will rise to the surface.

During the first process, the entire division was engaged in an extensive evaluation. This was necessary due to the arrival of a new Vice President. This new leadership, paired with the perspective of external consultants, informed the first eight goals, and their subsequent outcomes. In this next phase, the planning process will be more introspective, seeking input from divisional staff, current students, faculty, and other campus partners. This does not require us to start anew; instead it enables us to capitalize on the extensive work done in the first phase.

The Student Affairs Professional Development Committee will be highly engaged in facilitating the feedback necessary to create this new type of plan. Over the summer and fall of 2016, this group will conduct numerous focus groups with specific constituent groups. These sessions will be focused on gaining perspectives on the current strategic plan, what is important as we move forward, and general perceptions of the division around the university.

The key change to the process will be a more deliberate connection between the divisional and departmental goals. Instead of beginning at the departmental level, we will start with broad divisional goals, after which the departments will determine which goals they can contribute to, and what the outcome of their efforts will be.

Our strategic plan will be based upon the strong foundation the division has built over the last two years. The first strategic planning process served as a hands-on learning experience, allowing us not only to fulfill critical needs within our community, but to create a more streamlined process for the future. The reorganization of the executive staff and of our website has realigned our work internally and externally. Moving forward, the creation of division-wide learning outcomes will aid us in measuring the success, not only of our regular year-long efforts, but of the strategic plan itself.

Throughout both this and the next phase of our plan, we aim to be transparent with the entire CWRU community, celebrating our success and soliciting feedback to improve. We look forward to the next leg of the journey.

PROPOSED PHASE II PLANNING TIMELINE

In Phase I of the strategic plan, we established a clear vision, driven by a compelling mission, and supported by a diverse set of ambitious goals. We must now begin to envision the next horizon.

PDC PLANNING PROPOSAL