



# Lincoln University

Reimagining the Legacy: Learn. Liberate. Lead.

Strategic Plan 2018



# Message from the President

Dear Lincoln University Community,



It is with great pleasure that we share Lincoln University's new strategic plan: "Reimagining the Legacy: Learn. Liberate. Lead." The plan is the result of a broadly inclusive, evidence-based process that was designed to honor the past while looking forward to the future. At its core is a focus on student success through reinvestment in our roots as a liberal arts institution. The plan acknowledges that the liberal arts' use of curricular and co-curricular opportunities as the vehicles for honing essential skills like critical thinking, speaking, writing and problem solving remains the best approach for preparing graduates to thrive. This is especially the case given the unprecedented market shifts so characteristic of this global, 21st century knowledge-based economy.

The plan has two broad aims. First, it endeavors to operationalize Lincoln University's distinctive place as a world-class liberal arts institution. This will include maximizing our approach to the liberal arts by reviewing, revising and investing in curricular and co-curricular opportunities and by grounding this education in the historical context of our University. The second aim is to garner the resources needed to achieve our educational goals. The plan highlights objectives related to investments in students, faculty and staff, as well as the diversification of revenue sources.

This plan is structured to lead you through six key areas: the University's history, the mission & vision, strategic themes, the planning process, the planning context and strategic opportunities.

It is exciting to embark on this strategic journey with a high level of support and commitment from faculty, students, staff, alumni and community partners. Together, we will fortify Lincoln University's distinctive niche in the world of liberal arts institutions and will garner the resources needed to achieve our educational goals. As we move into the next chapter in our distinguished University history, I look forward to using this plan as a compass focused toward student success as we all Learn. Liberate. and Lead!

*Sincerely,*  
**Brenda A. Allen**  
*President*

staff photo/Shelley Mix

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# History

## Commitment to Excellence

During its distinguished history, Lincoln University has had 14 presidents:

*John Miller Dickey*  
(1854-1856);  
*John Pym Carter*  
(1856-1861);  
*John Wynne Martin*  
(1861- 1865);  
*Isaac Norton Rendall*  
(1865-1906);  
*John Ballard Rendall*  
(1906-1924);  
*William Hallock Johnson*  
(1926- 1936);  
*Walter Livingston Wright*  
(1936-1945);  
*Horace Mann Bond*  
(1945-1957);  
*Marvin Wachman*  
(1961-1969);  
*Herman Russell Branson*  
(1970-1985);  
*Niara Sudarkasa*  
(1987-1998);  
*Ivory V. Nelson*  
(1999-2011);  
*Robert R. Jennings*  
(2012- 2014); and  
*Brenda A. Allen*  
(2017-present).

*The University's historic campus is located on 422 acres in southern Chester County, Pennsylvania. It also operates an additional location in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania at 3020 Market Street.*

Since its founding in 1854, Lincoln University, the nation's first degree-granting Historically Black College and University (HBCU), has been internationally recognized for its commitment to excellence in scholarship and service. Lincoln University graduates have distinguished themselves in many fields including medicine, science, technology, education, law and the arts. In addition to our more well-known graduates — U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall '30; poet and playwright Langston Hughes '29; the first president of Nigeria, Nnamdi Azikiwe '30; and the first president of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah '39 — Lincoln University and its graduates have participated in the founding of eight U.S. universities and launched the model for what became the U.S. Peace Corps. Lincoln graduates also include the first African American bishop of the United Methodist Church, Roy C. Nichols '41, and the U.S. Navy's first African American female rear admiral, Lillian Fishburne '71. In 1884, the University also produced the first alumni magazine published by any college or university in the United States.

Lincoln University's beginnings can be traced back to its founder, Presbyterian Minister John Miller Dickey; his wife, Sarah Emlen Cresson; and its first two students, brothers James Ralston and Thomas H. Amos. The University was initially chartered as Ashmun Institute in honor of Jehudi Ashmun, the first governor of Liberia, and renamed Lincoln University in 1866 after the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. Since its inception, Lincoln has attracted an interracial and international enrollment from the surrounding community, the region and throughout the world. The University admitted women students in 1952 and formally associated with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1972 as a state-related, co-educational university. Lincoln University is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

***The University remains committed to preserving its distinction as an intellectual and cultural resource for this region and beyond.***



photo/ Bill Hurlburt



# Mission & Vision

## Mission

Lincoln University, the nation's first degree-granting Historically Black College and University (HBCU), educates and empowers students to lead their communities and change the world.

It does so by:

- Providing a rigorous liberal arts education featuring active and collaborative learning;
- Integrating academic and co-curricular programs with the University's distinctive legacy of global engagement, social responsibility and leadership development; and
- Cultivating the character, values, and standards of excellence needed to enable students to become responsible citizens of a global community.

## Vision

Lincoln University will be a national model for both 21st century liberal arts undergraduate education and innovative graduate and professional programs.

From its beginnings, Lincoln University has placed great emphasis on a liberal arts education, one dedicated to students acquiring the knowledge and skills needed for success. But learning at Lincoln has not just been about mastering facts and figures. Rather, a Lincoln education stresses the acquisition of knowledge to develop free, independent and creative thinkers. Further, the educational goals have always favored the use of knowledge and intellectual skills toward leading change in the nation and beyond. This legacy represents the strength upon which the University can continue to build, especially since the educational process at Lincoln speaks well to contemporary calls for college graduates able to thrive in a rapidly changing world. **"Reimagining the Legacy: Learn. Liberate. Lead."** is designed to advance this glorious history in the context of the 21st century. Particular attention will be paid to teaching innovations and more deliberate efforts to develop and hone important intellectual and interpersonal skills. Toward these ends, the plan has two broad aims: (1) to clearly operationalize the University's distinctive education model and (2) to identify the processes, policies and resources needed to realize the educational goals.

# Strategic Themes

## **Theme One:**

### ***Build a Culture that Supports Student Success***

Student success at Lincoln University is defined as supporting students to perform well academically; develop holistically (mind, body, and spirit); and successfully advance to graduate school, service or employment. Graduates will leave Lincoln University with the knowledge, attitudes and competencies needed to be competitive in a global economy and to have a positive impact on their families, their communities, the nation, and the world. HBCUs have a track record of demonstrating that students from all backgrounds can achieve at high levels. Lincoln University will continue its tradition of accepting students of promise and empowering them to achieve their full potential. High academic and social standards, along with outstanding student support, produce student success.

### ***Strategic Objectives:***

1. Using an inclusive process, develop a values statement for the University that describes values in behavioral terms.
2. Connect culture and accountability by defining expectations for both performance and value-driven behaviors for everyone associated with the University — including vendors and partners — and holding everyone accountable, every day.
3. Design and deliver or procure training and professional development programs that support employees in developing skills which reflect institutional values and behavior (e.g. customer service, communication and collaboration, team building).
4. Design reward and recognition programs to bring favorable attention to faculty, staff, students and administrators whose behavior and performance support student success.

## **Theme Two:**

### ***Enhance Academic Quality and Achieve Operational Excellence***

Lincoln University builds upon a glorious past and advances the legacy to “educate for freedom” as envisioned by Horace Mann Bond, the University’s eighth president, in a way that works for the 21st century. The University’s academic and co-curricular programs and services are exceptionally well suited for the students it serves. By focusing on a liberal arts approach featuring high impact practices, investing in areas of strength in the sciences, and investing in faculty growth and development, Lincoln University graduates students who continuously build our reputation. Moreover, Lincoln’s business processes are characterized by operational excellence. The administrative systems, policies, procedures and communication channels work effectively to achieve the mission and vision.

## ***Strategic Objectives:***

1. Develop a strategic enrollment management plan that incorporates both recruitment and retention goals, clarifies the target undergraduate and graduate populations, and identifies the optimal enrollment size to achieve the University's academic and financial goals.
2. Develop a plan for the School of Adult & Continuing Education in Philadelphia that integrates the University's strategic and enrollment goals.
3. Review curricula and syllabi to ensure that general education and major program courses are tied to institutional learning outcomes and include high impact pedagogies.
4. Review and revise, as necessary, academic personnel policies to ensure that faculty hiring, orientation, and tenure and promotion practices support institutional priorities.
5. Invest in faculty development and research opportunities.
6. Continue to enhance faculty governance and develop leadership potential within the faculty and academic administration.
7. Review and revise the performance management system to ensure that employees receive effective and timely feedback on performance.
8. Identify operational issues that most hinder progress in achieving the vision, and work collaboratively to resolve these issues using task forces, process redesign, administrative action, policy change or other tactics.

## ***Theme Three:***

### ***Develop Strategic Partnerships to Leverage Resources and Assets***

Through a myriad of strategic partnerships, Lincoln works with local, regional, national and international partners to develop property, conduct research, solve community problems and contribute to the cultural life of the community. The University's focus on active and collaborative learning using high impact practices is supported by developing partnerships with industry, entrepreneurs, schools, governments and the non-profit sector. The goal: to create opportunities for students to apply what they are learning in the classroom while experiencing the world. Strategic partnerships like public-private partnerships are helping the University diversify its revenue streams while also providing both educational opportunities for students and products or services for the University and the local community. Strategic internal partnerships between divisions and departments, faculty and staff ease the flow of communication within the University and support a work environment that is collaborative, efficient and effective.

## ***Strategic Objectives:***

1. Identify expertise (internally or externally) in designing and implementing public-private partnerships and develop a plan for growth.
2. Develop an institutional structure and process for identifying and evaluating potential partnership, sponsorship and engagement opportunities.
3. Identify three or more partners to enhance professional school options for Lincoln University students.

## **Theme Four:**

### ***Strategically Align Resources to Support Institutional Priorities***

Lincoln University aligns resources with its highest priorities. Strategic spending ensures that every dollar spent supports student success. Organizational structure, policies, procedures and decision-making processes converge to allocate people, money and infrastructure toward projects and initiatives that support the vision. The University is a model of stewardship. Lincoln is prudent in its use of every dollar and opportunity provided by the state, alumni, friends and partners. New and reallocated resources support initiatives that enhance the educational experiences of all students. Lincoln constantly identifies business opportunities that generate new dollars for investment.

#### ***Strategic Objectives:***

1. Review and revise the organizational structure to facilitate communication, collaboration and accountability within and among units.
2. Diversify revenue sources through entrepreneurial activity, fundraising and philanthropic support.
3. Design and implement a process that integrates planning, budgeting and assessment.
4. Enhance the institutional research function and provide professional development to support faculty, staff, students and administrators in using data to inform decisions.
5. Complete a Campus Master Plan that aligns priorities for new construction, facilities renovations, deferred maintenance and space utilization with academic and strategic goals.
6. Increase investments in technology and infrastructure to support the strategic priorities.

## **Theme Five:**

### ***Tell the Lincoln University Story***

Lincoln University's reputation is based upon the quality of its graduates and its history and legacy as an HBCU. Its liberal arts focus promotes social responsibility and global engagement. The University excels not only at producing well-prepared graduates but also at telling its own story. It educates and informs major stakeholders about its accomplishments and successes, which generates goodwill and additional resources to support its vision. Every member of the Lincoln University community understands the vision and mission and tells the story from his or her perspective. The messages that are disseminated are consistent with the University brand and support building its reputation. Telling the Lincoln story builds pride and motivates everyone to do more to achieve results.

#### ***Strategic Objectives:***

1. Develop and implement a strategic marketing and communication plan that is designed to reach and influence all major stakeholder groups, provide greater coherence for the Lincoln University brand and position the University to compete for students, talent and financial resources.
2. Develop strategies for educating and engaging Lincoln students and alumni in telling the story.
3. Develop and implement a strategic advancement plan that is designed to engage all major stakeholder groups, create a culture of philanthropy and position the University for increased philanthropic support and alternative revenue streams.

# The Planning Process

## Structure

In September 2017, President Brenda A. Allen appointed a broadly representative Strategic Planning Council, which included faculty, staff, students, alumni and trustees, to:

- Advise the president on the development, coordination, integration and evaluation of the strategic plan;
- Study and interpret data relevant to the institution and the external environment; and
- Assist in engaging the total institutional community as fully as possible in the planning process and in communicating with key stakeholders.

Three task forces were established to assist with key components of the planning process:

- The Situation Analysis Task Force collected and interpreted data to better understand the planning context and identify strategic issues;
- The Stakeholders Conference Task Force assisted in planning a large group event designed to engage the University's major stakeholders in the planning process; and
- The Outcomes and Measures Task Force developed outcome statements and suggested ways to measure progress toward achieving the mission and vision.

*(The full charge and membership of the Strategic Planning Council are available at [www.lincoln.edu/strategic-plan](http://www.lincoln.edu/strategic-plan).)*

## Data Gathering and Interpretation

Because Lincoln University had completed a planning exercise in 2015 under Interim President Richard Green, this strategic planning process was designed to build on the information and insights gained from that planning exercise and other past efforts. Key concepts identified from previous surveys, internal documents, prior strategic plans and initial interviews with key staff members related to the University's mission, vision and goals were used as a starting point for engaging the campus community in the planning process.

In order to test whether the key concepts identified from the preliminary data-gathering process resonated with the University's stakeholders, a brief online survey was administered to faculty, staff, students, alumni and trustees.

Concurrent with the online survey, the Situation Analysis Task Force collected and reviewed existing internal and external data to identify strategic challenges and opportunities. In addition, student leaders, faculty, and staff were interviewed to develop a comprehensive understanding of Lincoln today and the perspective of stakeholders about its future.

## *Stakeholders Conference*

After the task forces submitted reports to the Strategic Planning Council, the information was used to develop the draft mission, vision, strategic themes and strategic results (outcomes and measures.) The Stakeholders Conference Task Force then helped to plan and facilitate a Stakeholders Conference, which was held Nov. 17, 2017, in the Student Union Building on the Lincoln University campus. The conference engaged nearly 200 major stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, alumni, government officials, community and business leaders, and trustees. They discussed the University's proposed mission, vision, strategic themes and strategic results. The feedback from this session was used to further refine the concepts and develop the first draft of the plan.

# The Planning Context

## *Higher Education Landscape*

### **Small College Survival**

While most institutions of higher education are grappling with the impact of shifting demographics, rising costs and reduced state and federal support on their operations, this climate make small colleges especially vulnerable. Additional characteristics of the University, including it being a semi-private, liberal arts and historically Black institution, provide further stressors. In such an environment, the historical funding model adopted by many small, private, and semi-private liberal arts institutions is particularly challenged.

This model is built on the premise that institutional operating budgets will grow at a slow pace, but remain balanced by complementary revenue growth from tuition increases and steady fundraising. It is further assumed that good stewardship of the resources towards fulfilling the institution mission will allow all such factors to remain stable. In 2017, the Association of Governing Boards for Universities and Colleges (AGB) published a white paper suggesting that the current climate makes it harder to realize this model and is threatening the long-term stability of small institutions. The paper offers alternative models toward promoting lasting fiscal health. Of particular interest are (1) the Distinctive Program Model, which utilizes a unique niche approach to brand, recruit and retain students, and (2) the Expansion Model, which focuses on additional professional or graduate programs to enhance enrollment. Both offer great models that may be applied to Lincoln University as a small, semi-private, liberal arts institution.

### **Focus on Skill Development**

The 21st century economy is best characterized as global, dynamic and knowledge based. Many of the shifts and changes in industry are fueled by rapid advances in science and technology. As a result of these factors, the world is experiencing unprecedented levels of global competition and market disruptions. In response, many higher education experts suggest that universities redouble their efforts to develop and hone students' intellectual and interpersonal skills toward producing graduates able to tool and retool themselves as needed. Current literature suggests that the liberal arts approach is the best method for achieving this end. Among other benefits, a liberal arts education uses curricular and co-curricular opportunities as vehicles for practicing and mastering important skills, such as writing, critical thinking, teamwork, cultural competency and leadership. Central to our strategic goals, the University's liberal arts approach must place great emphasis on the intellectual development of students.

## High Impact Pedagogies

High Impact Pedagogies (HIPs) are instructional approaches that make a significant difference to student persistence, learning outcomes and student success. Such approaches include first-year seminars, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning, service learning, community-based learning, internships, and capstone courses and projects. HIPs positively relate to persistence and grade point averages, higher rates of student-faculty interaction, increases in critical thinking and writing skills, greater appreciation for diversity and higher student engagement. Moreover, students from ethnic-minority backgrounds, lower socio-economic-status and/or with lower academic credentials tend to gain more from these practices than other students. To maximize the success of the students that the University serves, it is crucial that the University create curricular and co-curricular opportunities based upon such powerful instructional approaches.

## Higher Education in Pennsylvania

Lincoln University has been a member of the Commonwealth System of Higher Education since 1972. As a state-related institution, the Commonwealth provides the University with an annual financial appropriation in exchange for offering tuition discounts to students who are residents of Pennsylvania. Nearly 50 percent of all University students are citizens of the Commonwealth. The University's state appropriation represents nearly 25 percent of Lincoln's annual operating budget (an increase from 17.5% in 2012). The University also receives financial assistance for capital projects. In recent years, there has been much debate among state legislators regarding funding the state-related universities which—in addition to Lincoln University—includes Penn State, Pittsburgh and Temple universities. The debates have often caused delays in the passing of the state budget. While there appears great support for Lincoln University at the local and state levels, state investment in higher education is decreasing nationwide. This trend must be considered as the University plans for its strategic investments over the next five years.

## Historically Black Colleges and Universities

A December 2017 report commissioned by the United Negro College Fund highlights the continued positive impact of HBCUs on individuals as well as local and national economies. The report notes that African Americans who graduate from HBCUs fare better personally and financially than those who receive degrees from non-HBCUs. Currently, HBCUs enroll nearly 10 percent and graduate nearly 17 percent of all African Americans attending college—while only representing 3 percent of the nation's higher education institutions. The study reports that HBCUs generate a total economic impact of nearly \$15 billion; for every \$1 million spent by an HBCU, 13 new jobs are created\*. In spite of such data, HBCUs continue to struggle with enrollments, ironically, due to expanded access created by affirmative action. Shrinking enrollments, coupled with small endowments and grant portfolios, are creating financial strains on many Black institutions. The result: crumbling infrastructures, lack of scholarships and declining outcomes in terms of retention and graduation rates. Responses to this issue have included mission creep, reduction in admission criteria and gutted programs as some institutions struggle to garner the resources necessary to stay afloat. As a result, many HBCUs are straining to define their distinctive worth. Clearly defining Lincoln University's contemporary value proposition must become the foundation for its strategic goals.

\* <https://www.uncf.org/news/entry/hbcus-make-america-strong>

# Strategic Opportunities

## *Finances and Enrollment*

As evidenced by five consecutive years of balanced budgets and unqualified opinions on its annual audits, Lincoln University is financially stable. Additionally, the University's asset base—comprised of land, facilities and investments—is relatively large compared to institutions of the same size and character. Further, the University has experienced such steady growth in enrollments that the current student population is the largest in the institution's history.

As a result, the University is now poised to move from being fiscally stable to fiscally healthy. Achieving this goal will require a concerted effort towards identifying new and diverse streams of revenue while balancing enrollment growth with educational resources.

## *Curricular and Co-Curricular*

Surveys, interviews and focus groups confirm that Lincoln University should continue to emphasize its tradition of the liberal arts. Faculty and alumni are especially supportive of this direction. The current curricular and co-curricular opportunities suggest that the University has maintained a liberal arts base. The Institutional Learning Outcomes identified represent many of the essential skills deemed important within the higher education and corporate communities, and many of our students have access to high impact pedagogies, such as study abroad, undergraduate research and internships, which are known to deeply impact learning.

The goal now is to maximize the University's approach. Particular focus must be placed on embedding opportunities to develop and hone essential skills across curricular and co-curricular experiences. Additionally, better integration of high-impact learning opportunities into the overall educational context deserves strategic attention.

## *Technology, Internal Processes and Organizational Structures*

Lincoln University managed to move itself forward over the past five years in spite of turbulent financial and leadership challenges. Austere budgeting practices and reductions in force allowed the University to operate uninterrupted. Faculty and staff came together to ensure delivery of services to students, and best practices such as outsourcing were used to manage daily demands. Through these efforts, the University has maintained effective operations.

The University must now prepare itself for long-term growth. This will require investments in technological and physical infrastructures. Strategic increases in faculty and staff will be needed to better balance the workforce, and we must seek the functional synergies in our organizational structure that are necessary to deliver the highest quality of service to our students.





# Lincoln University

LEARN. LIBERATE. LEAD.

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Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 et seq., and its implementing regulations, 34 C.F.R. Part 106, prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex in the University's programs or activities. It is the expressed policy of Lincoln University to comply with Title IX. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Gerard Garlic, Title IX Coordinator, Room 126B, Lincoln University, 1570 Baltimore Pike, Lincoln University, PA 19352, phone 484-746-0000 or Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, The Wanamaker Building, 100 Penn Square East, Suite 515, Philadelphia, PA 19107-3323, phone 215-656-8541, fax 215-656-8605, email: ocr.philadelphia@ed.gov.

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Lincoln University  
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