

Divine Word College: Strategic Plan for 2021-2024

May 1, 2021 – Approved by Board of Trustees

Mission Statement. Divine Word College, a Roman Catholic seminary in the tradition of the Society of the Divine Word, educates men and women for missionary service as priests, brothers, sisters and laypersons. For this purpose, we offer an education that combines spiritual formation, a liberal arts curriculum, language learning and mission preparation within an environment that teaches and honors the rich cultural diversity of the world. This spiritual, academic, and experiential preparation serves the particular learning needs of our students, promotes their development as whole and responsible persons, and fosters a lifelong commitment to serving God's people (2009).

GOAL A: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Create and implement a coherent assessment protocol to measure student learning and program effectiveness.

[Rationale: DWC is committed to creating and implementing a professional protocol and institutional culture of assessment in the undergraduate and ESL programs to enhance student learning and program effectiveness.]

Objective 1: Participate in the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Assessment Academy.

[Rationale: DWC joined the HLC Assessment Academy as a member of the 2020-2024 cohort. This specialized academy provides a structured, mentor-facilitated program aimed at advancing and accelerating an institution's efforts to assess student learning and program effectiveness.]

Action Step 1.1: Implement Project Update #2 (September 2021) and Project Update #3 (March 2022) during the 2021-2022 academic year.

Responsible: VP for Academic Affairs & Assessment Academy Team.

Target completion: April 2022

Budget: \$7,000 annual fee

Action Step 1.2: Implement Project Update #4 (September 2022) and Project Update #5 (December 2022) during the 2022-2023 academic year

Responsible: VP for Academic Affairs & Assessment Academy Team

Target completion: April 2023

Budget: \$ 7,000 annual fee; Midpoint Roundtable/Consultation \$ 2,500

Action Step 1.3: Implement Project Update #6 (September 2023) and Project Update #7 (March 2024) during the 2023-2024 academic year.

Responsible: VP for Academic Affairs & Assessment Academy Team

Target completion: April 2024

Budget: \$ 7,000 annual fee

Action Step 1.4: Evaluate Assessment Academy implementation in final Impact Report #1 (September 2024) and final Impact Report #2 (December 2024).

Responsible: VP for Academic Affairs & Assessment Academy Team

Target completion: December 2024

Budget: Results Forum \$ 2,500

Objective 2: Create and implement a coherent and integrated assessment protocol across the undergraduate program.

[Rationale: DWC will create a new assessment protocol that represents a more coherent and integrated approach and that provides more efficient infrastructure for the collection, analysis, and reporting of assessment data across the undergraduate program.]

Action Step 2.1: Review degree descriptions and develop Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), Signature Assignments, and Rubrics for all undergraduate programs.

Responsible: VP for Academic Affairs, Assessment Coordinator, Departmental Faculty

Target completion: August 2021

Budget: \$ 1,000 expenses

Action Step 2.2: Implement AQUA / Watermark assessment software for the collection, reporting, and analysis of assessment data.

Responsible: VP for Academic Affairs, Assessment Coordinator, Assessment Committee

Target completion: August 2021

Budget: Initial contract year \$10,000; thereafter \$9,000 annually

Action Step 2.3: Realign PLOs and curricula during annual program reviews to identify mapping deficiencies, improve degree program coherence, and facilitate student achievement.

Responsible: Assessment Coordinator, Department Chairs, Departmental Faculty

Target completion: April 2022, April 2023, April 2024

Budget: \$ 1,000 annually

Action Step 2.4: Submit an Interim Monitoring Report on Assessment to the Higher Learning Commission.

Responsible: VP for Academic Affairs & Interim Monitoring Report Committee

Target completion: November 2022

Budget: \$ 500 expenses

Objective 3: Secure Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA) specialized accreditation for the English as a Second Language (ESL) program

[Rationale: DWC will further professionalize the ESL program through adherence to external accreditation standards and improvements in program curricula and assessments. Attainment of specialized accreditation through CEA will provide for and document improvements in student learning and program effectiveness.]

Action Step 3.1: Submit the ESL Self-Study Document for initial CEA specialized accreditation.

Responsible: IELI Director & CEA Accreditation Coordinator

Target completion: November 2021

Budget: \$ 2,500 fees; \$ 2,500 expenses

Action Step 3.2: Host the CEA visitation team for the DWC campus site visit.

Responsible: VP for Academic Affairs, IELI Director & CEA Accreditation Coordinator

Target completion: April 2022

Budget: \$ 7,500 fees; \$ 1,500 expenses

Action Step 3.3: Implement CEA specialized accreditation report recommendations and action plans during the 2022-2023 academic year.

Responsible: IELI Director & CEA Accreditation Coordinator

Target completion: 2022-2023 academic year

Budget: TBD

GOAL B: ADMISSIONS

Achieve and maintain a total enrollment of 125 students, including 50 SVD candidates.

[Rationale: These numbers represent a sufficient number of students for effective learning in the classroom and sufficient numbers of SVD candidates entering the SVD novitiate.]

Objective 4: While maintaining outreach to all potential students, make a concerted effort to admit underrepresented populations.

(Rationale: Increase enrollment by recruiting certain populations and promoting specific programs, such as the IELI and Good Neighbor Scholarship).

Action Step 4.1: Admit five Hispanic SVD candidates.

Responsible: VP for Admissions

Target Completion: May 2024

Budget: \$5,000

Action Step 4.2: Admit five non-SVD candidates into the Pre-Theology Certificate Program.

Responsible: VP for Admissions

Target Completion: May 2024

Budget: \$5,000

Action Step 4.3: Admit two lay students each year (ESL and undergraduate programs).

Responsible: VP for Admissions

Target Completion: May 2024

Budget: \$5,000

Objective 5: Increase SVD referrals to ten (10) per year.

[Rationale: SVD referrals have dropped sharply the last three years and are one of the best referral sources.]

Action Step 5.1: Invite SVD provincial councils and other select SVD members to Divine Word College for a visit.

Responsible: VP for Admissions
Target Completion: May 2023
Budget: negligible

Action Step 5.2: Include monthly vocation information in all three province newsletters.

Responsible: VP for Admissions
Target Completion: May 2022
Budget: negligible

Action Step 5.3: Vocation Directors to visit 20 SVD parishes each year and attend district meetings within three years.

Responsible: VP for Admissions
Target Completion: May 2024
Budget: \$7,000

Action Step 5.4: Send regular mailings to SVD members to keep vocation ministry a priority for them.

Responsible: VP for Admissions
Target Completion: May 2023
Budget: \$2,000

Action Step 5.5: Provide a program for SVD members on how to assist youth and young adults with discernment.

Responsible: VP for Admissions
Target Completion: May 2022
Budget: \$2,000

Objective 6: Identify future personnel needs for the Admissions Office.

[Rationale: Some team members may leave the team and we need to plan for replacements.]

Action Step 6.1: Identify a timeline for those who plan to leave the admissions team.

Responsible: VP for Admissions
Target Completion: May 2021/May 2022
Budget: negligible

Action Step 6.2: Work with DWC administration and province leadership to identify new personnel.

Responsible: VP for Admissions

Target Completion: May 2021/May 2022

Budget: negligible

Action Step 6.3: Invite new people to consider joining the admissions team.

Responsible: VP for Admissions

Target Completion: May 2022

Budget: negligible

GOAL C: FORMATION AND STUDENT LIFE

Revise and implement the Religious Formation Curriculum.

[Rationale: As a Catholic institution dedicated to the formation of men and women for the missionary service in the Church and in the world, Divine Word College Seminary adheres to the Program of Priestly Formation as developed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops while honoring and preserving the missionary charism of the Society of the Divine Word.

The Religious Formation Program at Divine Word College therefore reflects both the ecclesiastical as well as the missionary characteristics required of a seminary college for missionary service. The updated Religious Formation Program of 2015 outlines the important foundations for implementing a program of formation that meets the needs of the Church, the SVDs, and the individual candidates.

The 2021-2024 Strategic Plan under review seeks to provide clear descriptions and continuity across all formational areas of candidates in line with the goal of meeting their individual formation needs. The goals and objectives of this Strategic Plan are articulated in the context of the DWC core competences (Critical Thinking Acuity, Communication Effectiveness, Intercultural Competence, Social & Global Responsibility, and Missionary Discipleship) and the five facets of the Religious Formation Program (Human, Spiritual, Intellectual, Intercultural Community, and Missionary Ministry). In achieving the above-mentioned goal, the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan aims at the following:]

Objective 7: Develop a descriptive structure for the DWC Religious Formation Curriculum to ensure the clarity of purpose, the articulation of candidate learning outcomes, as well as the relevance of areas of competence and required skills for candidates being prepared for SVD missionary service in the Church and in the world.

[Rationale: The five facets of the religious formation program at DWC must be truly grounded in the Catholic identity and the SVD missionary charism.]

Action Step 7.1: Form five subcommittees of three members to work on each formation facet. Suggested changes to the religious formation curriculum are subject to further reviews, evaluations, and ultimate approval by the Formation and Student Life Committee.

Responsible: VP for Formation and subcommittee coordinators
Target Completion: Spring 2021

Budget: negligible

Action Step 7.2: Formation conferences aimed at addressing specific skills and areas of competence of the candidates for all levels of formation are to be held with specific goals and outcomes being clearly spelled out.

Responsible: VP for Formation

Target Completion: Fall 2021

Budget: negligible

Action Step 7.3: Map core formation topics to formation program outcomes consistent with the college institutional outcomes and the SVD characteristics.

Responsible: VP for Formation

Target Completion: Fall 2021

Budget: negligible

Objective 8: Improve the current assessment instrument in order to provide a more coherent and measurable assessment of the effectiveness of the Religious Formation Program.

[Rationale: The progress of candidates toward achieving the goals and objectives of the religious formation program is concretely evaluated for the purpose of realizing the effectiveness of the formation curriculum.]

Action Step 8.1: Review, critique, and modify the assessment instrument employed in measuring the growth and development of candidates throughout all stages of formation at Divine Word College.

Responsible: VP for Formation

Target completion: Spring 2022

Budget: \$500 (materials and consultation)

Action Step 8.2: Collect and update the data required for continually evaluating the effectiveness of the Formation Curriculum in achieving its goals and objectives.

Responsible: VP for Formation

Target completion: Spring 2022

Budget: negligible

Objective 9: Provide continuing appraisals of how the assessment process is being implemented at all levels/stages of formation.

[*Rationale: Commitment to dialogue, collaboration, and common missionary service is fostered and encouraged among formation staff members at Divine Word College.]*

Action Step 9.1: A workshop for all formation staff members at the beginning of each semester provides a venue for orienting different formation directors responsible for different stages of the DWC formation program toward common goals and implementation strategies.

Responsible: VP for Formation

Target completion: Fall 2022

Budget: \$2,000 for workshops and conferences if necessary

Action Step 9.2: A review session for all formation directors at the end of each semester offers the opportunity for reviewing and evaluating the results of the assessment outcomes to strategize for future plans and implementation.

Responsible: VP for Formation

Target completion: Fall 2022, at the end of each semester

Budget: negligible

GOAL D: OPERATIONS

Advance and protect the physical, operational and financial well-being of Divine Word College through long-term planning and continuous improvement.

[Rationale: Divine Word College is committed to creating the best possible physical environment for higher education. We do this by establishing and committing to inclusive long-term planning and operational efficiency.]

Objective 10: Increase financial communication and reporting between departments, Finance Committee, and Business Office and satisfy any issues or requirements outlined in the annual financial audit.

[Rationale: Communication and information sharing between departments and other key stakeholders is key to building a sound financial plan and audit.]

Action Step 10.1: Organize bi-monthly meetings between Business Office Director and various departments to report and review purchases.

Responsible: VP for Operations, Business Office Director

Target Completion: Annual/Ongoing

Budget: negligible

Action Step 10.2: Create a monthly report of projects that will exceed \$5,000 and submit to the Business Office Director as recommended by the auditor.

Responsible: VP for Operations, Business Office Director

Target Completion: Annual/Ongoing

Budget: negligible

Action Step 10.3: Coordinate with Third Road Management and provide necessary documents as outlined in the contract with TRM.

Responsible: VP for Operations, Business Office Director

Target Completion: Annual/Ongoing

Budget: TBD

Action Step 10.4: Review and report progress toward resolving audit deficiencies with the Finance Committee throughout the year and at the bi-annual Board of Trustees meeting.

Responsible: VP for Operations, Business Office Director

Target Completion: Annual/Ongoing

Budget: negligible

Objective 11: Develop Five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to guide facility improvements and budgeting requests.

[Rationale: Planning for major purchases and improvements is critically important to ensure Divine Word College is systematically constructing, maintaining, and upgrading the community's physical plant while effectively budgeting in a fiscally prudent manner.

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Action Step 11.1: Coordinate with DWC President, Planning Committee and Maintenance Supervisor to determine major projects and prioritize by importance.

Responsible: VP for Operations

Target completion: CIP will be updated annually prior to annual budget sessions.

Budget: negligible

Actions Step 11.2: Create rationale narrative for each Capital Improvement project.

Responsible: VP for Operations

Target completion: CIP will be updated annually prior to annual budget sessions.

Budget: negligible

Action Step 11.3: Determine probable cost for all projects utilizing professional proposals for work and list costs on worksheet.

Responsible: VP for Operations

Target completion: CIP will be updated annually prior to annual budget sessions.

Budget: negligible

Action Step 11.4: Add and update projects to the Capital Improvement Plan annually or as necessary. Share project updates and consult with the Planning Committee throughout the year.

Responsible: VP for Operations

Target completion: CIP will be updated annually prior to annual budget sessions.

Budget: negligible

Action Step 11.5: Share CIP with the Financial Affairs Committee annually and incorporate project costs into the annual budget.

Responsible: VP for Operations

Target completion: CIP will be updated annually prior to annual budget sessions.

Budget: negligible

GOAL E: EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (PRESIDENT, DEVELOPMENT, PR, ALUMNI)

Reaching out, we encourage our friends to support and participate in missionary service.

[Rationale: As Divine Word College prepares students for missionary outreach, it also embodies a missionary presence in our neighborhood and around the world.]

Objective 12: Strengthen the *Divine Word Alumni Association*.

[Rationale: Between 1964 and 2020, more than 1670 students have studied at DWC in the ESL and undergraduate programs; 718 have earned undergraduate degrees. Many thousands more Divine Word alumni have studied at other SVD schools since the first SVD formation program (a postulancy for brothers) was opened at Techny on September 8, 1901. We have contact with only a fraction of alumni. The three SVD provinces of North America ask that DWC serve as the organizational center of a reorganized alumni association.]

Action Step 12.1: Mail a quarterly newsletter to reach out to those who do not have access to email or electronic devices.

Responsible: Alumni Director

Target completion: Spring 2022

Budget: \$3500

Action Step 12.2: Add at least 200 contacts to the database.

Responsible: Alumni Director

Target completion: Spring 2024

Budget: negligible

Action Step 12.3: Complete the selection and appointment of animators for each of the six regions in the U. S and Canada.

Responsible: Alumni Director

Target completion: Fall 2022

Budget: negligible

Action Step 12.4: Launch the new website for the Divine Word Alumni Association including updated directory and missionary stories of lay and religious alumni.

Responsible: Alumni Director, Public Relations Director

Target completion: Fall 2021

Budget: \$5250

Action Step 12.5: Provide opportunities for alumni to gather virtually.

Responsible: Alumni Director

Target completion: Fall 2021

Budget: negligible

Objective 13: Further organize, strengthen and grow our local *DWC Friends*.

[Rationale: Many "local" people have shown their friendship over the years. It is time to cultivate those friendships by more systematically addressing them and recognizing their collaboration. DWC Friends would include trustees, former trustees, people who have been awarded the Donaghey and Matthew 25 awards, FAN Club participants, volunteers, and local benefactors.]

Action Step 13.1: Name a coordinator for inviting and recognizing DWC Friends.

Responsible: College President

Target completion: Fall 2022

Budget: \$10,000 in pt salary

Action Step 13.2: Establish and maintain a contact list of DWC Friends for use when promoting activities at the college.

Responsible: Public Relations Director and DWC Friends Coordinator

Target completion: Fall 2021

Budget: negligible

Action Step 13.3: Enlist the help of SVD confreres from Epworth to invite people to participate in the mission of DWC (e.g., provide a script for presiders to read at the conclusion of Mass that includes brief information on ways for people to be involved and who to call for more information.)

Responsible: DWC Friends Coordinator, Public Relations Director

Target completion: Spring 2023

Budget: negligible

Action Step 13.4: Prepare a printed booklet of frequently asked questions about DWC to help faculty and staff to invite others to be DWC Friends
(Answers are brief and easy to understand. Booklets updated and distributed to all members of the DWC Community on an annual basis.)

Responsible: Public Relations Director and DWC Friends Coordinator,

Target completion: Spring 2022

Budget: \$500

Objective 14: Energize our outreach with new and existing *benefactors*.

[Rationale: Our benefactors have been very generous. In the last several years, they have provided nearly one third of the income to DWC through direct contributions and through return on investments of their gifts.]

Action Step 14.1: Develop and implement a plan for personal visits to long time benefactors and major donors to strengthen our relationships with them.
(Seek collaboration with Executive Dir. of the Chicago Province Development Committee.)

Responsible: Development Director, Associate Development Director

Target completion: Spring 2022

Budget: Approx. \$12,000 already regularly budgeted

Action Step 14.2: Develop a website for Vietnamese language donors to be linked to the DWC website.

Responsible: Development Director

Target completion: Fall 2022

Budget: \$5000

Action Step 14.3: Seek increased collaboration from SVD members and alumni throughout the North American provinces in order to promote SVD missionary outreach and fundraising efforts by attending regional alumni gatherings.

Responsible: Development Director

Target completion: Spring 2023

Budget: Approx. \$2000 already regularly budgeted

Objective 15: Help DWC students to acquire and develop skills for local outreach.

[Rationale: In the future, our students will often be called upon to reach out for local support for their missionary projects. We want to help them develop their skills at meeting the public and cultivating the relationship. Learning to say "hello" and "thank you."]

Action Step 15.1: Prepare DWC students (and local SVDs) to take part in outreach events (All Souls Day, Matthew 25, Meet and Greet, Epworth Country Christmas...).

Responsible: Public Relations Director

Target completion: Fall 2021

Budget: negligible

Action Step 15.2: Encourage students to send personal notes or cards to DWC Friends and benefactors for birthdays (if known), holidays, or just to thank them for supporting DWC.

Responsible: Public Relations Director

Target completion: Spring 2022

Budget: \$1500