



# Framing Our Future

Affirming Our Values, Vision and Aspirations  
for Wake Forest University's Third Century

SEPTEMBER 2023

DRAFT

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# Introduction: Framing Our Future

Wake Forest's bicentennial is within sight. For more than 189 years, this university has adapted to sweeping changes in our world and evolved with purpose to be one of the great institutions of higher education in the country.

The complex issues facing higher education and Wake Forest include financial uncertainty caused by global economic instability, questions about future enrollment trends caused by shifting demographics and the changing expectations of degree-seeking students and their families, evolving pressures on college athletics caused by a new legislative and competitive landscape, and physical space needs caused by aging facilities and infrastructure. These tensions are not new to higher education, and yet the strategies set forth in Wake Forest's most recent strategic plan, completed in 2009, are no longer adequate to guide the institution into the future.

*Sustaining the University's current success will require a strategic approach to leveraging recent investments and partnerships. We are at the beginning of an exciting journey for Wake Forest.*

Framing our Future is our collective vision, formed through hundreds of conversations with more than 1,000 faculty, staff, students, alumni, parents and friends from summer 2022 through summer 2023. In undertaking this unprecedented visioning exercise by the full Wake Forest community, the university affirmed its values and set its aspirations for its third century.

With *Pro Humanitate* as the inspiration, a series of thematic goals emerged into a strategic framework. The strategic framework provides structure to make decisions regarding where to invest to preserve distinctive value and inspire creativity. The goal of this work is to support Wake Forest's mission, enhance its value, underscore the institution's purpose and enable decisive responses to the changing needs of students and society. This process generated a clear collective vision that honors our deeply held values and elevates our ambitions to position Wake Forest to be a catalyst for good in society well into our third century and beyond.

Framing Our Future is a living document. The totality of work captured in these pages is best understood with complementary context and content on a dedicated website, [framework.wfu.edu](http://framework.wfu.edu).



# Who We Are and Who We Will Become

Wake Forest University is committed to being a community of students, faculty, staff and alumni from diverse backgrounds, lived experiences and perspectives. We seek to create and sustain an equitable, inclusive environment where all can live, learn, belong and thrive across our institution and beyond.

*Our motto, Pro Humanitate, calls upon the entire University community to engage in the fundamental questions about what it means to be human. It invites us to use our ideas, knowledge, talents and compassion on behalf of humanity in all its difference and diversity — in short, to be catalysts for good.*

**Wake Forest's identity, who we are, is defined by strong commitments to:**

- Educate the whole person
- Sustain a strong liberal arts curriculum
- Serve our undergraduate, graduate and professional school students to ensure their personal and professional success
- Generate new knowledge that benefits humanity through research, scholarship and creative expression
- Recognize the roles of teacher and scholar as interdependent, each contributing to excellence in teaching, learning and the generation of new knowledge
- Sustain an environment that values the critical role of student mentorship by faculty and staff
- Compete at the highest levels of college athletics
- Continue the work needed to provide greater access and opportunity to success



through equitable learning, living and working environments

- Emphasize the development of leadership, character and integrity
- Teach and model the importance of democratic process, civil discourse and dialogue across differences
- Embody *Pro Humanitate*, and call Wake Foresters as individuals and Wake Forest University as a community to take action consistent with this belief.

**The University will become a catalyst for good in society by extending those commitments into our third century and becoming a recognized national model for:**

- Graduating leaders with integrity and courage, across disciplines and professions, who embrace evidence-based debate, open dialogue and critical thinking;
- Innovation in curricular, co-curricular, experiential learning, and personal and professional development;
- Excellence in defined scholarship and research areas across our academic programs and partnerships that address pressing problems facing society;
- Acting on our commitment to ensuring inclusive excellence as a powerful catalyst for learning and a community strength; and
- Entrepreneurial partnerships that advance Wake Forest's mission.



# Shared Vision, Unique Value Proposition and Thematic Goals

Our shared vision of Wake Forest as a catalyst for good in society builds on a deep-seated, shared belief that our University community is distinct in embodying its motto. *Pro Humanitate* illuminates our purpose, animates our values and calls our community to seek a meaningful role in the world. *Pro Humanitate* is central to our future. Our unique value proposition provides the compelling “why” of Wake Forest:

*Wake Foresters will embody Pro Humanitate at home and in the world.*

This value proposition guided the articulation of **three thematic goals** that affirm Wake Forest’s unique place within the landscape of higher education and focus our future investment and exploration.

- Wake Forest will be a lifelong learning community that calls all to develop their full potential to contribute in a diverse and complex world.
- Wake Forest will foster a community of inquiry through research, scholarship and creative work that transcends boundaries to address the challenges facing humanity and our world.
- Wake Forest will build meaningful, mutual partnerships to honor our commitment to the well-being of our local, regional and global communities.

Each of the thematic goals provides inspiration for who we will become, expressed as strategic aims, to be applied to all parts of the University and to grow over time as new ideas and initiatives are identified.

THEMATIC GOAL  1

# Community of Learning

Strong, equitable learning communities nurture undergraduate, graduate and professional student growth. We center the importance of the whole student by taking into account the many ways and the varying pace with which individuals develop over the course of their education — both inside and outside of the classroom.

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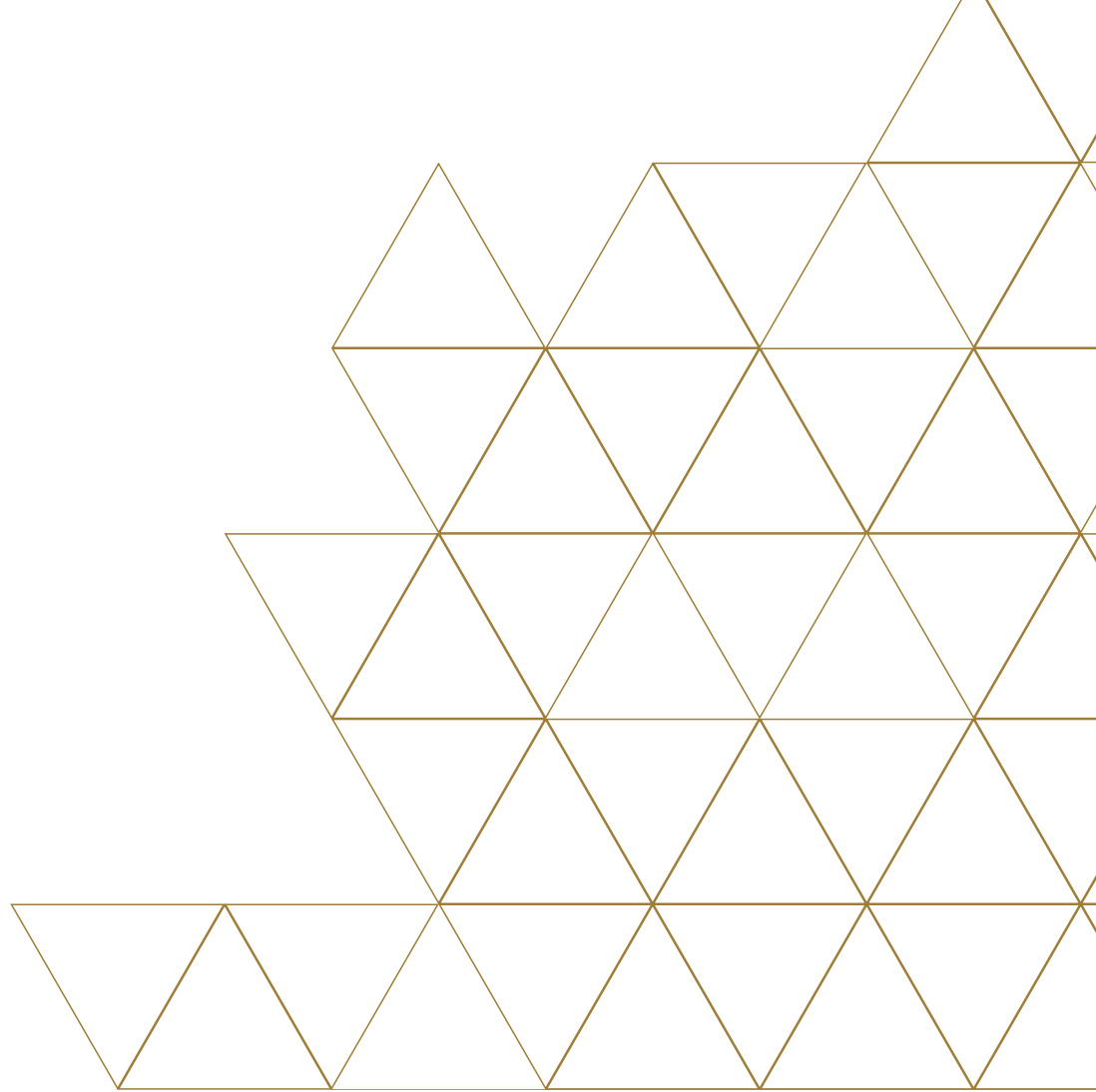
## STRATEGIC AIMS

### AIM 1.1

Attract, create and promote a diverse and inclusive learning community that provides all students with equitable access and opportunity for success and belonging.

#### Initial Action Steps

- Expand our financial aid resources so that becoming part of the Wake Forest learning community is financially accessible for all admitted students.
- Fully adopt Swarbick’s Eight Dimensions of Wellness model as a framework for institutionalizing our emphasis on educating the whole student and serving as a lens through which we contemplate future actions as we frame our future.
- Establish new undergraduate orientation programs for first-year and transfer students that use a developmental framework that intentionally connects students with the web of resources available to support their journey and enable them to thrive.
- Activate a robust residential model that promotes dialogue across differences, increases faculty-staff-student interactions and expands learning to enhance the academic and social integration of first-year students into college life through the Residential Commons initiative.



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STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK SEPTEMBER 2023







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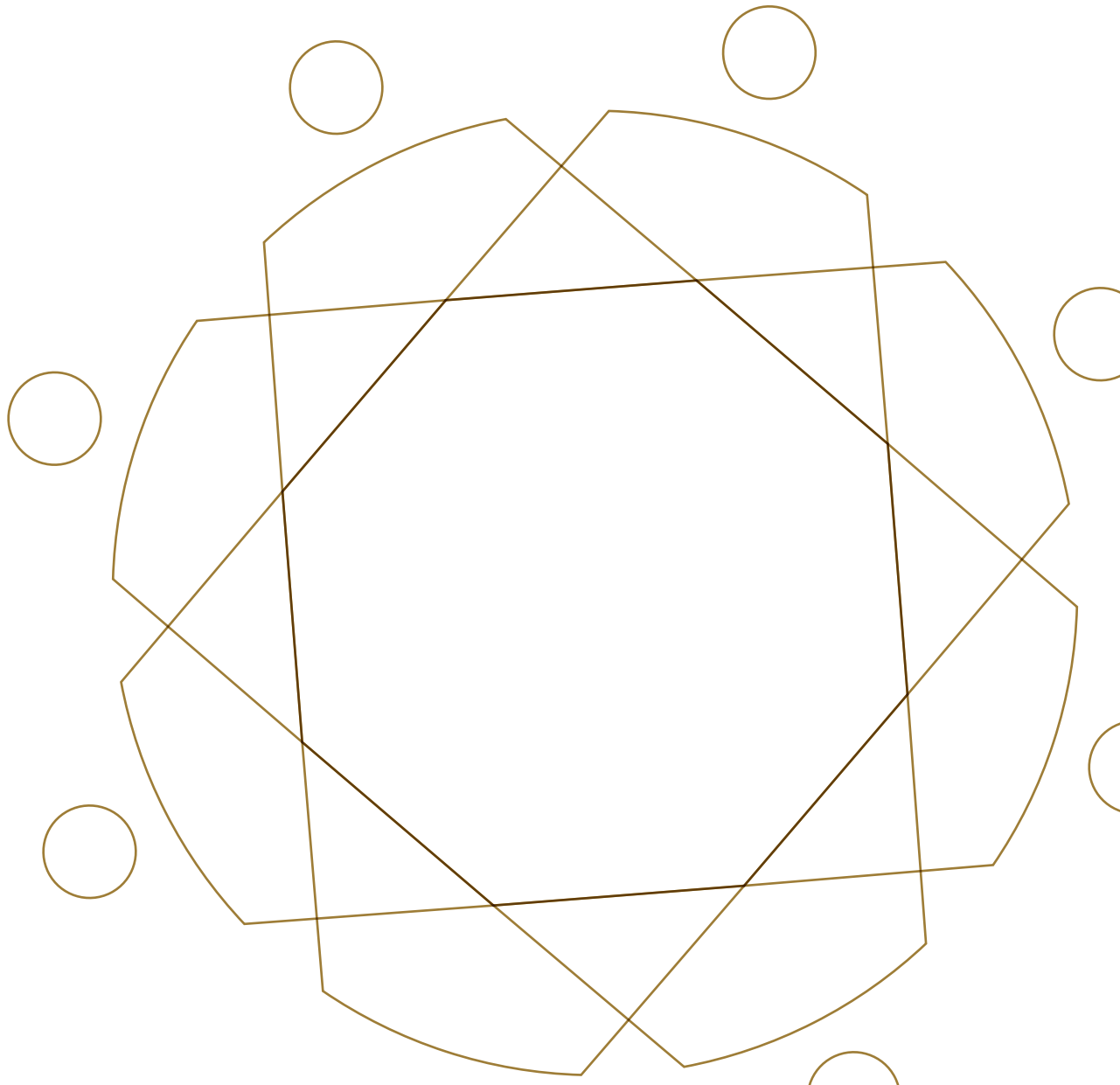
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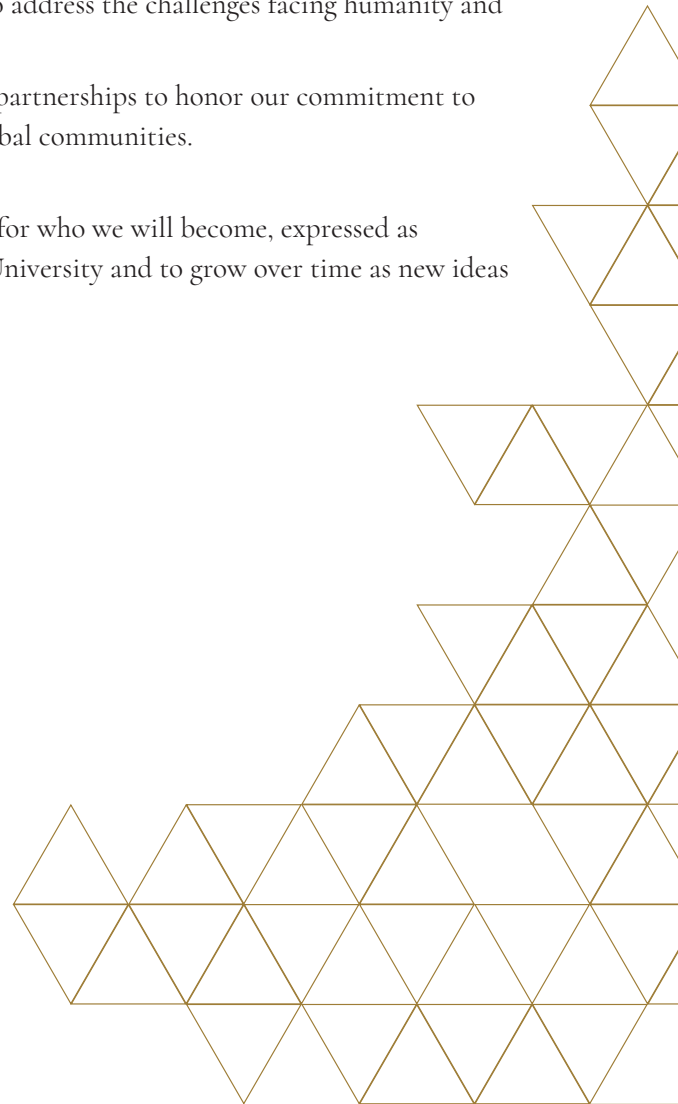
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- Activate a robust residential model that promotes dialogue across differences, increases faculty-staff-student interactions and expands learning to enhance the academic and social integration of first-year students into college life through the Residential Commons initiative.
- Update our residential model for second- through fourth-year students to reflect our students' needs relative to academic success, belonging, wellbeing and postgraduation success.
- Create graduate and professional student programming and support systems that bridge programmatic boundaries and foster affinity, belonging, integrity and success.