



operation **REFRESH**

Briefing:

Academic Excellence

Refreshing the strategic plan 2011-2016

Our community can take pride in recent progress on objectives established during the 2007 strategic planning process. We come together now to reflect on that progress and to begin a conversation about Mount Mary's future: How as a community can we not only extend but elevate our work to carry forward the mission of our College in the most meaningful ways?

Rationale and timeline

At the April 2010 College Forum, the 2007-2012 strategic plan's six initiatives were reviewed and repositioned within five new areas – Academic Excellence, Campus Renewal, Student Success, Community Impact, and Financial Vitality – with three critical factors (diversity, Catholic identity, and women's leadership) integral to all five areas. Progress in each of these areas enables us to update our planning and to lay the groundwork for an upcoming Higher Learning Commission review and a comprehensive fundraising campaign.

Operation Refresh makes possible accelerated but thoughtful planning through multiple participatory platforms for dialogue: campus convenings, interviews with stakeholders, online surveys, and a dedicated website with a confidential email comment link.

The outcome will be a robust scaffold – vision, priority initiatives, strategy – for review by the Board of Trustees in late October and ready for building out detailed goals and objectives going forward.

Relevant initiatives from the current strategic plan

Goal 1:

Develop new academic programs

Goal 2:

Enhance current academic programs

- Collaborate with other colleges in academic programming/course offerings in three departments to help reduce low enrollment courses.
- Enhance global initiatives, including study abroad, to promote and support our vision to educate women to transform the world.
- Identify, develop, and create course/program delivery offerings/format by 25% to increase student access (e.g., online, satellite campuses, weekend, evening, etc.).
- Extend reading specialist license to Level II.
- Increase number of students to engage in undergraduate research by 15%.
- Reduce the percentage of total credits taught by part-time faculty from 35% to 25%.
- Increase faculty development opportunities for teaching and learning.

Goal 3:

Address technology issues

- Create and implement a discipline-specific faculty development program in pedagogical uses of technology.

Goal 4:

Strengthen ongoing communication and involvement between academic departments and admission

- Meet with each academic department annually.
- Provide quarterly report summarizing enrollment division initiatives and activities.

Goal 5:

Attract, retain, and support a diverse, highly qualified faculty, administration and staff

- Market Milwaukee as a diverse community to applicants by providing a packet of information about neighborhoods, religious institutions, and community organizations that embrace diversity and multiculturalism.
- Identify faculty contacts that would be willing to answer applicants' questions regarding religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity at both Mount Mary and the greater Milwaukee metropolitan area.
- Review faculty salaries based on AAUP benchmarks for Category IIB; raise salaries as budget permits.



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Trends

• Rising cost of a college education

According to the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, average college tuition and fees have risen by 440 percent over the past 25 years – more than 4 times the rate of inflation and almost twice the rate of medical care.

• Ongoing economic uncertainty

The economic crisis has affected higher ed. As students' financial needs have increased, endowment values have declined, and many institutions have faced budget cuts in personnel and programming to make ends meet.

• Changing demographics

The student body on American college campuses will continue to become more racially diverse, older and more female over the next decade, according to projections from the U.S. Department of Education.

• Increasing lack of student preparedness

Many entering students continue to arrive underprepared for college-level coursework. First-generation college students especially are anticipated to need additional academic support.

• Rise of for-profit higher ed institutions

The Career College Association expects that for-profit colleges will be educating 15 percent of all college students by 2020, compared with 7 percent now.

• Continued pervasive nature of technology

Trends identified as key drivers of technology adoptions from 2011 to 2016 include these – the ability to work, learn and study whenever and wherever; cloud-based technologies and decentralized IT support; collaborative work by students; more cross-campus collaboration between faculty and departments.

• Increasing demand for alternative delivery systems and around-the-clock services

Students seem to want educational access 24 hours a day, seven days a week and expect on-demand access to research tools, podcasts, online library resources and electronic textbooks. Flexible scheduling alternatives such as satellite locations and weekend/night/online delivery of courses and services address the needs of all students, including those already in the workforce.

• Increasing calls for accountability

Congress and other watchdog groups are demanding measures to ensure that colleges and universities fulfill their promises relative to graduation, placement rates, learning outcomes, student debt load, and board accountability.

• Increasing pressure to commit to sustainability goals

The sustainability movement is transitioning from facilities to the curriculum and, now, to total institutionalization. The Presidents' Climate Commitment (signed now by nearly 700 colleges) has accelerated the call to action.

• 21st century learning competencies require educators to rethink what is taught and how

The character of knowledge is changing, from where we collect it (from traditional sources to open sources), to when we gather it (always), to how we gather it (in personal, individualized ways).

A listing of sources for the above material can be found at www.mtmary.edu/operationrefresh.htm

Institutional Strengths & Challenges

Strengths

- Educate for a lifetime (not a “quick fix” approach)
- Explicit focus on values and intentional reflection of one’s values
- Social justice integrated into curriculum
- Dedication and accessibility of faculty to students
- Accomplished faculty/quality teaching
- Looks and “feels” like a traditional college
- Small class size

Challenges

- Conservative mindset (this is how we’ve always done things)
- State of classroom facilities in terms of IT and other infrastructure
- Lack of support for faculty development
- Lack of electronically supported instruction including online and distance learning
- Proportion of part-time faculty
- Lack of college readiness among some students
- Full-time faculty are spread thin

Sources: “Operation Refresh” stakeholder interviews, July 19–29, 2010 and “Claiming the Future” summary SWOT analysis, 3/23/07.





Key Performance Indicators

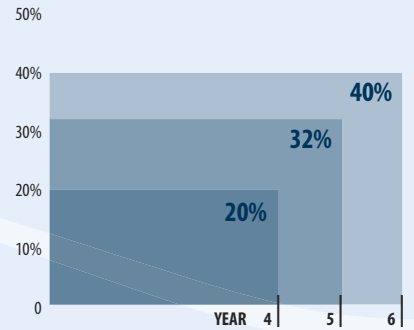
A key performance indicator (KPI) is a metric or way of evaluating some aspect of performance. Such measures are commonly used to help an organization define and evaluate how successful it is, typically in terms of making progress toward its long-term organizational goals. KPIs answer the question, “What is really important to us and/or to our stakeholders?”

Mount Mary Students

Admissions acceptance rate	58.9%
Average ACT of accepted students	19
Academic preparedness of entering first-year undergraduates: % in top quartile of high school graduating class	35%
Average class size	13.9
Student to faculty ratio	9:1
First-year retention rate	68.2%

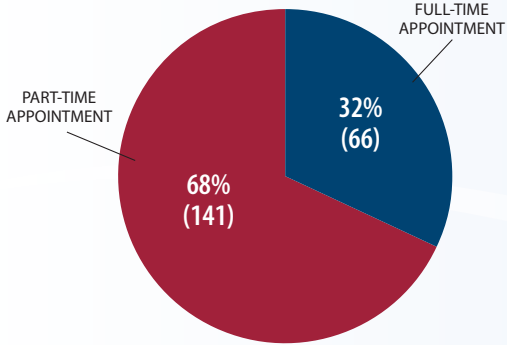
Graduation Rates for 2003 Cohort

4-year graduation rate	20%
5-year graduation rate	32%
6-year graduation rate	40%

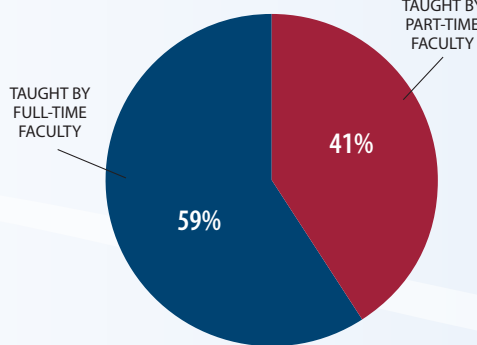


Mount Mary Faculty

Faculty Appointments: (207 Total Faculty)



Percentage of Classes Taught by Full-Time vs. Part-Time Faculty



Faculty Salary — Average by Rank

Professor	\$63,599
Associate Professor	\$53,796
Assistant Professor	\$45,725
Instructor	\$39,781

Faculty Holding Terminal Degrees in their Field

Full-time faculty (41 of 66)	62%
Part-time faculty (34 of 141)	24%

Source: IPEDS 2009-2010



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Benchmarking

Benchmarking is a process relatively common in the for-profit world undertaken for the purpose of evaluating various aspects of a business in relation to best practice, typically within a company's own industry. In recent years, benchmarking has been adopted by governments and nonprofits, including higher education institutions. In its simplest form, benchmarking is just a way to gauge one's own performance against that of others considered to be similar (peer) or, in some way, improved (aspirant).

Peer and Aspirant Institutions for Mount Mary

Research to identify peer and aspirant institutions to Mount Mary College included data compiled by Hanover Research Council (an independent research organization) in 2008 as well as 2009-2010 NSSE

and IPEDS comparison schools. This pool of institutions is intended to offer possible points of comparison to Mount Mary College to assist in better understanding its own operations as well as to glean best practices from others.

Peer institutions were selected based on similarities to Mount Mary: geographical location (urban or very close to urban), student profile (% Pell eligible, average ACT, and ethnicity), retention and graduation rates. This process generated a list of peer institutions that includes the following institutions:

- **Alverno College** (Wisconsin)
- **Columbia College** (South Carolina)
- **Ursuline College** (Ohio)
- **La Roche College** (Pennsylvania)
- **College of St. Elizabeth** (New Jersey)

Aspirant institutions were selected based on higher numbers in at least two of the following three areas: average ACT scores, retention rates, and graduation rates. Other considerations were diversity of students and percentage of Pell eligible students. Aspirant institutions have student bodies similar to Mount Mary College, but these institutions are more successful in recruiting academically better prepared students; they also are more successful in graduating a higher percentage of those students. This process generated a list of aspirant institutions that includes the following institutions:

- **Mary Baldwin College** (Virginia)
- **Cedar Crest College** (Pennsylvania)
- **Brenau University** (Georgia)

Current College Activities Involving Academic Excellence

- Faculty provide academic and professional leadership at the regional, national, and international level.
- The curriculum integrates service learning, leadership, and social justice to actively align departmental goals and objectives as well as learning outcomes with mission.
- Innovative study abroad programs, primarily developed and led by faculty, support students' curricular needs for short-term experiences.
- Academic environment balances professional and liberal arts studies, answering student desire for clear career paths while sustaining the arts and sciences core.
- Dynamic graduate programs expand professional and career opportunities.
- Faculty embrace mission as a curricular component and work collaboratively. Examples include the team-taught study abroad course "Women, Peace, and Conflict" (bringing together History, Behavioral Science, and Fashion) and the cross-disciplinary art and science project resulting in student artwork published in the *Journal of Chemical Education*.
- Students are provided with scholarly opportunities through a wide range of programs and honor societies.

Best Practices

More than 20% of last May's graduates participated in a study abroad experience. This strong participation reflects the quality and range of offerings, and it demonstrates the commitment of faculty to expanding – globally – student horizons and worldviews.

While study abroad has become a staple at most four-year institutions, the Mount Mary program is distinctive. It intentionally integrates not only curricular subject matter but also shapes each experience around the institutional mission of social justice.

Attuned to the demographics of its student body, the College offers a mix of formats (short-term as well as full semester or yearlong), study sites and subject matter. What factors contribute to the success of this programming? It is tied to the academic core and to the mission, elevating student learning to exceed 21st-century requirements. Faculty are integrally involved in conceptualizing study abroad offerings, and programming is responsive to constraints on students' time and flexibility as well as their interests.



What if... Where might Mount Mary be in 2020?

Things to include in our vision might be:

- We are known for our outstanding faculty, intellectual vitality, and an array of degree programs that contour the scholarly, and communitarian, aspirations of our state, our region, and beyond.
- Our faculty are selectively recruited nationally as well as regionally. They are distinguished by their strong academic preparation, vision, and leadership. They serve as leaders of discourse within our community, and they model the highest traditions of intellectual rigor and enlightened vision for their students.
- The efforts of our dedicated faculty and the achievements of our outstanding students and graduates elevate and sustain the College's reputation as a center of intellectual creativity in the service of humanity. Mount Mary is recognized for its strong role in regional initiatives for entrepreneurship, design, and health care.
- Complemented by expertise in, and application of, state-of-the-art instructional technique and technology, the Mount Mary undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs in 2020 are recognized for inspiring student success and creating potent contributions to the region's vitality.
- Other?