

The
Liberal Arts
↗ in Action

A STRATEGIC DIRECTION
FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Carleton ↗ **2033**



“The College recently completed a five-year transition to a geothermal heat pump system that allowed us to convert all of our campus energy usage from steam to geothermal energy. To me, these geothermal wells make the Bald Spot a perfect image for Carleton: a pleasant, unassuming, somewhat quirky place that has enormous reserves of energy and power hidden beneath the surface.”

—PRESIDENT ALISON BYERLY

PREFACE

The *Carleton 2033* Strategic Direction defines and reinforces the distinctive elements of excellence that will ensure Carleton's continued success in the future. It positions Carleton as not just an exemplar but a champion of the best of liberal arts education.

The goals and actions outlined here flow from three core values that inform every aspect of the Carleton experience: community, curiosity, and impact. These core values chart a lifelong journey of discovery for Carls, from the moment they become part of an inclusive community, through four years of academic exploration and social development, into a future of continued growth, engagement, and impact.

These three pillars form the foundation of Carleton's academic excellence. Increasing the competitiveness of our financial aid program and improving access ensures that we will be able to bring the best students to Carleton, regardless of their family income.

Seeding innovation and interdisciplinarity in the curriculum ensures continued creativity and growth in the academic program. Strengthening career preparation and fostering continued alumni engagement reinforces the lifetime benefits of the extraordinary liberal arts education offered at Carleton.

A Carleton education is not just about absorbing information—it is about using what you have learned, and turning knowledge into action. The strategic priorities defined in this plan will cultivate the qualities that prepare Carls to explore, engage, and ultimately transform their world.



President Alison Byerly

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INTRODUCTION

Carleton in 2023

Carleton embarks upon this strategic direction from a position of great strength. Nationally recognized as one of the country's top liberal arts colleges, we have maintained a steady focus on the key elements that contribute to that distinction, with academic excellence as the North Star guiding our efforts.

We have seen record applications for admission in recent years, with continued high quality and increasing diversity within the student body. The caliber of our faculty continues to be outstanding: in addition to maintaining their strong reputation for excellent teaching, they have garnered record amounts of grant funding, reflecting their strong research profile and creative accomplishment. The extraordinary dedication of our staff enables a rich co-curricular experience and peer-leading levels of participation in high-impact activities such as study abroad, service learning, and academic support.

The robust learning environment Carleton provides leads to strong outcomes for students, with extremely high retention and persistence, and high reported levels of student satisfaction with instruction, sense of community, and the success of the College in generating intellectual excitement.

The College's financial position is equally strong, with an endowment that topped \$1 billion following the successful Every Carl for Carleton campaign that concluded in 2021. That campaign brought many visible benefits to the College, including the creation of new scholarships, the Music and Performance Commons addition to the Weitz Center for Creativity, the construction of Evelyn M. Anderson Hall in 2020, and the opening of the renovated building now known as Hasenstab Hall in 2022.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the hard work and dedication of our faculty and staff, the responsibility and resilience of our students, and the support of the extended community allowed us to return to campus quickly and maintain a safe environment for learning. At the same time, the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis in 2020 generated important self-reflection within the Carleton community about racism and equity not just in our world, but on the Carleton campus. The completion and approval of the Community Plan for Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (IDE Plan) in April 2022 reflects significant and ongoing effort and commitment to principles of equity throughout our community.

The Challenges

Balanced against these strengths, however, is our recognition that we undertake this plan at a critical time for higher education, in the context of a world with many political, economic, and social challenges.

Though we managed well through the unprecedented stresses of the pandemic, it is important to acknowledge that those stresses have by no means disappeared. The continued impact of the learning loss experienced by students who are reaching college age, and the anxiety and disruption experienced by this entire generation, will be felt for years to come. More broadly speaking, a negative trend in student mental health that predated the pandemic has only worsened during this time. In April 2023, U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy called youth mental health needs “the defining public health crisis of our time.”

The changing demographics of the country, and a projected decline in the number of high school graduates, have already begun to depress college and university enrollments nationwide. The influential research of Carleton economics professor Nathan Grawe, in his 2018 book *Demographics and Demand in Higher Education*, highlights the likely impact of these changes on the higher education marketplace, and the resulting increase in competition among schools for a dwindling number of students.

The high cost of providing a quality education continues to be a barrier for many students, and a concern for families, lawmakers, and the general public. Colleges and universities rely on the contributions of highly educated and skilled employees, whose salaries are the largest item in most colleges’ budgets. Increased expectations for student support services, rising costs of technology, greater compliance demands, and competition among schools to provide cutting-edge academic, residential, and recreational spaces have all contributed to tuition and fee costs that have risen more rapidly than wages in other sectors. Federal and state tuition support for students in the form of Federal Pell Grants and state grants have also not kept pace with inflation. Hence, all but the wealthiest families must look carefully at college costs when making decisions about where—or even whether—to send their students to college.

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INTRODUCTION

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In this context, it is not surprising that a recent Gallup poll shows confidence in higher education down sharply in the last few years, with only 36 percent of Americans expressing “a great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence in higher education. Legislative support for colleges and universities continues to decline across the political spectrum.

While questions about the practical value of a liberal arts degree are not new, a new narrative about college degrees as a costly barrier to employment is reflected in programs such as a recent executive order in Pennsylvania eliminating four-year degree requirements for the majority of state jobs. A 2022 study of employment trends notes that some 46 percent of middle-skill and 31 percent of high-skill occupations reduced degree requirements between 2017 and 2019.

The rapidly expanding role of technology in every sphere of life has strengthened assumptions about the superior relevance and value of STEM degrees, a perspective reinforced with articles like the *Washington Post*’s widely noted article on “most-regretted” college majors. Moreover, the rapid evolution of artificial intelligence (AI) and large language models like ChatGPT not only impacts teaching and learning at schools, colleges, and universities—it raises questions about whether some of the skills students develop as part of a liberal arts education, such as writing and quantitative analysis, could become less marketable in the face of a changing employment environment.

Compounding this general uncertainty, attacks on academic freedom have become part of the political landscape, with legislators in Florida, Texas, and elsewhere seeking to limit or ban course content related to race, gender, and other topics at colleges and universities, while undermining norms of academic governance that protect the independence of academic research and teaching. This movement represents an enormous threat to the very mission of colleges and universities and is part of an alarming diminution of respect for science, education, and knowledge more generally.

The Commitment

These challenges, while significant, do not diminish our confidence in Carleton's mission. On the contrary, they lead us to conclude that Carleton must be even more explicit about the critical value of the liberal arts education we offer. Indeed, the broader challenges facing society as a whole, such as slowing climate change, reducing economic inequality, sustaining democracy, or managing the impact of AI, can only be addressed through precisely what Carleton seeks to provide: a combination of STEM and humanistic thinking, a willingness to explore linkages between social science and art, and an emphasis on the kind of collaborative problem-solving that takes place within an engaged and committed community.

Carleton as an institution has an important role to play in this complex landscape. However strong we may be as an individual college, we cannot succeed without a strong higher education ecosystem around us, and without public confidence in the value of a broad liberal arts education. While some colleges and universities are of necessity inwardly focused as they struggle with enrollment declines or significant financial challenges, a college of Carleton's strength and reputation can afford to be a leader in countering some of these trends.

The strategic direction outlined here positions Carleton to serve as not just an exemplar but as a champion of the best of liberal arts education. It defines the distinctive elements of excellence that make a Carleton education exceptional and invites Carls to be part of an active journey of exploration and discovery that lasts a lifetime.

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INTRODUCTION

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The goals and actions outlined here reflect three core values that distinguish Carleton: community, curiosity, and impact. These in turn shape the nine primary goals of the plan, and the twenty-seven recommended actions that will turn those goals into reality. Together, these values chart a lifelong course for Carls, one that leads from admission, through transformative academic and social development, into a future of continued growth, engagement, and impact on the world.

While our values remain constant, the strategies that make Carleton excellent in 2023 are not the same as the goals and actions that will lead to excellence in 2033. The goal of this plan is to set in motion ongoing processes of experimentation and change that will ensure that Carleton continues to advance in the decade ahead.

How will these values shape the Carleton of 2033?

First, we will ensure that all Carleton students feel welcomed into a community that is grounded in equity, inclusivity, and respect. At a time when we seek to attract students from a wide range of backgrounds, and with the mental health and wellness of all students a high priority, an equitable and supportive community is a critical foundation for success at Carleton. We will work to expand financial aid and provide resources to ensure that all students have access to the distinctive opportunities that Carleton offers.

Second, we will foster continued academic excellence at Carleton by cultivating its most distinctive component: curiosity. The intellectual breadth of our faculty, and the deep and genuine curiosity of our students are the key ingredients of our academic strength. Carleton is a place where faculty love to teach and students love to learn. This strategic direction seeks to ensure the continuation of that special DNA by supporting innovation on the part of faculty and exploration on the part of students.

This focus on curiosity and experimentation will also strengthen our leadership in sustainability as we work to integrate our campus sustainability commitment with academic approaches to environmental studies and climate change, creating a living laboratory for environmental education on our campus.

Third, we will focus and deepen our efforts to prepare students for lives of impact and meaning after they leave Carleton. Our location provides many opportunities for students to actively explore and learn from the issues facing our campus and local communities, while our robust programs for off-campus study encourage global engagement. At the same time, integrating programs of career exploration across campus, and making better use of the connections and advice our alumni can provide, will strengthen our case for the lifelong benefits of a liberal arts education. Finding new ways to engage our dedicated alumni will also ensure their continued connection and support.

We recognize that accomplishing the ambitious goals outlined here will require energy, resources, and support from across the Carleton community. We know that everyone is already working hard toward the success of the College: our outstanding faculty; our dedicated staff; our loyal alumni, trustees, and parents; and the talented students who are the reason we are all here. At the same time, we know that Carleton is a place that is never content to rest on its laurels and is always eager to become a better version of itself.

In her commencement address to each year's graduating class, Carleton President Alison Byerly has commented on the importance of the place where the community gathers for that ceremony, noting the Bald Spot's storied history and its new significance as the anchor of the College's innovative geothermal energy system. She has said: "To me, these geothermal wells make the Bald Spot a perfect image for Carleton: a pleasant, unassuming, somewhat quirky place that has enormous reserves of energy and power hidden beneath the surface."

This strategic direction seeks to tap some of that hidden power, release some of that potential energy, and allow Carleton to become, not different, but even more fully Carleton in the years to come.

Community

Carleton will invite students, faculty, and staff into an equitable community of belonging where everyone can fully access the opportunities of a Carleton education.



Carleton has always prided itself on building community without conformity, welcoming students whose varied passions, interests, and personalities are valued for their distinctiveness. Our approach to education is grounded in an understanding of community as the foundation for learning, and a recognition that students learn from each other as well as from their faculty and staff mentors. For Carleton,

continued academic excellence means offering an education that is accessible, engaging, and transformative for all students.

We recognize that for some students, there are barriers to accessing a Carleton education and taking advantage of all the opportunities that Carleton offers. We know that students who come from a wide range of backgrounds and life



experiences may feel excluded from the sense of connection and belonging that defines the Carleton experience for others. Our faculty and staff, too, need to feel equally seen and valued, as every member of this community plays an important role in the education of our students.

The Community Plan for Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (IDE Plan) that Carleton completed

and approved in the spring of 2022 laid the groundwork for addressing many of these issues. Building on those commitments, we have identified additional actions that will support students, faculty, staff, and alumni in developing a lifelong connection to the multiple communities that make up a diverse, inclusive, and supportive learning environment.



GOAL ONE

A Carleton education
will be fully accessible
to students from
all backgrounds
and income levels.

ACTIONS

Action 1

We will expand no-loan financial aid to a wider income band, and lower loan levels for all students.

Strategy 2.1.1 of the IDE Plan called upon the College to examine its financial aid policies and seek ways to reduce the financial burden on students. While Carleton students have levels of indebtedness significantly lower than national averages, we recognize that for students with the lowest family incomes, any level of debt can be difficult to manage. Some of Carleton's liberal arts college peers have limited or eliminated loans from their financial aid packaging, making our financial aid offers less competitive for students with high levels of financial need.

As recommended by the May 2023 report of the Financial Aid Working Group, Carleton will establish a new policy of no loans for families with incomes of less than \$100,000 (or 150 percent of the median U.S. household income). This would eliminate loans for approximately 24 percent of Carleton students.

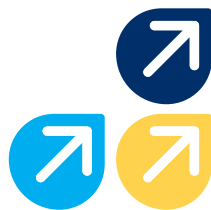
Further, for all students on financial aid, we will reduce the loan burden for income thresholds above \$100,000 to a maximum of \$3,000 per year. This will decrease the average loan burden for the remaining 31 percent of financial aid recipients by approximately \$2,875 annually and \$11,500 over a student's four years.

ACTIONS

Action 2

We will achieve greater socioeconomic breadth with both an increased percentage of low-income (Pell-eligible, DACA, and undocumented) students through the Carleton Access Initiative and a continued commitment to middle-income families.

We will expand the socioeconomic diversity of the student body by increasing the number of students in the lower end of the overall income range while maintaining the middle-income target at 30 percent to avoid the barbell (bi-modal) family income distribution that is often seen at highly selective institutions. As detailed in the report of the Financial Aid Working Group, this would involve increasing the percentage of the lowest family incomes in the student body from the current 8.7 percent to 10 percent over four years. Expanding the number of students from lower-income families will also increase the total number of students on financial aid at Carleton, from the current 56 percent to approximately 58 percent. Increasing the lowest-income students while maintaining our middle-income percentage will require additional resources. The Carleton Access Initiative fundraising drive already underway will be one important source of funding for this goal.



We will achieve greater socioeconomic diversity in our student body with a continued commitment to middle-income families.

Action 3

We will implement new admissions recruiting strategies, including elimination of legacy preference, to support our diversity efforts following the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision on race-conscious admissions.

Objective 2.1 of the IDE Plan calls for the College to “increase the percentage and retention of historically underserved students with a focus on Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and other underrepresented groups.” The July 2023 U.S. Supreme Court decision on race-conscious admissions does not change our commitment to this goal, but it means we will need to employ new strategies to achieve it. These will include enhanced community partnerships, targeted geographic outreach, elimination of legacy preference in admissions, and other efforts to expand Carleton’s visibility among demographic groups we seek to attract. The financial aid recommendations noted previously will also play a key role in this effort. We will also work to ensure that our processes are attentive to the need to establish clear pathways to success at Carleton for all admitted students.



GOAL ONE METRICS

Average debt at graduation (decrease)

Percentage of Pell-eligible students (increase)

Percentage of BIPOC and historically underrepresented students (increase)

The *New York Times* Accessibility Index ranking (increase)



GOAL TWO

Carleton will strive for equity in an environment where every student is able to take full advantage of the opportunities that Carleton offers.

ACTIONS

Action 4

We will create an endowed Carleton Impact Fund that will provide students on financial aid with increased opportunities for funded summer internships, externships, research experiences, or off-campus study programs.

Research has shown that certain “high-impact practices” have an outsized effect on student learning. These include individualized learning opportunities such as student-faculty research, internships, off-campus study, and community-based learning. Many students take advantage of such opportunities during the summer, but students on financial aid who have a summer work requirement may need to earn more than such opportunities provide. The Carleton Impact Fund will fund such high-impact experiences or cover the gap between a valuable experience and the income needed.

Action 5

We will establish a new Carls Helping Carls Fund for timely grants to cover unexpected student expenses.

The Dean of Students Office currently provides emergency funding to students who are experiencing unanticipated financial burdens. However, demand for those limited resources has grown significantly as Carleton has increased the number of lower-income students on campus, and many unanticipated needs arise that may not be emergencies but are nevertheless difficult to manage on a limited budget. With two recent Reunion gifts dedicated to student support, the Class of 1972 Get Started Fund and the Class of 1973 Stay the Course Fund, as strong models, the creation of a Carls Helping Carls Fund will enable the College to provide more substantial, flexible, and timely funding to students. Such a fund could be supported by a combination of endowment and designated annual fund gifts.

ACTIONS

Action 6

We will create a tiered salary system for student work to foster more equitable and meaningful student employment.

With more than 80 percent of students holding a position on campus during their time at Carleton, student employment is a distinctive characteristic of the Carleton experience. However, paying similar rates for very different work experiences disadvantages students working in areas like dining that are very demanding, and fails to recognize differing levels of experience or responsibility. Following strategy 3.2.3 of the IDE Plan, the Financial Aid Working Group subcommittee on the Student Work Experience, in its December 2022 report, recommends the creation of a tiered salary structure that would offer greater financial incentives for more demanding jobs and more accurately reflect the wide range of roles undertaken by students at the College. The creation of that structure will involve student and community input in recognition of the important role of student work within the overall campus culture.

Action 7

We will create First at Carleton, a first-generation and immigrant-origin student success program.

Carleton's first-generation student population is currently approximately 15 percent and growing. Nationwide, a recent report from the Presidents' Alliance on Immigration notes that students from immigrant families make up nearly one-third of all students enrolled at American colleges and universities. Creation of First at Carleton would provide programming and support for all first-generation and immigrant-origin students, building upon the proven successes of dedicated support programs such as TRIO (federally funded), Posse, QuestBridge, FOCUS, and CUBE, as well as Carleton's status as a First-Gen Forward Institution. These programs would help first-generation and immigrant-origin students to succeed at Carleton by encouraging pride in their accomplishments, connecting them with College resources, and building community among peers.

Action 8

We will use the recommendations of the Student Mental Health and Wellness Working Group to create a comprehensive focus on student mental health and wellness.

Mental health challenges affect all students and have a disproportionate impact on students who are low-income, BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, neurodiverse, or part of other historically excluded identities. The new Student Health and Counseling (SHAC) multipurpose facility that will be completed in 2025 provides a new opportunity to evaluate and deepen our student health and wellness programs in support of all students, including those with visible or invisible disabilities. Recommendations from the Community of Belonging Task Force report include hiring an additional case manager to assist in providing support and care for students and offering courses within the physical education requirement that include focus areas such as healthy eating and nutrition, sleep, stress management, and other mental health and wellness topics. The Student Mental Health Working Group is developing additional recommendations, including examining the College's disability accommodation processes, in light of increasing student demand.



GOAL TWO METRICS

Percentage of students participating in high-impact practice (increase)

Retention and graduation rates for students of color, first-generation, and low-income students (increase)



GOAL THREE

Carleton will work
to strengthen faculty
and staff well-being and
sense of belonging.

ACTIONS

Action 9

We will create new structures for staff representation and opportunities for campus-wide engagement to strengthen employee community and agency.

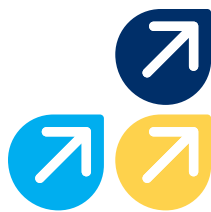
A staff experience survey completed in spring 2022, and discussions within the Community of Belonging Task Force, exposed the negative impact of internal campus hierarchies on the work lives and satisfaction of employees. The Community of Belonging Task Force made a number of valuable suggestions about ways to reduce differences and barriers between exempt and non-exempt staff, between staff and faculty, and between employees and administrators, including the creation of an elected Staff Council that would include representatives from every staff employee group on campus (exempt, non-exempt, and union) and would meet regularly with the administration to discuss issues of importance to staff. In addition, the creation of more community-wide events, including shared community service opportunities, can help strengthen our sense of community.

ACTIONS

Action 10

We will initiate collaborative discussions between Human Resources; the Provost's Office; proposed Staff Council, Staff at Carleton (SAC), and Forum; and the Faculty Affairs Committee about programs to promote faculty and staff well-being.

The experience of the COVID-19 pandemic intensified discussions that were already underway on campus about workplace stress, workload, and burnout. In a high-functioning environment dedicated to excellence like Carleton, both cultural and self-imposed expectations can lead to unsustainable levels of effort. In his 2022 book *The End of Burnout*, Jonathan Malesic notes that burnout often results from a gap between the ideals we bring to the workplace and the reality of the work experience. We will explore ways to increase employee engagement and agency, analyze opportunities for reducing tasks that are no longer prioritized, and foster clarity about reasonable work expectations for staff and faculty. Satisfaction and retention of our dedicated faculty and staff will be an essential component of our success in the years ahead.



Satisfaction and retention of our dedicated faculty and staff will be an essential component of our success in the years ahead.



GOAL THREE METRICS

2021 staff survey (to be repeated every three years)

Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) survey for faculty (to be administered spring 2024)

Curiosity

Carleton will champion the power of a broad liberal arts education through innovative teaching that inspires curiosity and experimentation.



The challenges our world will face in the years ahead—such as climate change, economic inequality, and the role of artificial intelligence—will require creative and multifaceted solutions. As a college dedicated to academic excellence, with tremendous depth and range in STEM fields, the humanities, arts, and social sciences, Carleton is ideally suited to producing students who can bring together many different perspectives and ways of knowing to address these challenges.

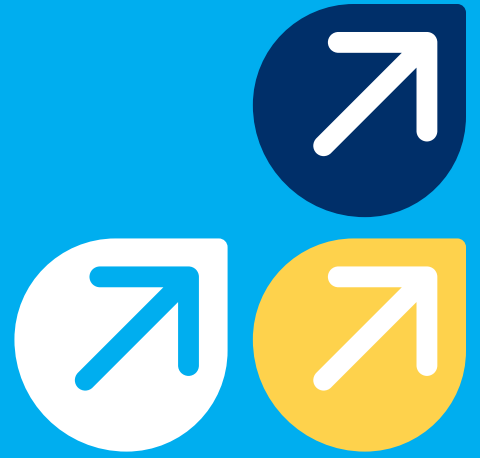
It is critical, therefore, that Carleton resist the popular urge to direct students down a narrow path of study leading to a single career outcome, and instead double down on the importance of exposing students to a wide range of disciplines, encouraging exploration and experimentation across fields and throughout the curriculum. At the same time doing more to chart the multiple pathways opened up by a broad liberal



arts education will give students and families confidence that any major they choose is the “right major” at Carleton.

Carleton’s unique brand of academic excellence is deeply rooted in a spirit of curiosity and experimentation. Recognizing the need to respond nimbly to the dynamic state of education today and the changing needs of our students, we will cement Carleton’s reputation for academic excellence with a deliberate focus on

pedagogical innovation and renewal, to ensure that both teaching and curriculum are designed to foster curiosity and experimentation among students. In a rapidly changing world, we cannot know for certain today what the classroom and curriculum of 2033 will look like, but we can build the infrastructure that ensures we continue to evolve to meet new developments in teaching, learning, and research in the years to come.



GOAL FOUR

Carleton will model the interdisciplinary approaches needed for students to address the complex challenges of the future.

ACTIONS

Action 11

Faculty will be charged with reviewing graduation requirements to ensure balance, coherence, inclusiveness, and equity.

An excellent liberal arts education is defined by its breadth and integration, and Carleton's graduation requirements seek to ensure that students encounter many different disciplines in addition to their major. In addition, the global experiences offered through off-campus study provide a particular lens that students can connect to their on-campus coursework. In the Advancing the Liberal Arts Task Force discussions, both students and faculty expressed a concern that students sometimes see graduation requirements as a box-checking exercise, and do not have a clear sense of how the current requirements come together into an integrated set of educational goals. In addition, many faculty expressed concern about imbalances in enrollment in programs across the college, with students increasingly clustering in a small number of majors.

A review of Carleton's graduation requirements, including institutional learning outcomes and the senior integrative exercise known as "comps," will provide an opportunity to study how the current requirements drive enrollment patterns, to consider how they satisfy our goal of broad exposure to the liberal arts, and to assess their impact on the goals of the IDE Plan.

The recent Higher Learning Commission Year 4 Assurance Review Report completed in June 2023 endorses the recommendation of IDE Plan strategy 4.1.1 that the Education and Curriculum Committee (ECC) "review the Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and the graduation requirements to ensure that they reflect the values of inclusion, diversity, and equity, and propose changes or additions as needed," noting that "this strategy would strengthen the ILOs and potentially the graduation requirements."

In addition, strategy 3.1.8 of the IDE Plan recommends that faculty "examine disparities in curriculum structure that hinder student progression through major/minor requirements and consider increasing opportunities for additional skill building throughout the curriculum (e.g., Math 101, Q-bits, courses with problem solving, pre-algebra, English 109)." As we continue to broaden the reach of our admissions efforts, it will be important to understand the varied preparation of students and the curricular pathways needed to allow them to explore all parts of the curriculum.

ACTIONS

Action 12

The Provost's Office will work with faculty and the Perlman Center for Learning and Teaching (LTC) to develop structures and add resources to better support current interdisciplinary work as well as future pedagogical collaboration and innovation.

Curricular innovation has long been a hallmark of teaching excellence at Carleton. Carleton's strong national reputation for undergraduate teaching reflects not only the dedication of individual faculty, but also the faculty's adoption of innovative college-wide curricular structures like the Writing Portfolio program and comps.

Many faculty members have also created individual opportunities to collaborate across or within courses, including in off-campus study programs, and a number of interdisciplinary programs bring together different approaches in creative ways that can provide exposure to contributing disciplines.

Currently, however, interdisciplinarity at Carleton is more visible at the individual course level than at the curricular level. Carleton has devoted limited resources to foster and support inter- or cross-disciplinary teaching innovation. Formal interdisciplinary programs do not have the level of dedicated staffing and programmatic support needed to ensure consistency and growth.

Support of interdisciplinarity and innovation may involve not only expansion of the funds necessary to make such innovation sustainable, but also support for the commitment of faculty time to ongoing pedagogical and curricular experimentation.

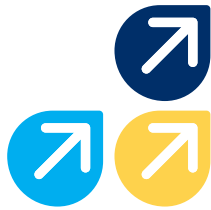
Additional faculty FTEs (full-time equivalents) will likely be needed to add capacity for interdisciplinary work across the faculty. Additional FTEs could serve interdisciplinary programs or add teaching capacity to departments whose faculty contribute multiple courses to interdisciplinary programs.

Action 13

We will pilot a new team-taught course cluster, Activating the Liberal Arts, designed to introduce students to the value of multidisciplinary learning.

A student's entry to Carleton should lay the foundation for their understanding of the need to combine STEM, humanities, and other disciplines, in order to address critical challenges such as climate change, AI, or economic inequality. We will explore the development of a cross-disciplinary pilot program that could be built around the first-year Argument and Inquiry courses, or alternatively as a separate sophomore year cluster. It would broaden the range of departments and disciplines students encounter in their first years at Carleton, help students understand how the challenges of today can be addressed through a variety of disciplines, and cultivate reflective and integrative liberal arts habits of thinking early on.

ACTIONS



With strength on both sides of what has traditionally been seen as “Two Cultures,” and a notable spirit of faculty collaboration, Carleton is distinctly positioned to demonstrate the importance of understanding issues from multiple disciplinary perspectives.

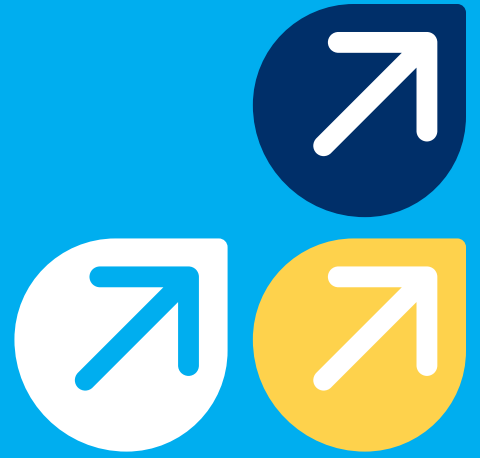
Action 14

We will strengthen student engagement in the humanities.

The humanities play an essential role in a robust liberal arts education. While there are always shifts in enrollment patterns over time, the consistent decline in humanities enrollments seen at Carleton, as at other colleges and universities, over the last decade means that students may have a more limited experience of these foundational areas of study. It is important to provide students with many opportunities to appreciate the richness and relevance of fields dedicated to understanding human thought, creation, and culture.

Recognizing that student interest is often sparked by the kinds of hands-on research experiences available to students in the sciences, Carleton's Humanities Center has recently begun exploring ways to create experiential learning opportunities in the humanities analogous to its successful Student Research Partnerships program supporting faculty-student research collaborations, and the existing Digital Humanities initiative. New approaches might include pursuing a humanities cohort program similar to the FOCUS curriculum-based cohort program in the sciences, and expanding funding for other types of humanities practica or internships. At the same time, the Humanities Center will continue its longstanding mission of support for faculty research and scholarship in the humanities. An investment of additional resources, such as identifying or creating an expanded physical footprint for the center, or adding more staff support, could help advance these initiatives.

With strength on both sides of what has traditionally been seen as "Two Cultures," and a notable spirit of faculty collaboration, Carleton is distinctly positioned to demonstrate the importance of understanding issues from multiple disciplinary perspectives. The Humanities Center has already sought funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to plan and launch a Curricular Bridge project that would pair faculty members across divisions to collaboratively teach an array of special courses that cross disciplinary and divisional boundaries and help students see the many connections between STEM fields and the humanities.



GOAL FIVE

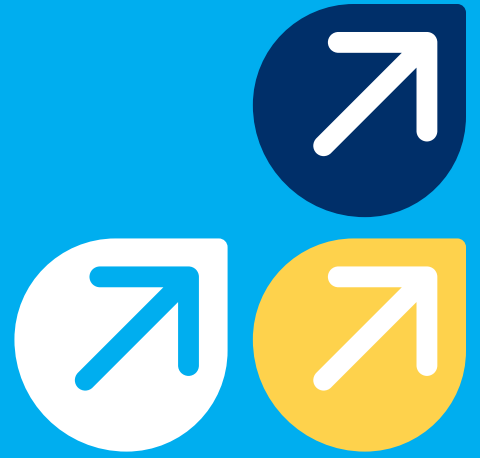
Carleton will create space for experimentation, exploration and intellectual risk-taking inside and outside of the classroom.

ACTIONS

Action 15

We will support the Carleton faculty's commitment to pedagogical innovation and teaching excellence by expanding the role of the Perlman Center for Learning and Teaching.

With additional funding, the Perlman Center for Learning and Teaching (LTC) could build on its current programs to offer additional support for faculty collaboration and experimentation. For example, the LTC could create an opportunity for interested faculty to organize summer workshops for faculty from across the country on topics like curricular renewal, inclusive pedagogy, sustainability, the impact of AI, or experiential approaches to the humanities. In keeping with Carleton's IDE goals, periodic workshops could engage and support diverse faculty from a range of institutions beyond liberal arts colleges, including state universities, historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), tribal colleges, and community colleges. Such programs would serve as a laboratory for new approaches that would enhance Carleton classrooms, be influential at campuses across the country, and reinforce Carleton's national reputation for undergraduate teaching excellence.



GOAL SIX

A holistic commitment to sustainability will integrate campus operations with academic approaches to environmental studies and climate change, creating a living laboratory for environmental education.

Carleton's longstanding commitment to sustainability provides a strong foundation for future growth. We are geothermal pioneers, having been the first college in Minnesota and among just a handful nationally to transition to sustainable heating and cooling in 2021. Carleton also was the first college or university in the country to install a wind turbine in 2004, and we have decreased our energy usage by over 40 percent since 2018. Sustainability and the environment are deeply ingrained in our curriculum and across interdisciplinary collaborations and scholarship. At a time when the climate crisis has never been more visible, Carleton is poised to assume a national leadership position in sustainability and environmental stewardship.

ACTIONS

Action 16

Carleton will pursue a new carbon neutrality goal of 2025 and create a Sustainable Future Fund to build permanent support for ongoing sustainability efforts.

The College has made enormous progress in reducing carbon emissions on campus over the past decade. In its 2020–21 review of Carleton's Climate Action Plan, the Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) concluded that we are well positioned to deepen our sustainability efforts and accelerate our progress toward carbon neutrality. Setting an ambitious goal for achieving carbon neutrality by 2025 and comprehensively strengthening our efforts in sustainability reflects the urgency of the climate crisis and aligns with Carleton's position as a leader by placing us among a small number of liberal arts colleges expected to reach this goal before 2030.

Recognizing that there are many dimensions to sustainability, the Sustainability Working Group is developing a plan to guide the College's progress over the coming years, including exploring a path to eliminating our natural gas usage and greening our electricity within 10 years. Achieving carbon neutrality and the continued climate work that lies beyond will require full campus involvement in sustainability efforts, in which the College's educational mission, curriculum, operations, and community activities and programs are coordinated in a unified and integrated approach. The Sustainable Future Fund will provide an opportunity for the community to help us achieve our ambitious goals in this area.

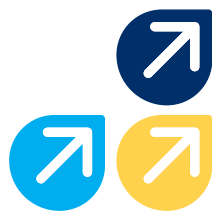
ACTIONS

Action 17

We will seek to expand curricular offerings in sustainability across the curriculum and establish new endowed positions that support environmental studies and climate education.

Carleton faculty have long been committed to exploring the complex issues related to sustainability and the environment, as evidenced in the number of courses and contributing faculty in the environmental studies program. However, the environmental studies program has not been able to take full advantage of student interest and faculty expertise because the current staffing model relies heavily on ad hoc curricular contributions by affiliated faculty from other departments.

Recognizing that sustainability is deeply linked to questions of equity and justice, we are launching a search for a new senior hire in environmental justice who can also serve as director of the program. We may need additional hires in order to provide for leadership development and curricular innovation that matches Carleton's institutional efforts in energy conservation and environmental sustainability. Creating additional positions with adequate research support in environmental studies, climate education, or related fields will enable us to strengthen and stabilize our academic commitment to sustainability.



We can build the infrastructure that ensures we continue to evolve to meet new developments in teaching, learning, and research in the years to come.

Action 18

We will create a new Center for Sustainability to highlight our commitment and combine operational, academic, and civic engagement efforts.

By highlighting sustainability as a core value, the College will be able to create synergies between environmental studies, interdisciplinary studies, co-curricular engagement, research, and the work of the Cowling Arboretum. This nexus of opportunities will serve as a powerful model of the kind of engaged, interdisciplinary learning at which Carleton excels. This will also be a natural extension of existing work to conserve energy, invest in renewable energy, reduce waste, and decrease reliance on fossil fuels.

The temporary physical spaces of the Arboretum Office are no longer sufficient. Similarly, there is no common space for the environmental studies program to build community among the many participants across departments. Carleton's recent consolidation of sustainability efforts in creating the Office of Sustainability is a first step in a direction that could be fully realized with a Center for Sustainability that could house all three offices/programs.



GOAL SIX METRICS

New sustainability working group plan and report being developed by Sustainability Working Group will set carbon reduction targets using Second Nature reporting database

Number of courses related to sustainability, climate, and environment (increase)

Impact

Carleton will foster habits of civic engagement and career exploration that prepare Carls to lead lives of impact in their communities.

Carleton's outstanding academic program will ensure that students develop lifelong curiosity and a rich appreciation for the inherent value of a broad and integrative liberal arts education. At the same time, equipping students with an understanding of the tangible skills they have acquired through their Carleton experience will increase their confidence in their own ability to use that education to good purpose.

In addition to the intellectual growth stimulated by their academic work, Carleton students have the opportunity for additional personal and professional development through co-curricular experiences that may include participation in student organizations, athletics, or performing arts groups; student employment; and engagement with the local community.

While Carleton has a strong record of sending students on to graduate school and into a wide range of careers, we recognize that students would benefit from a broader framework for career exploration as they consider the multiple pathways available to them as liberal arts graduates. Forging stronger connections across campus and with alumni will expand the network available to students as they begin to think about their post-graduation futures. At the same time, students' deep engagement on campus and with local communities will cultivate skills in community-building that will prepare them for lives of impact in their communities.





GOAL SEVEN

Carleton will celebrate the unique qualities of our location and encourage meaningful connections between students and local communities.

Carleton is recognized as a globally engaged campus, with strong cohorts of international students, a deep tradition in international relations, and a wide range of faculty-led off-campus study programs in countries around the world. Our own Midwestern location, however, has often been seen as something to overcome rather than something to celebrate.

The market research study recently completed as part of our planning process confirmed that Carleton's geographic location is the biggest question mark in the minds of many prospective students, particularly those from historically underrepresented groups. And yet our location has many characteristics that are appealing to those same students. Research shows that they value areas they feel are safe, are strongly interested in community engagement, and are very concerned about sustainability, with 45 percent of students in a recent nationwide survey indicating that they considered sustainability in their college enrollment decision.

At this moment in time, Carleton should lean into the strengths of its location. Along with our beautiful campus and vibrant Northfield community, we have in the Cowling Arboretum a distinct asset that offers on-site opportunities for recreation, research, and teaching. In an increasingly competitive marketplace, our Midwestern location differentiates Carleton from our East Coast peers, and is a marker for the down-to-earth, "elite but not elitist" culture that makes Carleton so attractive to students who get to know us.

ACTIONS

Action 19

We will expand local partnerships and develop new programs for academic and civic engagement.

Carleton has always played an active role in the Northfield community. Conversations with community partners during the strategic planning process, however, illuminated opportunities to more fully engage with a number of community constituencies in and around Northfield.

Carleton's Center for Community and Civic Engagement (CCCE) is a proven model for connecting students and the broader community via coursework, community outreach, and volunteerism with the goal of developing inclusive, sustainable, and reciprocal relationships that foster student learning and faculty development, fulfill community identified needs, and nurture students' commitment to lifelong civic engagement. By expanding our work in academic and civic engagement and building stronger relationships with Northfield and surrounding communities, the College has an opportunity to reinforce the connection between theory and practice, increase collaborations with area businesses and nonprofits, and to further the breadth and value of a Carleton education.

Action 20

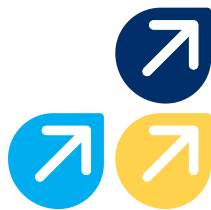
We will enhance Twin Cities access, program development, and connectivity by exploring improved transportation options.

Carleton's location just 40 miles from the diverse and vibrant Twin Cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul is appealing to many prospective and current students, faculty, and staff. However, logistical challenges can prevent us from taking advantage of that proximity. We seek to make the Twin Cities more accessible to all members of the community and explore ways to provide support for academic programming, civic engagement, alumni networking, career readiness, industry partnerships, and urban studies programs. Exploring additional transportation options would be a first step in improving access. At the same time, we will work to develop reciprocal relationships with potential partners that might bring new opportunities to campus.

Action 21

We will implement a new initiative, Indigenous Engagement in Place, that will deepen our partnerships with Indigenous communities and provide a base for developing a minor in Indigenous Studies.

Carleton's efforts to acknowledge and seek deeper engagement with its Indigenous neighbors are now galvanizing into a college-wide commitment. Carleton is in the process of applying for a Mellon Foundation grant to further enliven learning, teaching, and public scholarship in the humanities and across the liberal arts through curricular and engaged scholarly collaborations with Indigenous partners. Examples might include projects such as piloting a joint teaching institute with tribal college partners and offering incentives for curricular innovation, course development, and research partnerships. Our goal is to move toward centering Indigenous engagement in the College's work, expanding collaborations with Native Nations and organizations, and building new partnerships with tribal colleges for joint curricular initiatives and research partnerships.



Our Midwestern location differentiates Carleton from our East Coast peers, and is a marker for the down-to-earth culture that makes Carleton attractive to students.

ACTIONS

Action 22

We will begin the process of developing a Campus Facilities Plan in fall 2023.

As we think about the role that physical spaces play in building and fostering community, we recognize that a space analysis and new Campus Facilities Plan are needed to update and steward our campus infrastructure in support of the current needs of students, faculty, and staff.

The College completed its last campus facilities plan in 2014 to enact infrastructure priorities identified in the 2012 Strategic Plan. The completion of Evelyn M. Anderson Hall in 2019 and the renovation of the former Music Hall into Hasenstab Hall in 2022 are among the most visible legacies of that plan. Many elements of the 2014 plan are currently being realized through the Student Life and Housing Plan, including the creation of a new Student Health and Counseling Center.

With important progress having been made on academic facilities, and work underway on student life and housing, a number of projects related to general community needs remain. While progress has been made in improving campus accessibility since the 2014 plan, there is additional work to be done in this area.

Physical Education, Athletics, and Recreation facilities

At a time when students, faculty, and staff are increasingly prioritizing their physical and mental health, many of our recreational facilities are outdated or inadequate. In addition to upgrades to existing buildings and field spaces, possible solutions include a proposal to relocate programs and competitive events currently held in the West Gym through the construction of a new natatorium and gymnasium.

Sayles-Hill Campus Center renovation

A cornerstone of campus life, Sayles-Hill Campus Center is a visible and central gathering place on campus and fulfills many student functions. Current renovations to Sayles Café will help to address changing dining needs and preferences. However, further analysis of current space use will demonstrate whether the current layout and space allocation adequately reflect the changing nature of student organizations and campus life.

Faculty and staff housing

The March 2023 Faculty and Staff Housing Report prepared by the Faculty Affairs Committee reflects the increasing challenge experienced by employees, particularly new hires, in locating suitable housing in a very tight local housing market. The Campus Facilities Plan should consider the College's role in helping to address this problem, which has the potential to impact hiring and retention of both faculty and staff.

Office space

Some college administrative offices are currently housed in less-than-optimal space. For example, the Division of External Relations occupies offices at 200 Division Street that are not as accessible, proximate, and welcoming as is necessary for effective collaboration with campus partners. At the same time, some offices have seen reduced five-day occupancy as individuals take advantage of the College's remote work option. A space analysis of current needs and opportunities will determine how to reallocate or create space to serve our current needs.



GOAL SEVEN METRICS

Campus Facilities Plan
(to be completed by Spring 2025)

Percentage of graduating class taking
an Academic Civic Engagement course
(increase)



GOAL EIGHT

Carleton will support the career exploration of students through every dimension of the Carleton experience.

ACTIONS

Action 23

We will create a campus-wide network for career exploration that will help students chart a pathway to the future that incorporates all the learning that takes place at Carleton: in the classroom, through co-curricular activities, and through student employment.

A comprehensive career framework will connect academic departments, student life, civic engagement opportunities, and alumni relations with the Career Center, creating a continuous pathway that begins with admission and continues through one's alumni years. The program will foster early student engagement through expansion of the existing Sophomorphosis program into a winter break program for all sophomores. A task force will be established to explore new models of advising that intentionally lead students to make connections across the curriculum, their co-curricular activities, and their professional development. Team-based models that bring together students with faculty and staff might facilitate establishing such connections. Introduction of either an expanded e-portfolio program or a co-curricular transcribing option will help students document how they have grown as individuals through curricular and experiential learning opportunities.

ACTIONS

Action 24

We will reimagine Johnson House and the Alumni Guest House as a Career and Alumni Center, giving greater visibility to the Career Center and facilitating alumni engagement in student career exploration.

Johnson House and the Alumni Guest House were renovated in 2017 to accommodate the Career Center while maintaining their traditional hosting function. Reconfiguring or expanding this space will allow us to move some of the Office of Alumni Relations staff currently at 200 Division Street into close proximity with the Career Center. This will be both a symbolic and substantive step toward advancing a key insight of the strategic direction: that our alumni are an indispensable asset to current students and faculty as they navigate current or imminent professional choices.

Carleton alumni—whether working in business, academia, medicine, the arts, the nonprofit arena, or elsewhere—are eager to be of help to current students. We recommend studying models that other colleges have used, such as the creation of small alumni advisory groups made up of alumni in specific fields or industries, or use of new technology platforms, to deepen opportunities to take advantage of the ways in which Carleton alumni exemplify the infinite number of pathways that extend outward from a liberal arts education.

Action 25

The Career Center will work closely with academic departments to track graduate outcomes among their majors, and to help illuminate the abundant success stories that demonstrate the different pathways taken by graduates in every major.

Many academic departments currently work closely with the Career Center to help students explore career pathways, share information about their alumni on department websites, or bring alumni back to Carleton to talk about how their major informed their varied career trajectories. The Provost's Office will work with a new program director for academic partnerships in the Career Center, as well as the Career Center Advisory Committee, to support faculty and departments in partnering with the Career Center to illuminate career pathways and build confidence that every major at the College provides a strong foundation for the future. The creation of a Career Center Faculty Fellows program, with a fellow for each academic division, could aid in this effort.

Action 26

We will redesign the student employment program to make it an intentional part of student career preparation.

There is an opportunity with every campus job, from working in an administrative office or tutoring to working in dining, to highlight job skills and help students connect those skills with career aspirations and create a more meaningful employment experience for students. As recommended by the Student Employment subcommittee of the Financial Aid Working Group, Carleton will increase the administrative resources to support the student work experience; create an expectation for mandatory supervisor training and student employee feedback; prioritize equitable outcomes for students in their campus work experiences; and introduce a tiered wage structure, as discussed in Action 6, to enhance the value of the most demanding jobs.



GOAL EIGHT METRICS

Status of graduating class one year later/
first destinations (full-time employment
to equal or exceed COFHE average)

Competitive admissions to
graduate programs

Number of alumni supporting
Career Center programs (increase)



GOAL NINE

Carleton will build on its strong tradition of alumni connection to create more opportunities for alumni intellectual, professional, and civic engagement.

ACTIONS

Many members of the Carleton community still remember President Larry Gould's opening remarks to new students each year, which have echoed across generations: *"From this day forward, you are a part of Carleton, and Carleton is a part of you."* This sense of reciprocal commitment is deeply embedded in Carleton's culture.

As prospective students consider whether to attend Carleton, the promise of continuing connections with and through the College can be an important part of the value proposition. Alumni connection is also an important aspect of the ongoing cycle of renewal that underpins the entire structural model of the College: we bring in talented students—supporting them with financial resources as needed—and as they go out into the world, they in turn support the College with their time, advocacy, or resources, making a Carleton education possible for the next generation of students.

Action 27

We will expand the successful Carleton Connects program to provide alumni with continued learning opportunities.

Lifelong engagement with Carleton should, perhaps most of all, imply lifelong curiosity and learning. This strategic direction envisions making the Carleton Connects programming a more organized and purposeful collection of online mini-courses for alumni, parents, and friends of the College. There could be no better way to present and promote the advantages of a Carleton education than providing continuing access to some of the ideas filling current Carleton classrooms, and opportunities for alumni to hear about one another's professional and civic activities and accomplishments.



GOAL NINE METRICS

Number of alumni participating in Carleton Connects or Carleton Alumni Adventures (increase)

CONCLUSION

The story told here is fundamentally one of renewal. It recognizes that excellence cannot be taken for granted but must be cultivated and nourished. Even the strongest community can become insular if it is not refreshed by a flow of new people, perspectives, and ideas. Even the finest curriculum can become stale if it is not renewed through ongoing innovation and experimentation. Even the most successful college can become stagnant if it is not constantly engaged in self-scrutiny and transformation.

This strategic direction is not a business plan covering all aspects of how we run the College. It is a set of community aspirations for specific ways in which we believe we can do better. The journey envisioned here assumes continued excellence in all the ways we are already strong, but builds upon our most distinctive strengths to catalyze future growth—for Carls and for Carleton.

Implementation of this strategic direction will require additional analysis and planning. In addition to outlining the financial resources needed, we will need to identify the workload implications for staff and faculty. Our expectation is that many recommendations can be implemented not by doing more, but by doing current tasks differently, with a heightened focus on new priorities and objectives. Other recommendations may require additional staffing in key areas, course releases for faculty, or other adjustments.

Next steps for the administration will include incorporating estimated costs into a long-term budget model, finalizing a set of metrics to evaluate progress toward specific goals, developing a Campus Facilities Plan, and undertaking a campaign feasibility study to prepare for future fundraising. Many of the recommended curricular actions will need to be developed, discussed, and approved by the faculty. Other actions relating to campus culture or operations will be referred to College Council or other governance bodies.

We hope that the strong community consensus represented in this strategic direction will speed these next steps and stimulate further discussion of ways to achieve the goals outlined here. Though the many faculty, staff, students, alumni, trustees, and friends of the College who participated in this effort may not have agreed on every recommended action, they were unified in their deep commitment to seeing Carleton continue to grow, advance, and become stronger in the years to come.

APPENDICES

These reports, white papers, and other documents were instrumental in developing the Carleton 2033 Strategic Direction. To learn more, visit go.carleton.edu/2033reports.

Carleton 2033 Task Force Reports

Advancing the Liberal Arts
Community of Belonging
Expanding Carleton's Reach

IDE Plan

A Community Plan for Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity

Financial Aid

Financial Aid Working Group Report May 2023
Student Average Debt at Graduation
Recommendations of the Student Work Experience Subcommittee

Textbook Affordability

Textbook Affordability white paper April 2023

Facilities Planning

2014 Facilities Master Plan
Student Life and Housing Plan
Sayles-Hill Café remodel
March 2023 Faculty and Staff Housing Report

Sustainability

Utility Master Plan
Climate Action Plan (CAP) Review 2020

Market Research

Market Research Overview

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