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8-11-2022

Andrews University 2022-2025 Strategic Plan - Storyline One: Access

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Recommended Citation

Luxton, Andrea, "Andrews University 2022-2025 Strategic Plan - Storyline One: Access" (2022). *Faculty Publications*. 4525.

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Andrews University

*2022–2025
Strategic Plan*

by Andrea Luxton



Our Story

Andrews University has always been a place of belonging and a place for World Changers. From its beginnings until now, Battle Creek College, then Emmanuel Missionary College, and now Andrews University has consistently invited the world to be part of its community and then sent its graduates back to the world to bring positive missional change. It has been central to the Seventh-day Adventist world church, helping build capacity and supporting and partnering with the church and its institutions from its inception. Of course, how that world changer commitment is worked out changes with the times, yet at the core it remains essentially and importantly unchanged. We remain a strong Seventh-day Adventist university, committed to creating in our students a desire to be active followers of Jesus Christ and engaged members of the church, whether as a pastor or an engineer, a teacher or a physical therapist. And as a university we continue to be active partners and servants to the church, its institutions and the wider community, desiring to model how Seventh-day Adventist education can truly be transformational and world-changing.

In 2022 our passion for being World Changers is as strong as ever. Yet there are increasing headwinds pushing against the patterns of the past in all higher education. To belong seems harder; to bring change, more complex, yet essential. Yet there are also huge opportunities.

So, in this strategic plan for 2022–2025, we share the outline of our new and yet ongoing narrative. We seek to grow by expanding our access to current and prospective students. We hope to deepen our commitment to shared values and broaden our opportunities to understand how to serve even better. And we recognize to do this, we must strengthen our resilience. As we seek to expand our revenue base, we will find new resourcing to allow us to do what we do well, even better!

Storyline One:

Access

“If I could only find a way to bridge the gap?”

For Christopher that gap is a gap of finance. He is from a single parent home, but his parent’s earnings are still just above the cap for receiving Federal financial aid. After all the scholarship awards are in and he looks at what loans are available to him, the gap to come to Andrews still seems too much.

For Adele that gap is a gap of academic background. She had some illness early on in her academy years. That left her behind in some classes. She has caught up very well considering, but she is still fearful that there is an academic gap that will make it difficult for her to be successful at university.

For Jeffrey the gap is one of direction. He is smart, but he just doesn’t know what to do! How can he not waste time and money while he finds out?

For Jasmine it is a gap of time. She wants to take a professional program that requires a graduate degree, but she is really worried about how she can manage all the years of education that will take because she has other family and financial responsibilities. How can she navigate that long path of education ahead of her?

And finally for Barry the gap is geographical. He just cannot see how he can travel to Michigan to study, but he really wants an Andrews education. How can he get flexibility in learning?

The environment in which Andrews University now operates is so different from ten years ago. The demographics have changed considerably. There are less traditional-age students looking for a university education. Some see alternative routes to careers, with good money being possible through other routes to education (such as trades) or even from no further education at all. Some are reluctant to take loans and are looking for cheaper options than those possible in a typical higher education environment. Add to that the falling number of 18-year-old students and those in Seventh-day Adventist academies, along with the pull of staying close to home, and Andrews University has to change the way we view our market. We must provide increased flexibility, focus on where current market and mission meet at all levels of education, and seek pathways for students who may be less traditional. All this leads to our plan to increase our student numbers by increasing access so more students can engage in a world-changing education. This is the first storyline of our strategic plan. Let me share just a few of the ways we plan to do this.



One of our recent successes has been the introduction of a new program for freshmen called Bridge to Success. This program is open to students who may not meet our traditional entry qualifications but who, with references and academic profile, we still believe will succeed. A tutor/mentor works with the cohort, provides them with additional skills and then on an individual level helps them integrate into the full University academic program. A very high proportion of students in



these cohort groups have been retained and have done well. This is just one of our programs intended to give access to a broader range of students and increase retention. Andrews University has also increased its physical presence at community colleges; we even have an identified space at Lake Michigan College, staffed by recruitment staff and faculty. This is new and we are hoping for good results! And then we have our growing international partnerships with other Adventist colleges and universities worldwide. We have created and continue to create what we hope are win-win partnerships that allow students to start studying in their own countries and then transfer at an appropriate time to Andrews to complete their studies. Each of these intentionally focused plans should increase our undergraduate student numbers. And these are just a few of our plans.

Another area of focus at Andrews University is in the area of student support. As we expand our student base, more support will be important. But beyond that, the pressures on university-age students have increased exponentially in recent years, with resulting increased needs. If students are going to succeed, if we are going to retain them, then we need to have the systems in place to enable that to happen. We were delighted recently to receive a grant as a minority-serving institution to increase our career support and also our support systems to reach out to underserved communities. The funding has enabled us to develop a new career center, as well as expand mentoring opportunities. Our grants and other fundraising initiatives are simultaneously focused on deepening our endowment base to support our students in the challenging financial market. In yet another

Our resources require that we focus even while we seek growth. And our mission requires that as we seek to grow we do so in a way that will deepen our mission commitment to our students and to the wider church and community.

initiative, the University will be significantly expanding mental health support for its students through an external partner who will work directly with our Counseling & Testing Center. Strong support systems will result in increased satisfaction and increased success.

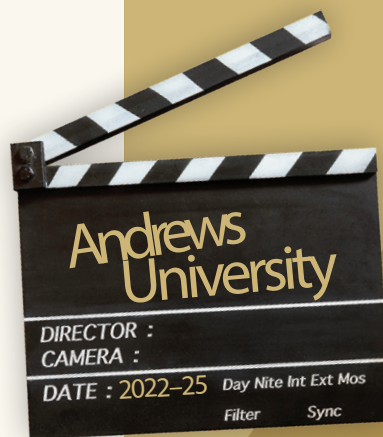
One of the unique strengths of Andrews University is its graduate programs. Over the last few years the graduate programs and student numbers have increased so that currently our graduate headcount is around the same as the undergraduate. This gives us the opportunity to develop a rich graduate culture. But it does more than that: it allows for the graduate experience to bring increased depth to the undergraduate. Over the last couple of years one of our thrusts in marketing has been what we call More for Less. This means students can shave maybe a year off their total educational experience by starting with an undergraduate program at Andrews; that then has a seamless connection with the graduate programs. So our physical therapy program, for those who qualify, will be three

years undergraduate and three years graduate; our master's degree in speech-language pathology is a two-year program after only three years of undergraduate study. Architecture is four years plus one. And so we can continue. The number of programs that fall under this umbrella is increasing, and our strategy is to increase these even more. One advantage for students is of course that in these programs there may be one less year of tuition to pay. However, more than that is the depth that comes to the total program as more advanced undergraduates interact with graduate students, and faculty who are qualified to teach at the graduate level also bring enhanced quality to undergraduate students. Increased access is also enabled as, especially in competitive programs, students will be in a favored position to "make the cut."

Finally, I want to talk about new programs and how those might impact access for the future. Right now we have several new programs starting: in the music department, a degree in music composition will round out our offerings, bringing to us a new group of students who are not so focused on performance. A BS in cybersecurity should provide a cutting-edge option to our Department of Computing. We have a new master's concentration in social innovation, funded by another external grant, in the Department of Leadership. In this program students will focus on how to develop and implement projects that will bring positive social change in their communities or church. This will be one of the growing number of Andrews University programs delivered online, also providing greater flexibility and access. Then, in the College of Health & Human Services, plans are continuing to launch a doctorate in occupational therapy (OTD), following the DScOT which recently began. Finally, in the School of Business Administration, we are beginning to offer a PhD in business administration, focusing on preparation of business teachers in higher education. Together we believe this new suite of programs will again increase access.

What then do we hope for? No, we cannot be all things to all people. Our resources require that we focus even while we seek growth. And our mission requires that as we seek to grow we do so in a way that will deepen our mission commitment to our students and to the wider church and community. You will continue to hear stories of how the strategies I identify are being rolled out and how we hopefully see the increasing access which we believe will strengthen our future.

And in a look ahead, in our next edition of FOCUS I will show how our second storyline on deepening our campus culture will help us ensure that all our students, whoever they are and wherever they are, will discover Andrews University is a place that is committed to making World Changers of faith, passion and commitment. ■



FOCUS will continue to feature articles on the additional storylines in the next two issues. View the strategic plan at andrews.edu/president/strategicplan.

Storyline One: We will grow by increasing access for more students to engage in a world-changing education.

Andrews University is committed to providing a high quality, accessible, world-changing education to eligible students at all levels of higher education, through on-campus and remote experiences, dependent on mission, market and need. By the beginning of the 2025–2026 academic year, the University intends to grow to 1,800 undergraduate students and 1,800 graduate students studying on or through the main campus, with a first to second year retention rate of 87 percent and an overall persistence rate for undergraduates of 90 percent and graduates of 85 percent. These figures exclude continuing education/certificate students studying through the Adult Education Center and students studying at international locations.

Storyline Two: We will deepen and sharpen our community culture and sense of belonging to further enrich our world-changing experience and commitment.

Andrews University is committed to a community culture where faith is active in service, evidenced in calling, and where institutional values are experienced in the University's commitment to diversity and inclusion, building leadership, encouraging holistic wellness and nurturing innovation. A robust liberal arts program, particularly as experienced in ACE or the J.N. Andrews Honors Program, and intentional graduate programming will bridge the students' academic experience with the community experience, and shared values will together increase the sense of belonging of all campus demographics. Together these become world changing.

Storyline Three: We will intentionally increase our resilience to bring rich and innovative planning to our future.

Andrews University's mission is to educate students to be World Changers for the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the wider community. To continue effectively with this core mission, it will be critical for the University to increase its financial resilience and be committed to thoughtful innovative planning and change. This will strengthen the University at all levels as it continues to serve its students and constituents well beyond its 150th birthday.