



# The Next Chapter

## ANDREWS UNIVERSITY 2017–2022 Strategic Plan

*by Andrea Luxton*

### **STORYLINE THREE:**

In a competitive environment Andrews University must be able to provide a flexible, engaging, learning environment through faculty committed to the redemptive work of education. They will use both innovative and time-honored teaching methods, using the lens of “the teacher” in advancing research and engaging with service. The result will be a transformational education experience.

As we turn to our next chapter, we have chosen several lenses (core strengths) with which to approach and communicate our overarching theme (mission). The lens of Explore Intentionally identifies our commitment to finding new and relevant ways to live out our mission and to encourage students to do the same. Live Wholly portrays actively our historic commitment to holistic education (Body, Mind, Spirit) and our commitment to reinvigorating that in the lives of our current community whether through initiatives in physical, emotional or spiritual wellness. The lens of Learn Deeply is the lens of depth and quality: what we are known for and how we can continue high impact practices for our students. And our final lens of Engage Globally is part of our story DNA: it is the way of the past and the way of the future, albeit through adjusted storylines.

And so we move to those new storylines, strategies that we believe will both ensure the continuity of the rich Andrews story, as well as deepen and strengthen the story as it moves into the next chapter. Each storyline will be rooted in our overarching theme(s) and through our chosen lenses, but will in turn introduce new and engaging plots that will add color and texture to our future. These will be the central thrust of this chapter of the Andrews’ story.

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**AT THE TIME OF HIS GRADUATION A RECENT** graduate of Andrews University wrote: “Being able to conduct research in a faith-grounded institution has given me opportunities to explore the relationship between my area of study and my religious belief without being afraid of dealing with tension between the two. The professors here have helped guide me in a path where I was encouraged to find out things for myself and not just rely on the belief of my peers. It helped me dig deeper into my personal spirituality, which then encouraged me to formulate my own thoughts based on what I have read and studied.” Then he names some specific professors in biology, English, religion and Honors who had been particular anchors in his journey, “not only



with their constant support of academics and faith without fear of tension, but with their own life as an example. They are not afraid to bring in faith to their individual fields of study; they embrace it and show it through their daily interactions with the people around them. Their mentorship throughout this whole process is priceless and I thank God for the opportunity of being their student and research mentee.”

This graduate could not have expressed more eloquently what our third storyline in our strategic plan seeks to accomplish—the creation of an environment where every student finds fulfillment in their discipline, a deep connection between their discipline and faith, and sees in the life of the teachers Seventh-day Adventist professionals who practice their faith daily.

Let me start by telling you of some other student successes that tell us of the seriousness Andrews places on providing a transformational educational experience for our students. During 2016 alone students were

named writers in 14 peer-reviewed publications (usually partnering with faculty) and students were presenters at 48 professional conference sessions (often more than one student presenter in a session) at events as far apart as Michigan and Australia. One former Honors and English student has recently been accepted with full funding to eight different prestigious PhD in English programs, one Ivy League. Another former student is currently at the University of British Columbia studying microbiology and was a recipient of the prestigious Canadian national Vanier Scholarship. Just the other day, our Honors director received a message from a former student now studying at one of the top law programs in the world in Melbourne, Australia, “We have our first intensive class for the semester over the next 2 weeks and after that we settle into regular classes (torts, contracts, and public law!). I just have to say, thanks for preparing me so well!!!! My research project and all our Honors classes have once again

made a tremendous difference already. Being able to synthesize large amounts of reading, paying attention to details but also being able to relate the issues globally, and generally the hard work ethic you instilled in us have already had an impact on how I’ve approached/understood the material.” Many similar quotes are sitting in my inbox that speak to the conviction of students on the transformational nature of an Andrews’ educational experience.

Our outstanding Honors program at the undergraduate level does much to model the best of our teaching and learning experience. As L. Monique Pittman, director of the Honors program expresses it, their program and the faculty that teach in it, are dedicated to supporting the development of critically thinking scholars and professionals; committed, lifelong believers in Christ, and ethically acting members of the human community. That is very much what our third strategic storyline is all about.

As I recount these successes maybe you are asking, why do we need a storyline that focuses on teaching and learning when we have so many stories to tell of success and value in this area? And certainly we could multiply these stories many times over. Yet what is critically important to us is to create an environment where every student could write a testimony on their experience that is equal on the quality of their Andrews University experience. In a changing higher education environment, this requires intentional focus on partnering with faculty, and particularly new faculty, to build their skills and understanding as teaching professionals, as well as an enhanced focus on evaluating the effectiveness of each of our programs in meeting the mission of the University and the expectations of the marketplace.

Let me talk then about what we are doing with our new Center for Teaching & Learning for faculty. During the 2016–17 school year 146 faculty members attended at least one event offered by the Center and in the 2017–18 year those numbers will likely be surpassed. Since its inception this group has set up a mentoring scheme for faculty, started a book club on texts related to teaching and learning, encouraged research on teaching and learning in specific disciplines, and provided significant

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professional development in cooperation with other offices on campus. As a result, for example, 10 percent of current faculty is researching in the field of the Scholarship of Teaching and 25 present annually at the Andrews University Teaching and Learning Conference that attracts faculty from Andrews University and beyond. Our website ([www.andrews.edu/ctl](http://www.andrews.edu/ctl)) provides far more detail than I can do here on the work of this Center.

This is what we have done, but perhaps what is even more exciting is our plans to make this storyline a reality in the future. In that context I am very pleased to announce that a new Graduate Certificate for College and University Teaching has completed campus approval processes and is ready to go. Ideally, all students at Andrews University receiving terminal degrees with a desire to teach in higher education, should be provided the opportunity to earn the certificate. This certificate also will be available for our new faculty, as well as faculty in other institutions, to strengthen and broaden their teaching skills in a faith environment. Through the Center for Teaching & Learning our intent is to position the University at the forefront of teaching excellence and teaching innovation with the Seventh-day Adventist context.

The Center for Teaching & Learning does not work in isolation. The Center for College Faith, the Department of Digital Learning & Instructional Technology (DLiT) and more recently the Office of Diversity & Inclusion, work closely with the director, Anneris Coria-Navia. For the purpose of this storyline let me speak to the second of these: technology and online learning, a very fast-changing area of education and a significant focus for Andrews University.

Amongst DLiT’s many services, they too are focusing on ensuring the strength of teaching and learning. In particular, their “Course Tune Up” helps faculty in a workshop setting revise courses in line with best practice in technology and their monthly Faculty Technology Showcases are faculty-led events, which demonstrate and discuss various uses for technology and tools. In addition, the associate dean for Online Higher Education, Janine Lim, reports that each online course, every semester, is assigned to an instructional designer who provides pedagogical and technical support in the online teaching and course design process. That way faculty receive one-on-one support and guidance on building the syllabus, designing assessments, creating learning activities, and recording video lectures. In addition, during the online teaching experience, their team provides technical support as well as assistance with any online teaching-related challenges that may arise.

That is some of the detail but it is the impact of what we do that becomes critical. Our goal is to ensure that all online students will be able to resonate with these student comments: “This course helped me to see history in all of its truth and in a broader context. It also helped me to see it through a Christian perspective,” or, “The way the instructor conducted the course was amazing,” or, as a result of the class, “I have actually changed some of my personal habits to become a better steward of the environment.”

Teaching and learning is at the heart of what we do at Andrews University. That is why we are here—for our students. Time-honored methods cannot be forgotten in that process. However, we cannot stand still without constantly seeking fresh ways of ensuring our mission is met through the teaching and learning enterprise, whether that is in classroom delivery, mentoring in a research environment, creating service opportunities, or through an online modality. This interaction between faculty and students lies at the heart of any university, and our uniqueness is in ensuring that as we do this we live out our particular mission in a very intentional way.

This is our third strategic storyline.

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

1. Transform the Campus Culture through focus on faith development, wellness, diversity and inclusion.

*STORYLINE: To live, work or study at Andrews University will mean active engagement in a community that is passionate about being a caring, inclusive, healthy community of faith.*

2. Define the Andrews University footprint beyond the Berrien Springs campus through collaboration with church, community and higher education institutions.

*STORYLINE: Andrews University, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, partner institutions and the communities they serve will be richer because of the intentional engagement and influence of the University beyond its immediate campus.*

3. Position the University as a leader in teaching and learning.

*STORYLINE: In a competitive environment Andrews University must be able to provide a flexible, engaging, learning environment through faculty committed to the redemptive work of education. They will use both innovative and time-honored teaching methods, using the lens of “the teacher” in advancing research and engaging with service. The result will be a transformational education experience.*

4. Increase the quality and depth of the student learning experience.

*STORYLINE: As students have multiple options for their education, Andrews University must provide a student environment that makes the Andrews University choice irresistible.*

5. Engage in campus renewal and development to meet expectations of a campus for 2025.

*STORYLINE: Students and campus guests will experience an environmentally friendly campus that expresses its values through its physical campus spaces and provides state-of-the-art facilities for education, especially where professional spaces and equipment are required.*