

ENHANCING THE DREXEL EXPERIENCE: PENNONI HONORS COLLEGE STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030



DREXEL UNIVERSITY
Pennoni
Honors College

Message from the Dean

I am thrilled to share Pennoni Honors College's new strategic plan, an ambitious framework for our future. This plan sets forth a bold and ambitious new mission, vision, and values, which define the essence of who we are and how we will shape our future. Our plan's three pillars – integration, innovation, and enhancement – serve as a foundation to position the Pennoni Honors College as an integral part of Drexel's future and the future of higher education.

A strategic plan is only as strong as the process behind its creation. Our new plan is the result of an inclusive and intensive planning process that engaged all our stakeholders inside and outside of the University. Their voices are reflected in the strategies for each of our three pillars.

Developing our strategic plan is only the beginning. We will now implement the strategies laid out in our plan, monitoring our efforts and tracking our successes. This plan will guide our decisions, determine our priorities, and serve as our shared path forward.

This is truly an exciting moment for the Pennoni Honors College. Our new plan will ensure that we enhance the Drexel experience for everyone, bolster the University's reputation, and serve as a national model for interdisciplinary learning, institutional collaboration, and student-centered experiential learning. We look forward to the journey ahead.



Neville Vakharia, PhD
Dean, Pennoni Honors College



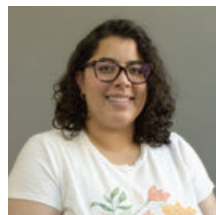
Message from the Strategic Planning Workgroup

This strategic plan is the culmination of many months of work on the part of Pennoni Honors College staff and the Strategic Planning Workgroup. Our workgroup was tasked with drafting the College's new mission, vision, and values and synthesizing the data gathered from stakeholders to shed light on Pennoni's strengths and areas of growth. We are happy to be sharing the results with you here.

Throughout this process, we were energized by the positive feedback we received about Pennoni as an inclusive, equitable, and welcoming college that enhances the Drexel experience. We were equally inspired by the growth opportunities highlighted by our students and alumni, who predominantly wanted even more engagement with the College. The pillars, strategies, and plans for implementation shared in this strategic plan grew directly out of this work.

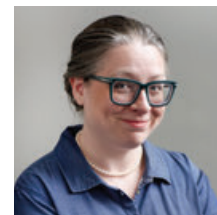
As we move into this next phase of implementation, we look forward to growing together as a college to better serve all members of our community and shape the future of higher education.

We could not have done this work without the dedication of every member of the Strategic Planning Workgroup:



CARA FANTINI, Med

Assistant Director of Undergraduate Research and Enrichment Programs



LEAH GATES, MA

Associate Director of Undergraduate Research and Enrichment Programs



GREG PROBST, MFA

2024-2025 Teagle Teaching Fellow



EMILY KASHKA-GINSBURG, MA

Associate Director of Undergraduate Research and Enrichment Programs
Co-Chair, Strategic Planning Workgroup



KENYON PRIVOTT

Honors Program Advisor



KATIE SULLIVAN BARAK, PhD

Director of the Center for Interdisciplinary Inquiry
Co-Chair, Strategic Planning Workgroup

Many thanks for their hard work and thoughtful contributions!



Reflection and a New Direction

Since its founding in 2002, Pennoni Honors College has played a pivotal role shaping Drexel and higher education. Navigating both internal and external inflection points, we have continuously considered who we want to be to best serve the University and our students. Our latest strategic planning process, culminating in the creation of our new strategic plan, was the College's most intensive and comprehensive process to date. For nine months, we reached out to our stakeholders, conducted interviews, facilitated conversations, analyzed survey data, and assessed the current landscape of honors education. This process served as a

critical moment of reflection to assess if our intended goals were impacting our stakeholders and addressing their needs.

Through this process, we established our new mission, vision, and values as well as identified our pillars of integration, innovation, and enhancement. By embodying these pillars, which serve as our guiding principles, and developing strategies to align ourselves with our mission, vision, and values, we not only give ourselves a framework but also an ambitious plan to position ourselves as a leading force within the University and within higher education.



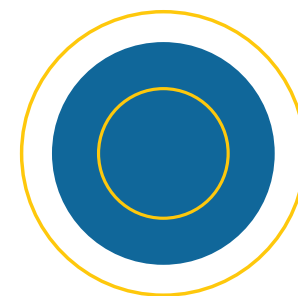
Putting Our Plan Together: Stakeholder Voices

Our strategic planning process was guided by a structure and timeline developed by Dean Vakharia to gather data, document our findings, and engage the entire College in the process.

From the start, our planning process was built on hearing from our stakeholders. Dean Vakharia met with deans and University leadership to understand their past and present relationships with the College and to assess how the College could support their future needs. These conversations sparked questions and curiosity about the work we do, revealing points of miscommunication and misunderstanding that we needed to address.

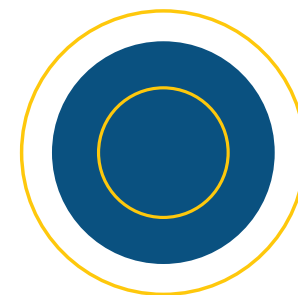


PLANNING STEPS:



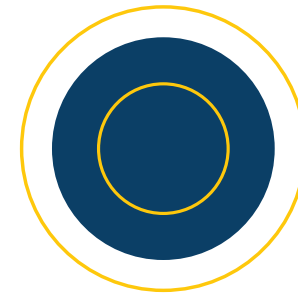
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Stakeholder
Engagement &
Environmental Scan



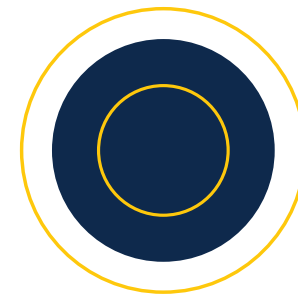
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Mission,
Vision, &
Values



3

Pillars &
Strategies



4

Documentation &
Communication



Our Timeline:

Stakeholder Engagement & Environmental Scan

→ Fall 2024 — Spring 2025

Mission, Vision, & Values

→ Winter 2024 — Spring 2025

Pillars & Strategies

→ Winter 2025 — Spring 2025

Documentation & Communication

→ Spring 2025 — Fall 2025

Putting Our Plan Together: Stakeholder Voices Continued:

These initial stakeholder meetings were followed by surveys and focus groups with our current student and alumni populations. Through our surveys, we asked broad questions about their impetus and rationale for applying to various programs within the Pennoni Honors College, if the College played a role in their decision to attend or remain at Drexel, and the benefits and challenges of their involvement with the College.

Through our focus groups, we facilitated deeper, substantive dialogues about a broad range of experiences. We heard about the many ways in which our programs have transformed their lives: how participating in the STAR Scholars program altered their trajectory as researchers, how being in the Custom-Designed Major reframed for alumni what education could be, and how Honors courses provided crucial respite and a broader perspective from their discipline-focused coursework. We listened closely to participants' feedback on improving access to our physical spaces, fostering a better sense of community amongst our students, and integrating our work with other colleges to ease students' schedules and workloads.

Through these conversations, we could align our aspirations with reality and determine the steps forward to build a pathway toward our goals.

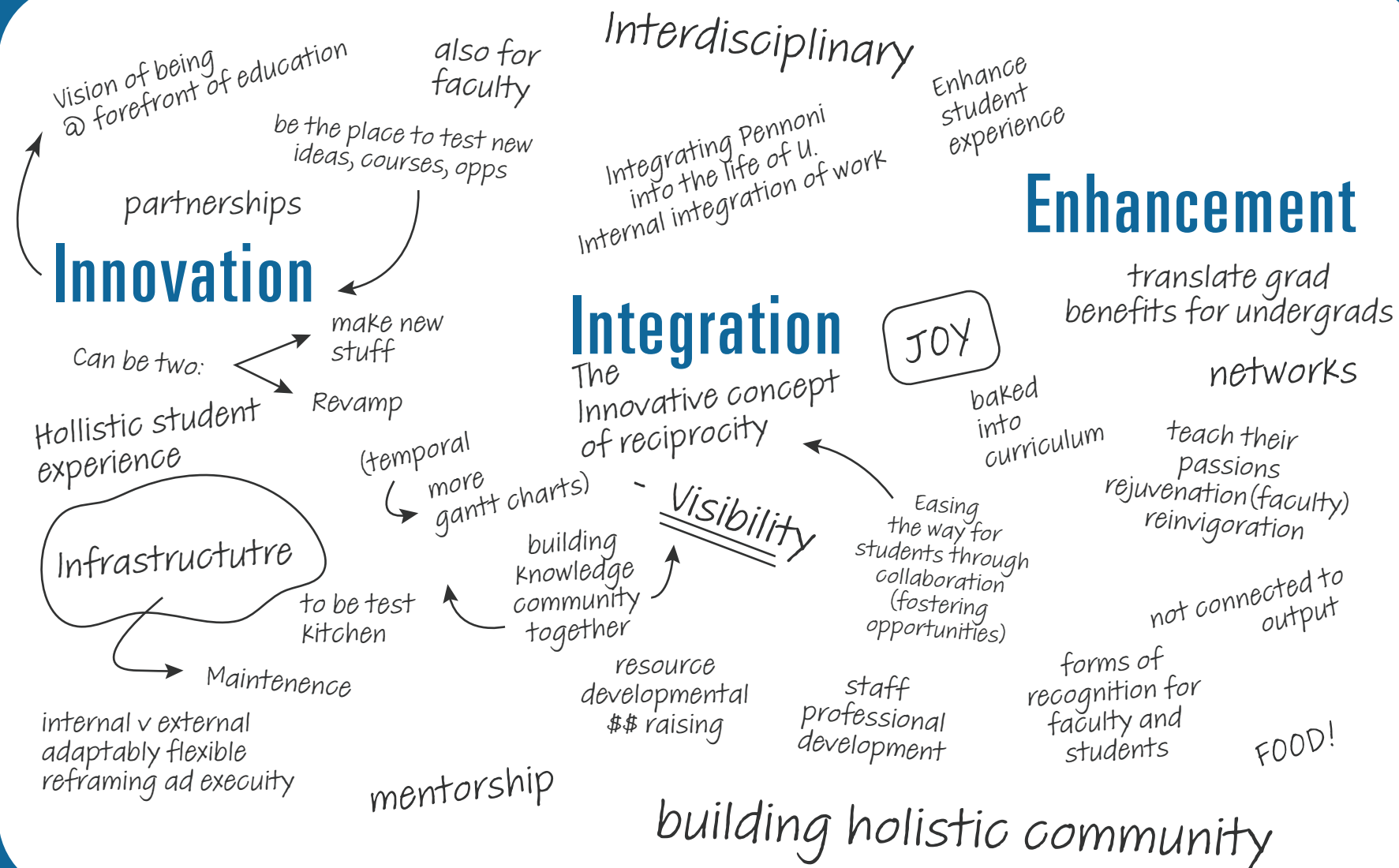
Putting Our Plan Together: From Data to Strategy

Throughout our data collection, analysis, and stakeholder conversations, we continually returned to the same words, phrases, and ideas. University leadership envisioned the Pennoni Honors College as more fully integrated into the fabric of the institution. Similarly, as a college, we also believe in the rich textures that emerge from deep and reciprocal collaborations across the University. The College has always been a site of experimentation and play. Therefore, it is vital that we remain a hub for faculty and staff to design and implement new ideas and practices in curricular development, research, and enrichment programming. Most importantly, we believe that we enhance the value proposition and student experience of Drexel, and our planning process identified areas of growth and opportunity that would ultimately enhance both the College's and Drexel's reputation.



Our Ideation Process

(Example Digital Whiteboard Rendering)



Putting Our Plan Together: From Data to Strategy

The threads of our three pillars – integration, innovation, and enhancement – were already woven into our strategic planning conversations but explicitly naming them provided us the anchoring necessary to frame our analysis and develop specific strategies to guide our work. Our Strategic Planning Workgroup, comprising members from units across the College, played a central role in synthesizing the data collected with the stories we gathered. The Workgroup drafted preliminary versions of our mission, vision, and values based on college-wide ideation sessions; analyzed survey and focus group data; and provided insight into the focal points for our strategic plan. From this work, they developed a comprehensive report articulating their findings and summarizing what they referred to as “glows” (what the College does well) and “grows” (areas in which the College needs to improve). The report formed the backbone for our pillars, strategies, and plans for implementation.

Mission

Vision

Values

Our Mission

Pennoni Honors College cultivates intellectual agency, motivated curiosity, and a conscientious community through collaboration and customization, serving all Drexel students, faculty, staff, alumni, and neighbors. Integrated across disciplines and campus life, Pennoni delivers innovative academic offerings, student-centered experiential learning, and a space for courageous conversations that welcomes students as their authentic selves, where they are advocated for, respected, and appreciated.



Mission

Our Vision

Pennoni Honors College will shape the future of higher education as a guiding light for interdisciplinary learning, institutional collaboration, and integrative experiences that emphasize student agency and enhance the Drexel experience.

Vision

Values

Mission

Vision

Values

Our Values

Access and Customization

Provide resources for students to learn, grow, and build, and empower students to pursue unique, individualized opportunities.

Community and Inclusion

Create culturally competent spaces that welcome all perspectives across the Drexel community, where each person feels safe, valued, and represented while building long-lasting bonds that extend beyond graduation.

Curiosity and Play

Bring a playful, creative spirit to learning that honors intellectual inquiry and imagination to provide a balanced education that is both rigorous and fun.

Our Pillars

Our pillars serve as guiding principles that shape our strategies and define our direction. Each reflects a bold, forward-looking vision for the future of the Pennoni Honors College.

Innovation

Pennoni centers care in our work to reimagine existing practices, develop new programs, and cultivate a supportive space for innovation at Drexel. Through holistic approaches to curriculum development, advising, research, and mentorship, we are a dynamic model for an enhanced educational experience.

Integration

Pennoni fosters a culture of reciprocity by strengthening collaborative relationships to leverage resources and build capacity throughout and beyond the University. This integrative approach ensures an interconnected, transparent, and enhanced experience for Drexel students, faculty, and staff in a way that continues to bolster the University's reputation.

Enhancement

Pennoni cultivates a student-centered community that ensures a more connected, celebrated, and joyful experience for all who engage with Pennoni. In building this community, we enhance the Drexel experience and foster belonging for all students, faculty, and staff.

Our Strategies



Integration Strategies

- Deepen and develop collaborative connections with academic and administrative units across the University to build capacity for experiential learning opportunities through undergraduate research, civic engagement, global engagement, and cooperative education.
- Align Pennoni's curricula with Drexel's core competencies and ensure academic offerings fit the needs and educational goals of students.
- Recruit and retain highly motivated students by facilitating a community where students feel a sense of belonging at the University.
- Communicate strategically to all stakeholders to build awareness and reputation throughout and beyond the University.



Our Strategies



Innovation Strategies

- Serve as the University's innovation lab for faculty and staff to advance contemporary approaches in interdisciplinary curricula, pedagogy, and experiential learning.
- Scale and disseminate Pennoni's best practices in collaboration with other academic units to deepen engagement, retention, and success for all Drexel students.
- Evaluate and streamline current practices and processes to ensure meaningful and holistic relationships with our stakeholders are always at the core of our work.
- Provide Pennoni staff with support to pursue professional development opportunities that strengthen cross-institutional collaboration, knowledge-building, and the integration of new ideas in curricular and co-curricular programming.



Our Strategies



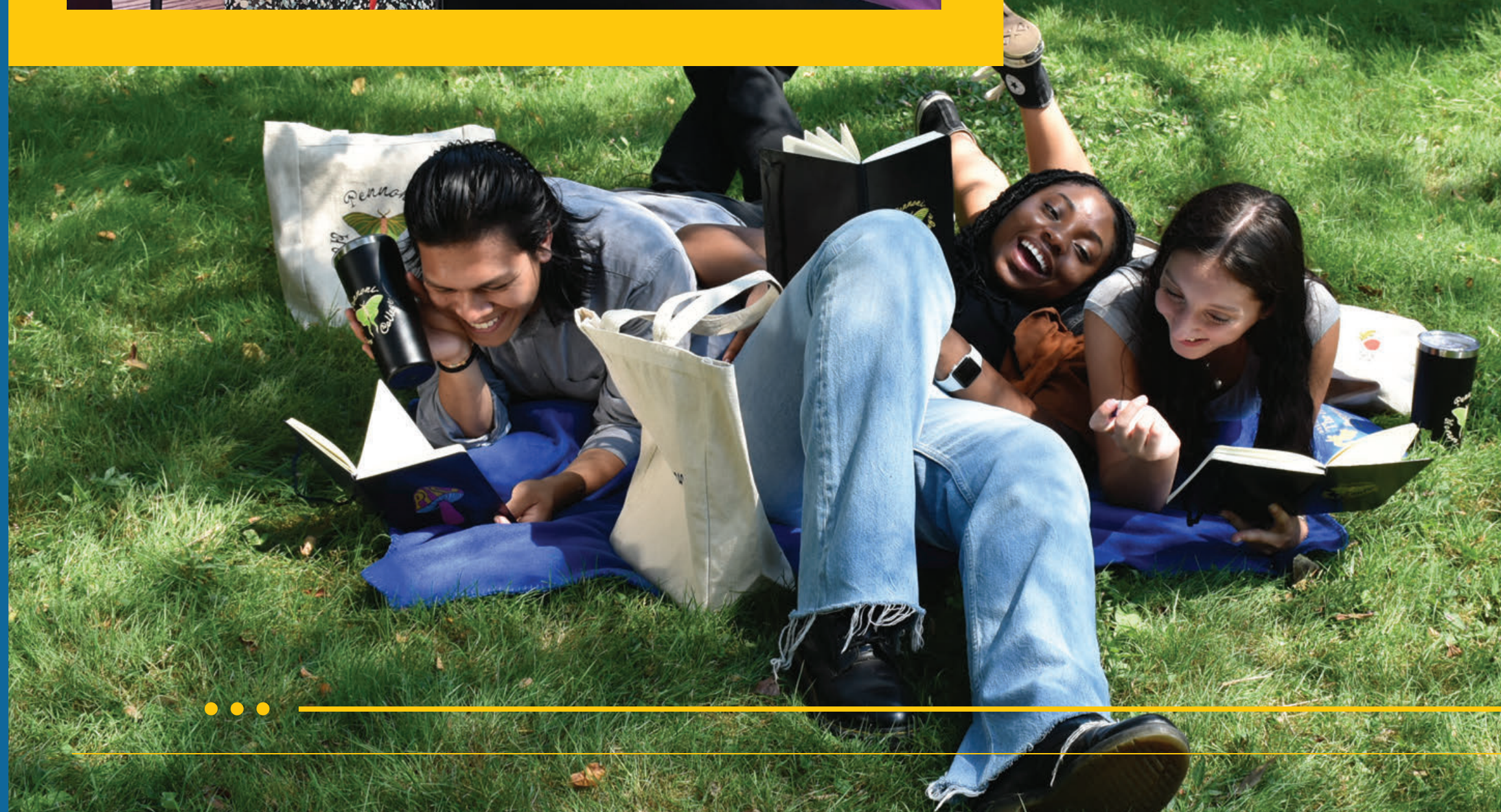
Enhancement Strategies

- Strengthen and open pathways for current student engagement to better foster community, relationship building, and a sense of affinity with Pennoni and the University.
- Ideate and implement initiatives and opportunities that underscore our programs' value proposition for students.
- Advance opportunities for Drexel faculty and staff to develop innovative courses, receive formal recognition, and engage with a supportive community of dedicated educators.
- Build and strengthen on-ramps to experiential learning opportunities for undergraduates at all stages, as well as providing supportive off-ramps for students to explore pathways as they pursue other possible futures.
- Build students' reflective capacity through curricular and co-curricular offerings that encourage connecting their experiences at Drexel to their professional and personal futures.
- Create and amplify modes of engagement that integrate current student and alumni feedback to help shape Pennoni's future.



Becoming Holistic: Implementing Our Strategic Plan

On the surface, our strategies are simple: become more integrated, foster innovation, and enhance our and Drexel University's reputation. To commit on paper is one thing, to accomplish our goals, however, is another. As our leadership team drafted our strategies, we considered the balance between aspiration and reality, generalities and nuance, and resources and sustainability. Our goals are robust and will great shift the trajectory of the college in a direction that is aligned with the University's during our academic transformation and beyond.



MOVING FORWARD



We are committing to deepening our relationships with our colleagues across the university and finding more ways to build reciprocity and community to provide a better infrastructure and experience for Drexel students, faculty, and staff. We are not only going to create the conditions necessary for faculty and students to innovate in the classroom and in their research endeavors but to actively disseminate our examples and build models for others' use.

By actively strengthening our relationships, opening up pathways for students, and creating opportunities, we will enhance Drexel's reputation as a university with both robust and meaningful experiences that will boost students' futures as well as one that ensures students reconnect with the innate pleasure of learning.

Our new strategic plan is the culmination of months of effort, many hours of dialogue, and the voices of more than two hundred stakeholders. Throughout this process, we have been guided and motivated by the feedback we have been given. We are tremendously excited to implement this plan and ensure that the Pennoni Honors College shapes the future of higher education, enhancing the Drexel experience for all.