



# Work Plan

*for*

**Christian Brothers University**

2023 - 2025

# Overview of CBU Work Plan for 2023–2025

In December 2022, the CBU executive team and Board of Trustees convened for a retreat to develop an initial list of strategic priorities for the University. The outcome of the retreat, which was moderated by Rev. Dennis Holtschneider, President of the Association of Catholic Colleges & Universities, was the identification of potential short- and long-term strategic directions for CBU. Because of the urgency to address institutional finances, the executive team was tasked with swiftly developing a 24-month plan for the Board to approve in Spring 2023. Anchored by general goals to grow enrollment, improve CBU's reputation, control costs, and improve gift and grant revenue, the two-year work plan was proposed and accepted by the Board at its May 2023 meeting.

In developing the plan, the executive team focused its work on identifying actions that would generate new revenue or reduce costs swiftly. Consequently, the plan is predominantly designed around new activities and initiatives and assumes the general maintenance of existing programs and operations. Collectively, the plan aims to generate a bottom-line improvement of \$4.8 million over fiscal year (FY) 2022 by the end of the 2025 fiscal year. The University will still need to improve its financial position going forward, but if successful, the plan will place the institution in a strong position toward sustainability.

The two-year plan is also constructed around initiatives that the executive team deems realistic and achievable either with existing resources or with prudent additions, such as attractive degree programs. Notably, the plan was also completed and approved against the backdrop of recent damages to campus facilities and the University's decision to voluntarily withdraw accreditation for the Physician Assistant Program.

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## I. PLAN GOALS

### 1. Increase Enrollment

Because CBU's fiscal position is strongly determined by revenue from tuition, fees, and housing, increasing enrollment stands out as the most critical component of the plan. The goal here also seeks to capitalize upon CBU's recent investments in undergraduate and graduate enrollment management leadership, staff, and resources.

The goal to grow enrollment will lean heavily on new undergraduate programs in Construction Management, Information Analytics, Engineering Technology, Political Science and Politics & Law, as well as other programs in the development pipeline. Likewise, CBU's new partnership with Rize along with program changes in Global College, have improved CBU's position in the online student marketplace where the University also expects to make enrollment gains. At the graduate level, new degrees will begin this year in Mental Health Counseling and Cybersecurity, and international students will remain a major part of the Graduate School's growth strategy.

#### Examples of Initiatives to Support Goal 1:

1. For traditional undergraduate enrollment, target class sizes for first time first year (FTFY) student enrollment to improve FTFY student tuition and fee revenue by \$8.2 million by FY 2025 (over FY 2022).
2. Increase graduate credit hours by 5,582 over the same period, resulting in \$6.1 million in revenue growth.

3. Continue to grow CBU's dual enrollment programming to increase annual dual enrollment revenue by \$119,000 by FY 2025.
4. Realize additional tuition and fees revenue in the transfer student market by continuing to implement its recruitment and growth plan for the Nursing program.
5. Increase endowments for funded scholarships.
6. Optimize athletic team rosters for student-athlete scholarships.
7. Develop new club sports that will be attractive within existing and new markets.
8. Pursue new initiatives in family outreach, campus safety communications, and improving campus vibrancy through more attractive and well-attended events.

### 2. Increase Reputation Impact

One of the most common themes to come out of the December retreat was sensitivity to the challenge of sustaining CBU's reputation for high quality education while also seeking opportunities for market differentiation. Our community takes tremendous pride in the transformational impact we have on our students, yet there is a common concern that too few people know about us and just how accessible and affordable we are. Consequently, the two-year plan is thoughtfully aimed throughout at sustaining and building CBU's reputation.

#### Examples of Initiatives to Support Goal 2:

1. Improve CBU's reputation for affordability by increasing the number of funded scholarships.
2. Deepen CBU's commitment to high quality education by actively promoting and showcasing CBU's students and programs for their strength in undergraduate research; pursue grants and recruitment opportunities to make undergraduate research even more central to CBU's academic identity.
3. Utilize nationally normed survey instruments (such as the recently completed National Survey for Student Engagement) to enhance student satisfaction; share the results of these studies with internal stakeholders, celebrate our strengths, and pursue improvements in identified areas of weakness.
4. Activate advisory boards to share CBU's story within their networks and inspire academic innovation.
5. Ensure a student-centric mindset across all areas of operation and within all academic departments. The entire student experience needs attention, and areas that excel in promoting student success and supporting our students will be elevated for their exemplary work.

### 3. Control Costs

This past year, CBU undertook the difficult action to reduce its workforce to realize \$1.1 million in payroll savings. More work needs to be done, however, and the two-year plan has identified opportunities for further cost savings. While the University recovers from fiscal losses due to recent years of lower than budgeted enrollments, it will be necessary to continue to keep operational costs—such as those for professional development and travel—as low as possible. As a sign of the plan's optimism, and with the board's approval, CBU will continue to implement its new compensation frameworks for faculty and staff. The costs for these increases are built into the two-year fiscal model. Nonetheless, frugal use of operating dollars is crucial during this period.

### **Examples of Initiatives to Support Goal 3:**

1. Continue to optimize class sizes and steadfastly reduce the number of low-enrolled courses, especially those with seven or fewer students.
2. Explore how CBU might partner with peer institutions, especially fellow Lasallian colleges, to reduce operating expenses and find mutually beneficial opportunities for revenue, such as through online course sharing.

### **4. Increase Gift and Grant Revenue**

#### **Examples of Initiatives to Support Goal 4:**

1. Cultivate and solicit seventy-five to 100 major donors and planned giving prospects to make unrestricted gifts in FY 2024 and FY 2025.
  2. Increase alumni giving by 2% during the plan period.
  3. Task the Board of Trustees with achieving 100% annual unrestricted gifts by its membership.
  4. Schedule special alumni and donor opportunities through targeted events for specific academic and athletics programs.
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## **II. CLOSING**

Historically, the conclusion of a strategic plan at Christian Brothers University is followed by a period of comprehensive planning that includes a wide-ranging study of the status of the University that exists as the result of the concluded plan. This work plan is designed to serve as a 'bridge' from the goals of the last plan – both met and unmet – to those which we will ascertain to best lead us into our future path to fulfill and expand our educational mission and to strengthen our Lasallian foundation.

It is built on the successes we achieved in our "Pathways to Success" Strategic Plan (2017-2022), as well as on the challenges we faced during the global COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in goals that were unmet, delayed, or perhaps require rethinking in lieu of the hard lessons we learned during those difficult years.