



MCLA Strategic Planning 2025-2030

FINDING OUR VOICE

May 2026 Campus Update

Overview

*Opportunities, challenges,
and achievements*

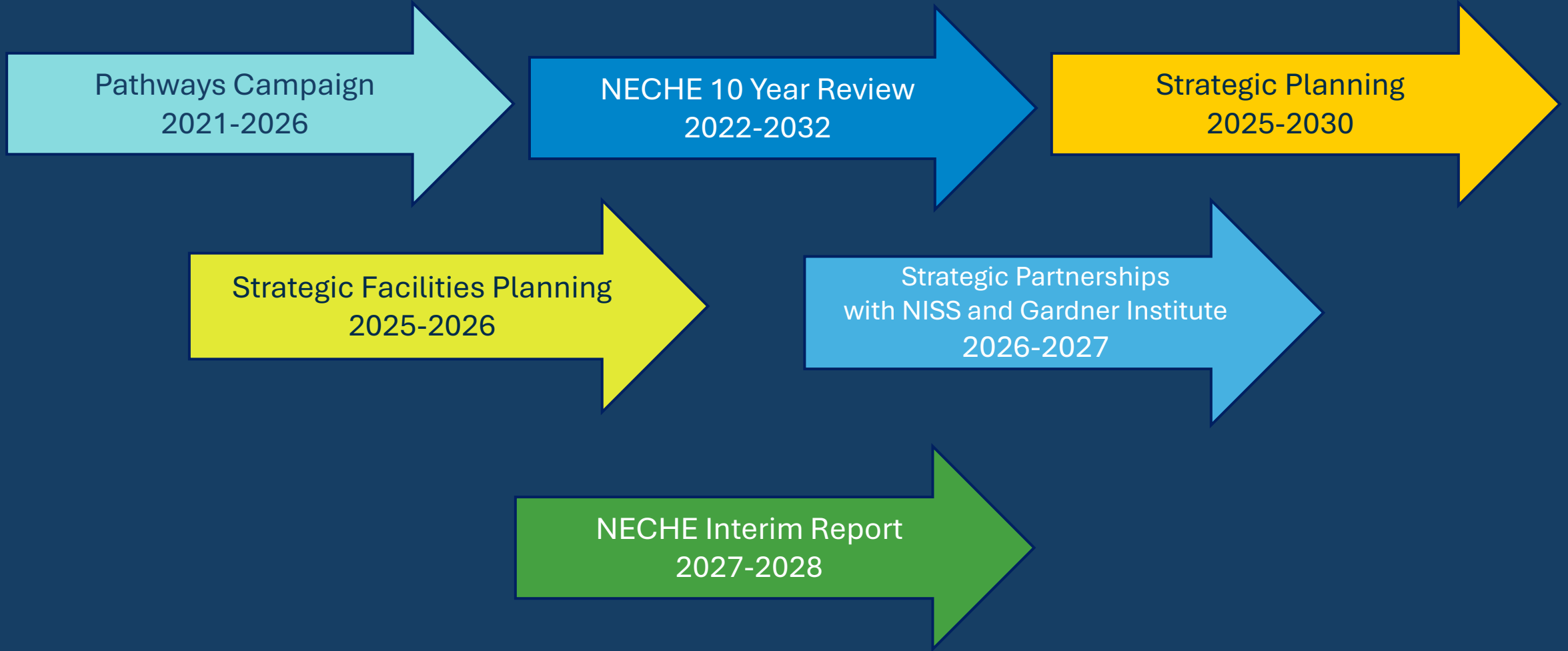
“Guided by our distinctive public liberal arts mission, this strategic plan reflects MCLA’s deep commitment to academic excellence, innovation, and belonging. The plan represents a call to action, urging us all to challenge assumptions, think creatively about our work, and act strategically in pursuit of our shared goal of making MCLA a stronger, more accessible and student-centered institution.”

President James F. Birge

Planning Process Participation

- ❖ Nearly 600 MCLA community members participated in the strategic planning process with close to 1,000 data points collected
- ❖ More than 75 MCLA community members are currently participating in the strategic planning working groups
- ❖ Project leaders are engaging additional campus colleagues in their work, creating an inclusive process

Institutional Planning Timeline 2021 - 2028



Plan Highlights

Goal 1: Distinctive liberal arts mission: Refine and promote MCLA's distinctive public liberal arts mission and vision in response to the evolving role of higher education and align key institutional decisions and resources accordingly

Goal 2: Increase access, belonging, and success: Build responsive and sustainable institutional structures and practices to increase access, belonging, and success for all members of the MCLA community, with particular focus on those traditionally excluded from higher education

Goal 3: Enhance the student experience: Strengthen and develop innovative initiatives that enhance the holistic student experience and cultivate a campus culture responsive to student voice

Financial Update

- ❖ Board budget is regularly monitored to ensure appropriate spending
- ❖ Tracking SUCCESS funds to ensure funds are utilized to support student success and engagement in support of the plan
- ❖ Built the FY 27-28 Strategic Planning budget
- ❖ Monitoring DCAMM (Bright Grant) funding opportunities to support campus upgrades
- ❖ Included Advancement on Oversight Committee



Goal Teams Participation

Goal 1

Jana Boyer
Carolyn Dehner
Bernadette Alden
Lynette Bond
Maggie Clark
Jen Dix
Mike Gladu
Tia Kareh
Doreen Kleinman
Masyn Lavariere
Kristin Nichols
Jami Pytko
Laura Standley

Goal 2

Patrick Connelly
Lynn C. White Cloud
Emily Alling
John Clark
Ashleigh Hala
Cindy MacDonald
Arianna Marroquin
Spencer Moser
Kerri Nicoll
Nicole Porther
Brenda Stokes
April Wright

Goal 3

Laura Mooney
Luke Morrill
Eva Bassallo
Jerel Dydowicz
Bob Fortini
Jenn Labbance
Valen Freitas
Whitney Gecker
Justin Golub
Brendon Goodridge
Elizabeth Harris
Brendan Kelly
Justina Trova

Goal 1: Liberal Arts Mission

- ❖ Updated mission statement draft developed to share with the MCLA community
- ❖ Advanced a draft of institutional learning outcomes to share with the community
- ❖ Conducted a full institutional website audit and optimization initiative
- ❖ Transformed social media into a managed institutional engagement and reputation channel with measurable impact
- ❖ Launched targeted streaming and connected digital campaign focused specifically on admitted students adding a yield optimization layer to the funnel
- ❖ Created a scalable, multi-channel content engine that supports recruitment, yield, and brand storytelling



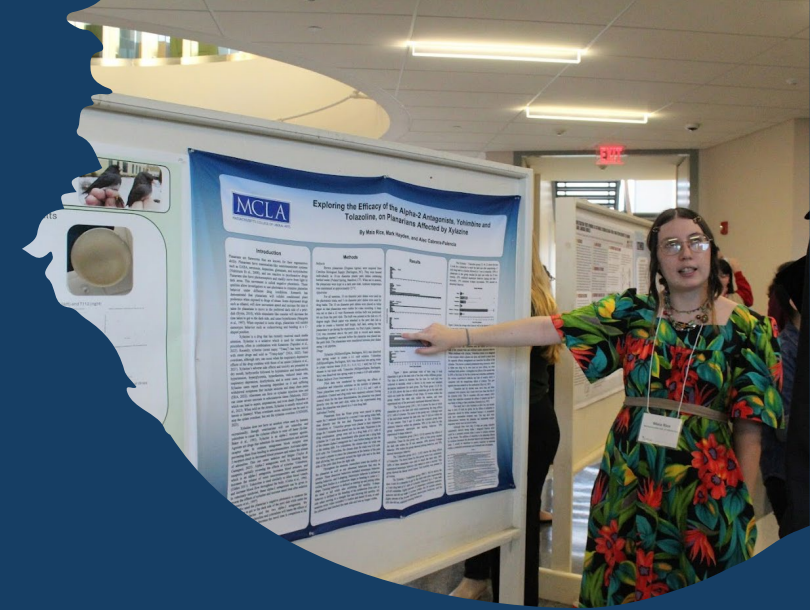
Goal 1: Liberal Arts Mission

- ❖ Launched a strategic, personalized communications initiative within Slate to reduce summer melt and improve transfer conversion
- ❖ Researched and developed new financial aid awarding parameters to better utilize institutional, state, and federal student aid to support students and enhance recruitment efforts
- ❖ Launched a comprehensive, institution-wide market research and brand study to establish a data-driven foundation for future strategic planning



Goal 2: Increase Access, Equity and Success

- ❖ Developed and chaired a campuswide, *Council on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*
- ❖ Explored the framework of the Okanagan Charter
- ❖ Examined MCLA's current framework and resources for curricular and co-curricular, High Impact Educational Practices (HIPs)
- ❖ Initiated steps towards HIP designation listing for curricular offerings in the course catalog
- ❖ Completed Campus Climate Survey and focus groups.
- ❖ Began reinvigoration of Community-Based Learning programs



Goal 2: Increase Access, Equity and Success

- ❖ Began development of an experiential transcript
- ❖ Piloted no cost educational materials in selected classes
- ❖ Continued work to make all course materials fully accessible to all students
- ❖ Enhanced civic engagement offerings for MCLA students to make connections with the North Adams community
- ❖ Built opportunities for student volunteerism within the North Adam Public Schools system
- ❖ Developed a database of contacts for community engagement partners



Goal 3: Enhance the Student Experience

- ❖ Reestablished key Academic & Student Affairs partnership to relaunch community-based Learning Programs
- ❖ Identified key MCLA milestones and created a Pathway Map students should complete during their time at the College
- ❖ Partnered with DCAMM to develop a comprehensive multi-year Campus Master Plan
- ❖ Reviewed student programming models at peer institutions to maximize MCLA's engagement and retention
- ❖ Engaged with national organization (NASPA) to evaluate Student Affairs staffing models, review organizational structures and key programs supporting student engagement



Goal 3: Enhance the Student Experience

- ❖ Launched centralized campus calendar and student engagement programming platform
- ❖ Partnered with Student Government Association to develop an institution wide inclusive based definition of student leadership
- ❖ Through SGA developed mechanism that is monitored and responded to remotely and in-person for students to share views and provide feedback
- ❖ Further development and utilization of the annual dining survey to continue to identify new dining options and best meet student needs



Looking Forward: Next Year

- ❖ Finalize and advance the College's updated mission and institutional learning outcomes
- ❖ Initiate discussions with DHE to explore specialty institution designation (e.g., MassArt, Mass Maritime)
- ❖ Align the College's budget with mission, values, and enrollment-driven priorities
- ❖ Grow non-tuition revenue through facilities rentals, professional development, and state funding opportunities
- ❖ Maintain ongoing website modernization to ensure accuracy, accessibility, and thoughtful AI integration
- ❖ Launch a refreshed brand identity and user-centered website redesign aligned with institutional priorities
- ❖ Partner with brand agency to develop a long-term marketing plan
- ❖ Create updated marketing materials that clearly convey MCLA's mission, values, and impact to key audiences



Looking Forward: Next Year

- ❖ Launch the Council on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and its charge
- ❖ Adopt and advance the *Okanagan Charter*
- ❖ Expand campus support for High Impact Practices. Deepen involvement and engagement of departments and CTL
- ❖ Develop and launch a Summer Bridge program
- ❖ Define key milestones MCLA students should achieve during their time at the College and develop a clear pathway that guides students
- ❖ Pilot campus transportation plan
- ❖ Revitalize community-based and Civic Learning programs
- ❖ Refresh student social and gathering spaces across campus



Looking Forward: Next Year

- ❖ Continue institutional progress in making all course materials low or no cost and fully accessible
- ❖ Create a student employment program that helps students develop essential skills
- ❖ Develop a Transfer Success Coaching program
- ❖ Strengthen relationships with Community Colleges to increase the transfer pipeline
- ❖ Enhance leadership program offerings for all students
- ❖ Enrich social programming offerings including late-night and weekend events and additional engagement opportunities as well as programming to better support commuters and first-generation students
- ❖ Reestablish MCLA's Racial Equity Summit



Mission Statement & Learning Outcomes

Mission Statement Working Group

Staff

Carolyn Dehner
Justina Trova
Logan Keyes

Faculty

Ruby Vega
Pete Hoyt
Laura Standley
Jeremy Winchester
Tom Byrne

Students

Masyn Lavariere
Allie Bayer

Alumni

Bristol Sternfield '21
Colby Harvish '16

Community member

Tim Callahan

Mission Statement

Current mission statement:

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) is the Commonwealth's public liberal arts college and a campus of the Massachusetts state university system. MCLA promotes excellence in learning and teaching, innovative scholarship, intellectual creativity, public service, applied knowledge, and active and responsible citizenship. MCLA prepares its graduates to be practical problem solvers and engaged, resilient global citizens.

Revised mission statement:

MCLA offers a student-centered and accessible public liberal arts education within an inclusive community. With a focus on close mentorship, interdisciplinary studies, and experiential learning, MCLA prepares graduates to successfully adapt and thrive in a changing world.

Mission Statement

- ❖ Is this our why?
- ❖ What does this say about MCLA's ambitions as a public liberal arts college?
- ❖ Does this differentiate us from our competitors?
How?
- ❖ Does this reflect what we are passionate about at MCLA?
- ❖ Will this create campus alignment and agreement?
- ❖ Will this resonate with our target audiences?



Mission Statement

Instructions:

As you exit 218, please take a raffle ticket which has your room number on it. Go to that space to meet your group. Using the handouts provided in each room, answer the questions fully. Identify a note taker to capture the group's discussion. We will collect your notes at the end of the session. You will have approximately 15 minutes for your discussion.

Breakout rooms available:

Room 218

Room 213

Room 216

Room 208

Room 203

Room 201

Learning Outcomes

1. **Communicate and Connect**

Students will effectively communicate and present ideas with clarity, intention, and confidence for diverse audiences and cultures; listen and respond to promote mutual understanding; and use creative, visual, and human-centered digital strategies to enhance meaning.

2. **Think Critically and Identify/Solve Problems**

Students will understand the foundational components of systems and fields of knowledge; develop the skills to examine and question assumptions within them; and propose a solution/resolution.

3. **Collaborate and Lead**

Students will become transformative change makers by collaborating, providing meaningful contributions, and supporting others.

Learning Outcomes

4. **Adapt and Keep Growing**

Students will utilize feedback to widen their perspective, take initiative in new or challenging environments, and demonstrate resilience when faced with change.

5. **Understand Yourself and the World**

Students will cultivate self-awareness and a sense of purpose, informed by an understanding of ethical decision-making and social responsibility in an interconnected world.

Learning Outcomes

- ❖ Do the outcomes clearly identify the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that students should be able to demonstrate during their time at MCLA?
- ❖ Are the outcomes aligned with elements of the Core, departments, and graduate learning?
- ❖ Do the outcomes represent learners as active participants and partners in their own education and that of others?
- ❖ Are the outcomes observable and stated in assessable terms of what students should know and be able to do (i.e., can they be demonstrated with evidence of student work)?
- ❖ Does the language of the outcomes elicit ideas of concrete assignments or experiences through which students could demonstrate the knowledge or skill?
- ❖ Do the outcomes indicate a degree of academic rigor or level of student performance and achievement?

Learning Outcomes

Instructions:

Return to the same room where your group met for the mission statement breakout. Using the handouts provided in each room, answer the questions fully. Identify a note taker to capture the group's discussion. We will collect your notes at the end of the session. You will have approximately 15 minutes for your discussion.

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“I am confident that we will work together as a community to advance these goals and enhance the positive impact MCLA already has – on our students and their families, our 21,000 alumni, our faculty and staff, our city and the region, as well as the Commonwealth.”

President James F. Birge

Thank you

Have a great summer!