



# Sage Forward 2025-2029

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**THE RUSSELL SAGE COLLEGE STRATEGIC PLAN**

*Approved by Russell Sage College Board of Trustees October 2025*

## OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Everyone thinks their  
college is special.  
We know ours is.



## A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

**Russell Sage College was founded in 1916 by Margaret Olivia Slocum Sage** — a woman of remarkable conviction, generosity, and vision. At a time when women were still fighting for the right to vote, she created a college that offered something radical: the power of education as a pathway to independence. She believed women should be empowered — financially, intellectually, and professionally — to shape their own lives and transform the world around them.

In her letter to our first graduating class, she urged students to become “a great power for good in the world.”

More than a century later, that call to action still echoes in our mission — and is the foundation of our Sage Forward strategic plan.

Today, Russell Sage is a coeducational institution with a broader, more inclusive reach — but the same unwavering belief in the power of education to empower lives. With a distinctive two-campus model in Albany and Troy, we serve students from every background and walk of life: first-generation students, transfer students seeking belonging, adults retooling for new careers, veterans, and aspiring leaders of every identity. We remain committed to ensuring every individual in our community is heard, valued, and equipped to thrive — just as Margaret Olivia envisioned.

Our impact is measurable. We are one of just 1% of colleges nationwide that combine a small-college experience with professionally focused programs from the bachelor’s to doctoral level. For seven consecutive years, we’ve been ranked among the top 25 colleges in the nation for social mobility by *U.S. News & World Report*.

This past year has also marked a historic chapter — our plan to merge with Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences — another institution committed to being a great force for good in the world, and a leader in healthcare, pharmaceutical science, and biomedical research.

What makes us special is our willingness to be bold. Our new strategic plan, which was shaped through collaboration with students, faculty, staff trustees, alumnae/i and community partners, reflects the same vision of Margaret Olivia when she opened Russell Sage College.

It puts people first.

It recognizes high schoolers who believe in the power of higher education but need guidance and support. It improves pathways for transfer students, who have long been a vital part of our community but deserve refined systems that create smooth transitions. It supports graduate students seeking career-relevant, flexible learning. And it acknowledges that life isn't linear, and education should be adaptable, with room to exit and re-enter when life gets in the way.

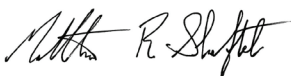
The plan also prioritizes our employees, who are our superpower. It strengthens bonds with alumnae/i, who are both our past and our future. With plans to update facilities and ever-evolve academic programs, it meets the needs of our workforce partners, who are our champions.

And it charts the future for Russell Sage University — what we plan to name the merged institution in fall 2027 — pending regulatory approvals.

With deep gratitude: This plan reflects the contributions of hundreds of individuals across the Russell Sage community — students, faculty, staff, trustees, alumnae/i, and friends — who brought their ideas, energy, and aspirations to the table. Thank you for your vision, your voice, and your belief in what Sage is, has been, and can become. I am honored to join in this work with you.

This is more than a plan. It's a roadmap for transformation — ambitious, inclusive, forward-looking, and deeply rooted in our values. We believe Margaret Olivia would be proud to see how her vision continues to inspire us: To be. To know. To do.

Sincerely,



**Matthew Shaftel, Ph.D.**

*President*

*Russell Sage College*

## OUR MISSION AND VISION

### MISSION STATEMENT

Together, Russell Sage and ACPHS form a community of scholars committed to empowering students...

**TO BE:** to provide the individual student with the opportunity and means to develop and advance personally and professionally, and thus to be successful in achieving life goals.

**TO KNOW:** to contribute to the larger society a group of diverse, thoughtful, and competent citizen-leaders who continue to be engaged in the pursuit of lifelong learning.

**TO DO:** to translate learning and research into action and application — across education, business, arts and sciences, health sciences and pharmacy, and criminal justice — recognizing the obligation of educated persons to lead and to serve their communities.

**\*Note:** This mission statement is a draft statement, revised in light of the planned merger with Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (ACPHS). The merger is estimated for completion in fall 2027, pending all regulatory approvals. The vision statement will be revised at a future date.

### VISION STATEMENT

Russell Sage College will become the nation's leading catalyst for social mobility by offering a holistic and intentional educational experience that aligns with the evolving needs of the workforce and society. We foster a culture of well-being through innovative, student-centered systems that make college easier to navigate. We empower students – regardless of their background – to reach their fullest potential and graduate as skilled professionals who are also compassionate, mindful individuals, living the principles of Be. Know. Do.

## A PLAN SHAPED BY VALUES AND WOVEN WITH THREADS

This strategic plan is the result of deep listening, wide engagement, and shared aspiration. From the beginning, our process was anchored in the voices of our community — students, employees, trustees, alumnae/i, and regional partners — who helped synthesize the core values and thematic “threads” that define Russell Sage College.

These five threads — Students First, Fortifying Our Future, Empowering Our People, Connecting and Contributing, and Operational Excellence — along with our values of distinction, became the foundation of our planning efforts.

As the plan took shape, those threads and values did not remain in silos. Like any great tapestry, they were woven together — interlacing, strengthening, and enhancing one another.

The result is a focused and actionable framework: four strategic imperatives, grounded in 17 objectives, that build on our legacy and position us boldly for the future. While each imperative draws from multiple threads, the influence of our community’s input is embedded throughout. This plan does not abandon those five themes; it fully integrates them — into a cohesive, empowering vision for the next chapter of Russell Sage.

## CHALLENGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

Our strategic plan equips every Sage student to thrive in a rapidly evolving world. We recognize challenges like elevating student success and well-being are not simply institutional goals, they are responses to the shifting demographics and lived realities of our students, many of whom juggle work, family, and education in pursuit of transformative opportunity. The demand for holistic support systems reflects the growing number of nontraditional students, including transfer students, adult learners, veterans, and career-changers, who require flexible pathways and personalized guidance.

Similarly, our focus on strengthening compensation, professional development, and community ties acknowledges that today’s workforce expects and deserves equitable structures and authentic belonging. As we modernize our physical and digital infrastructure, we recognize that high-quality learning spaces and accessible technologies are essential to fostering a sense of place and belonging.

Throughout this work, we are guided by two key assumptions:

1. Maintaining our baseline of academic excellence and financial sustainability is foundational and not the primary work of the plan.
2. We must remain nimble and prepared to recalibrate should federal and state funding models, competitive landscapes, or global forces shift in unexpected ways.

In embracing these challenges, our plan aspires to meet the needs of today and become a catalyst for the social mobility and empowerment of every student we serve.

## DISTINCTIVE VALUES

**Social Mobility and Empowerment:** Commitment to empowering individuals – regardless of their background – to reach their fullest potential.

**Students First:** Prioritizing student success, well-being, and holistic development.

**Inclusivity:** Commitment to equity, belonging, and a welcoming community where every individual feels valued and supported.

**Care:** Nurturing and supportive environment that values individual well-being and care.

**Agility:** Ability to adapt and respond effectively to changing needs.

## STRATEGIC THREADS



**Students First:** Student success, inclusivity, evolving academic programs, athletics, dynamic/experiential learning. How can we ensure students thrive and adapt our academic offerings for a changing student body?



**Fortifying Our Future:** Continued financial stability, fundraising, enrollment, housing, and campus planning. How do we continue to secure our future through enrollment, endowment growth, and realistic facilities planning?



**Empowering Our People:** Supporting faculty/staff with professional growth, competitive compensation, and inclusion. How do we recruit, retain, develop, and empower talent?



**Connecting and Contributing:** Engaging alumnae/i, building external partnerships, and contributing to the community. How do we strengthen our connections with our students and our community?



**Pursuing Operational Excellence:** Improving processes, data-driven decisions, and continuous enhancement. How do we — effectively and without friction — make informed decisions and continually strengthen our operations?

# OUR PROCESS AND TIMELINE

## TIMELINE

- **August 2024:**  
Cabinet retreat – draft strategic planning guide initiated
- **September 2024:**  
Initial Board of Trustees feedback; Faculty Executive Committee feedback; alumnae/i, faculty, and staff surveys; EAB kickoff
- **October 2024:**  
Open forums, inauguration, board planning session
- **November 2024-March 2025:**  
Workgroups formed, including representatives from students, faculty, and staff, to gather data, engage stakeholders, and propose strategic goals, action steps, and metrics
- **April 2025-May 2025:**  
Refinement of goals, metrics, and stakeholder feedback
- **June 2025:**  
Board of Trustees reviews and approves timeline
- **July 2025-August 2025:**  
Finalize writing and design
- **October 2025:**  
Board of Trustees votes to approve plan
- **Fall 2025:**  
Strategic plan launch to the community

## PLANNING TEAM MEMBERS

Matt Shaftel - *Sage Forward Co-Chair*  
Theresa Hand - *Sage Forward Co-Chair*  
Noora Ahmed - *Student Representative*  
David Baecker  
Rick Barthelmas - *Co-Chair*  
Becky Bernhardt - *Co-Chair*  
Sarah Brockway  
Megan Brousseau  
Judy Campisi - *Board of Trustees liaison*  
Lynn Capirsello  
Erica Carlo - *Co-Chair*  
Sara Carlson  
Trish Cellemme - *Co-Chair*  
MaryBeth Cusack  
Laura D'Agostino - *Co-Chair*  
Devlin Daley  
Sadiyah De La Rosa  
Caroline DeCota - *Board of Trustees liaison*  
Joe Degroot - *Student Representative*  
John Dion  
Francesca Durand  
Tracy Egan-Lasek  
Erin Elkins  
Brian Evers  
Erica Faas-Li  
Elizabeth Gallagher  
Grace Giancola  
Jenn Gish - *Co-Chair*  
Sonya Hauser  
Cathy Hill - *Board of Trustees liaison*  
Sean Hovendick  
Sarah Hunter  
Mary Kate Heffernan

Glenda Kelman  
Katie Lesko - *Co-Chair*  
Jim Lyons  
Joan Martin - *Board of Trustees liaison*  
Matt McElligott  
Kathy McLaughlin  
Geoffrey Miller - *Co-Chair*  
Albert Morban - *Student*  
Jenn Morrill - *Co-Chair*  
Sharon Murray  
Tim Noonan  
Chet Opalka - *Board of Trustees liaison*  
Rebecca Palmer  
Tammy Parsons - *Board of Trustees liaison*  
Amy Pass  
Sandra Penney  
Jermaine Privott  
Kate Proctor  
Andrea Rehn  
Kirk Robinson - *Strategic Plan Director*  
Stacey Rowland - *Board of Trustees liaison*  
Karen Schell  
Ali Schaeffing - *Co-Chair*  
Kelly Smith  
Patty Sparrell - *Board of Trustees liaison*  
Sheri Spraker  
Pete Stapleton - *Co-Chair*  
Ryan Sue  
Robin Taubin - *Board of Trustees liaison*  
Ryan Venter  
Fran Vorsky  
Chris Ward - *Board of Trustees liaison*  
John Zajaceskowski

## STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE 1:

# Equip Every Sage Student to Thrive

Develop a student-centered ecology of learning — integrating proactive, guided pathways; academic and career support; and holistic services across all modalities and life stages — to ensure every student is understood as an individual and is equipped to succeed and thrive beyond graduation.

## GOAL 1: Cultivate Whole-Person Success Through Thrive@Russell Sage

In the spirit of Thrive@Russell Sage, ensure every student receives proactive, personalized support — including transformational advising, success coaching, wellness services, and financial guidance — grounded in Sage’s distinctive culture of care and designed to help students flourish in college and beyond. (Success Indicators: 80% undergraduate retention with a steady increase and a steady increase of graduate student completion rates)

### Tactics:

- 1. Empower a Centralized Student Success Team:**  
 Team will proactively identify and remove cultural, academic, and operational barriers, while increasing cross-departmental collaboration, optimizing internal processes, and adjusting policies to reduce friction and ensure coordinated, high-quality support. This team will lead flexible academic recovery efforts, such as early alerts, grade replacement, summer coursework, and alternative pacing for gateway courses, and partner with operational offices (Financial Aid, Registrar, Student Accounts) to standardize and streamline service delivery and reduce administrative friction. They will also launch in-person and virtual Success Hubs offering integrated academic, career, wellness, accessibility, and administrative support, fostering a proactive, help-seeking student culture. [Sample KPI: # of policies adapted and improved, student satisfaction results] (Within 2 years)
- 2. Ensure Seamless Recruitment-to-Retention Experience:** Align communication and support structures from first contact through graduation to provide a clear, cohesive, student-centered journey, curating common entry points (orientation, RSC 101, etc.) to provide individualized academic, social, and persistence supports. [Sample KPI: disaggregated retention, graduation rates] (Within 2 years)
- 3. Build Completion and Affordability Supports:**  
 Expand completion scholarships, emergency microgrants, and flexible work-study for Pell-eligible, working, and near-completion students at undergraduate and graduate levels. [Sample KPI: # of students utilizing completion scholarships, outreach/tracking “near completion”] (Within 2 years)
- 4. Deploy Curricular Support and Early Alert Systems:**  
 Embed targeted interventions in courses with a high percentage of Ds, Fs, or Withdraws (DFWs), align
- dashboards for real-time outreach, and use tools like EAB Major Maps to clarify student progress and success. [Sample KPIs: reduce “no-alert” probationations by 50% before 1/1/28, opportunity program success rates] (Within 2 years)
- 5. Build an Integrated, Proactive Mentorship Model:**  
 Assign each student dedicated mentors — including faculty, staff, peers, and alumnae/i — to support academic, personal, and career development, and to foster connection to Sage’s culture of care. [Sample KPI: mentor engagement rate, engagement totals] (Within 1-3 years)
- 6. Strengthen Academic Advising Systems:** Address faculty advising loads, provide professional development and tools, enhance advising technology and guided pathway systems, and introduce professional success coaching for first-year students. [Sample KPI: range of student-to-advisor ratios and advisor retention rates, # of instances of misadvising] (Within 1-3 years)
- 7. Expand Student Wellness Services:** Implement a stepped-care mental health model, improve access to counseling, enhance outreach around support resources, and strengthen campus partnerships to address basic needs, such as food insecurity. [Sample KPI: # of student visits to wellness services, wait times for services] (Within 2-4 years)
- 8. Inclusive Pedagogy and Intentional Design:**  
 Reimagine schedules and classroom practices — including curated asynchronous and hybrid formats where appropriate — flexible exam timing, and inclusive pedagogy to meet contemporary learners where they are. [Sample KPI: heatmap of schedules, reduction in # of distinctive accommodations] (Within 2-4 years)

## GOAL 2: Design Guided Pathways for Students Beyond the Traditional 4-Year Model

Establish Sage as the most transfer-friendly private college in the region and a national leader in adult, re-entry, and exploratory education by delivering deliberate, learner-centered pathways for students who pursue college outside the traditional timeline or initial career pursuit. Initiatives include a branded exploratory degree for undeclared students, stackable credentials, hybrid formats, and seamless undergraduate-to-graduate transitions. (Success Indicators: double undeclared yield, add 150 adult and transfer enrollments by 2029)

### Tactics:

- 1. Launch the Sage Forever Program:** Support 50 returning stop-out students annually with re-entry advising and normalized off-ramp/on-ramp structures. [Sample KPI: re-entry yield, re-entry advising sessions] (Within 2 years)
- 2. Expand Flexible Course Formats:** Appropriately scale selected hybrid/asynchronous upper-division undergraduate and selected graduate programs to accommodate working students. [Sample KPI: # of flexible course interventions/online courses, one program for working students by 8/1/27] (Within 2 years)
- 3. Enhance Transfer Pathways:** Increase transfer enrollment from 150 to 300 annually through segmented transfer pathways, AI-driven credit evaluations, and targeted articulation agreements. [Sample KPI: speed/response time of transfer evaluations, transfer student yield] (Within 2 years)
- 4. Deliver Pre-Transfer and Graduate Advising:** Provide proactive advising through Gator Gateway and embed a “Graduate Pathways Week” into the undergraduate experience. [Sample KPI: # of sessions, increased persistence from undergraduate to graduate students] (Within 2 years)
- 5. Expand Dual Degree and 4+1 Programs:** Grow undergraduate participation in linked graduate pathways from 10% to 40%, adding options in MBA, Education, Health Professions, and selected growth areas. [Sample KPI: # of outreaches to potential graduate student population, increase rate of undergraduate-to-graduate student conversion to 20% by 2028] (Within 2 years)
- 6. Build an Adult Learner Pipeline:** Develop a task force to attend to “some college, no degree” population, offering credit for prior learning, stackable credentials, and for select programs, hybrid or asynchronous offerings. [Sample KPI: # of flexible offerings, adult learner yield] (Within 2 years)
- 7. Expand Graduate Student Support:** Provide tailored coaching, peer groups, mentorship, and flexible pacing to meet diverse life and work responsibilities. [Sample KPI: increase total % of academic support at graduate level, graduate student satisfaction with support] (Within 2-4 years)
- 8. Help Our Major Explorers:** Create a branded exploratory major with a focus on four hands-on experiences in year one to develop career pathways. Leverage exploratory growth, geographical expansion, and Sage Engage to grow traditional first-year enrollment to 500 by 2029. [Sample KPI: undeclared yield, conversion rates between academic exploration and Sage majors] (Within 2-4 years)

## GOAL 3: Champion the Student-Athlete Experience as a Model of Empowerment

Invest in a vibrant scholar-athlete experience by enhancing coaching, facilities, and student development grounded in wellness and academic success — affirming Sage as a destination for student-athletes who lead with character, grit, and purpose. (Success Indicator: achieve or surpass Empire 8 Conference averages for athletic facilities, graduation rates, and GPA)

### Tactics:

- 1. Embed Performance and Wellness Support:**  
Collaborate with faculty and staff to integrate strength training, mental performance coaching, and build interdisciplinary approaches to nutrition that promote student-athlete wellness and performance. [Sample KPI: # of integrated sessions, student-athlete satisfaction] (Within 2 years)
- 2. Affirm Athletics as a Powerful Pathway to Post-College Success:** Expand leadership and life-skills programming for student-athletes, and formalize this development through co-curricular microcredentials that appear on the co-curricular transcript. [Sample KPI: utilization of microcredentials amongst athletes, student-athlete graduate employment rates] (Within 2 years)
- 3. Unify Athletic Identity and Equipment Management:** Launch a department-wide uniform and gear program to ensure equity, promote Gator pride, and elevate Sage’s brand — while also modernizing equipment inventories, maintenance protocols, and safe storage systems. [Sample KPI: cost/efficiency metrics on equipment] (Within 2-4 years)
- 4. Invest in High-Quality Coaching and Support:** Ensure programs are led by full-time head coaches and are staffed appropriately to match roster needs, supporting both team development and cohesion. [Sample KPI: coach/student ratios, conference benchmarks] (Within 2-4 years)
- 5. Expand Access to Home Facilities and Resources:** Pursue a comprehensive facilities strategy to provide home courts, fields, locker rooms, and practice spaces. Build funding opportunities — including ticket sales, concessions, corporate sponsorships, and donor engagement — to support these enhancements and elevate the visibility of Sage athletics. [Sample KPI: status against conference benchmarks, prospective-athlete yield] (3 years and beyond)

### Estimated Strategic Imperative 1 Investments

*Recurring prioritized investments:* \$120,000

*Recurring investments:* \$685,000

*One-time investments:* \$385,000

*Possible campaign goal:* \$8.5 million

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE 2:

## **Establish Sage as a National Beacon of Social Mobility and Empowerment**

In the spirit of our bold and unapologetic founder, Margaret Olivia Slocum Sage, we will help students from all backgrounds unlock their potential and build purposeful, fulfilled lives through nationally recognized career pathways, financial access, and critical centers like our Denise Taber Finard '80 Women's Institute.

## GOAL 1: Advance National Recognition for Social Mobility and Opportunity Impact

Pursue Carnegie Opportunity College designation and maintain top 25 *U.S. News & World Report* social mobility recognition by improving access, outcomes, and long-term return on investment through integrated academic, financial, and career-focused strategies, and by positioning Sage as a regional leader in promoting the value of higher education. (Success Indicators: achieve Carnegie Opportunity designation, maintain top 25 for social mobility in *U.S. News & World Report*, engagement on College Attainment Campaign landing page)

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### Tactics:

- 1. Pursue and Promote Opportunity College**  
**Recognition:** Designate a cross-functional team to lead the Carnegie Opportunity College pursuit. [Sample KPI: progress toward Carnegie Opportunity College status] (Within 2 years)
- 2. Strengthen Equity Metrics and Close Gaps:** Track enrollment, retention, and outcomes for Pell-eligible and first-generation students; use early alert and retention analytics to improve performance and close opportunity gaps. [Sample KPI: disaggregated retention, disaggregated speed-to-graduation] (Within 2 years)
- 3. Amplify Sage's Mobility Narrative:** Promote outcomes-driven programs (e.g., Thrive@Russell Sage, Sage Engage, Sage Forever, a branded exploratory major, service learning) as engines of upward mobility; incorporate this impact into institutional marketing and advancement. [Sample KPI: earned media, enrollment funnel, College Attainment Campaign landing page visits] (Within 2 years)

## GOAL 2: Elevate Career Confidence and Experiential Learning to Lead the Region in Job Placement

Ensure that every Sage student graduates with the confidence, skills, and experiences to pursue meaningful careers and lives of purpose — positioning Sage as the Capital Region’s leader in career readiness and job placement. Through universal, financially supported experiential learning; robust, iterative career preparation; and Sage Signature microcredentials — including financial literacy, National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)-aligned career readiness, and identity-based learning — students will demonstrate career-aligned competencies. These achievements will be tracked through a comprehensive co-curricular transcript reflecting academic growth, inclusive engagement, and real-world preparation. (Success Indicators: document 90% of undergraduates at or above NACE competencies, exceed national standards for graduate pass rates, placement rates, starting salaries)

### Tactics:

- 1. Embed Early Exploration and Transition Support:** Provide structured career exploration for first-year students and robust transition programming through the Career and Self-Discovery Center for seniors and credential completers. [Sample KPI: % of first-year students completing required career exploration; % of students engaging in career assessments] (Within 2 years)
- 2. Feedback-Driven Career Curriculum:** Use first-destination survey data to regularly update and improve career-readiness programming. [Sample KPI: rate of data-informed development in career readiness, partner satisfaction] (Within 2 years)
- 3. Use Career Outcomes to Drive Continuous Improvement:** Strengthen post-graduation data collection — including employment, graduate school placement, and loan repayment — and use those insights to refine career-preparation programming, academic-to-career alignment, and return-on-investment storytelling. [Sample KPI: % of students above NACE competencies as juniors, increase % of students employed or in grad school] (Within 2 years)
- 4. AI and Entrepreneurship Proficiency:** Develop co-majors, minors, or microcredentials to ensure every RSC graduate demonstrates foundational competencies in artificial intelligence and/or entrepreneurship, positioning them for the future of work. [Sample KPI: % of students with entrepreneurship competencies, % of students with AI competencies] (Within 2 years)
- 5. Sage Signature Microcredentials:** Launch a suite of Sage-specific microcredentials, including badges for financial literacy, career readiness (aligned with the National Association of Colleges and Employers), entrepreneurship, and identity-based learning through modular Learning and Employment Records (LERs). [Sample KPI: # of students earning microcredentials, # of modular LERs] (Within 1-3 years)
- 6. Lead Our Competitor Institutions in Universal Experiential Learning:** Amplify the Gator Gateway experience to ensure 100% of undergraduate students participate in at least two immersive, experiential learning opportunities, including internships, research, entrepreneurial projects, study away, and/or civic engagement, with access beginning no later than sophomore year; help support with donor-funded Gator Grants. [Sample KPI: # of students in funded opportunities, student and partner satisfaction] (Within 2-4 years)
- 7. Activate Employer Networks and Community Partnerships:** Maintain a curated inventory of partners, utilize advisory councils to align academic offerings with workforce needs, and showcase student work through RSC Showcases; leverage campus facilities for employer trainings and workforce development programs. [Sample KPI: increased # of experiential partners, partner attendance at showcases] (Within 2-4 years)
- 8. Belonging Through the Transcript:** Embed tracking of cohort-based involvement and affinity group engagement into the co-curricular transcript to ensure each student is connected to meaningful and inclusive communities of belonging, while tracking skillsets acquired through these affinities. [Sample KPI: belongingness survey benchmarks, disaggregated retention] (Within 2-4 years)

## GOAL 3: Establish the Center for Innovation and Professional Excellence

Launch a dynamic hub for industry-recognized certificates, alumnae/i mentorship, and experiential learning — equipping Sage students with the skills, networks, and entrepreneurial mindsets needed to lead in a rapidly evolving workforce. (Success Indicator: center is operational and serving students by 2029)

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### *Tactics:*

- 1. Design with Purpose:** Develop the center in collaboration with employers, alumnae/i, and community leaders to ensure real-world relevance. [Sample KPI: # of active employer, alumnae/i, and community partnerships, # of students engaged] (3 years and beyond)
- 2. Infuse Entrepreneurship:** Launch co-curricular pitch competitions and develop innovation programming aligned with student interest and National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) standards. [Sample KPI: pitch activity participation, entrepreneurship competence from students and partners] (3 years and beyond)
- 3. Use Facilities for Impact:** Leverage campus spaces for community-based learning, workforce training, and professional education aligned with center goals. [Sample KPI: # of hosted events, attendee satisfaction] (3 years and beyond)
- 4. Track Industry Engagement:** Collaborate with workforce agencies and employers to develop accessible pathways to high-impact, high-wage careers. [Sample KPI: # of partners, graduate placement outcomes] (3 years and beyond)



## GOAL 4: Transform Alumnae/i and Donor Engagement into a National Model

Foster lifelong affinity and philanthropic growth by supporting alumnae/i's career and educational goals, expanding mentorship and professional networks, and inspiring deeper participation in the life and mission of Sage. (Success Indicator: 30% increase in alumnae/i engagement score by 2029)

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### *Tactics:*

- 1. Expand Alumnae/i Mentorship:** Formalize student-alumnae/i mentorship pipelines and embed them across the student lifecycle. [Sample KPI: % of students participating (by academic year), # of alumnae/i participating] (Within 2 years)
- 2. Foster Lifelong Affinity:** Host alumnae/i networking events — regionally, virtually, and through affinity programs, like the Denise Taber Finard '80 Women's Institute, Opalka Gallery, and Theatre Institute at Russell Sage. [Sample KPI: attendance at affinity programming, increase alumnae/i engagement score] (Within 2 years)
- 3. Incorporate Alumnae/i in Design:** Engage alumnae/i in the design of career services, the Innovation Center, and professional learning programs. [Sample KPI: # of alumnae/i participation, alumnae/i satisfaction] (Within 2 years)
- 4. Grow Alumnae/i Philanthropy:** Increase alumnae/i donor participation by doubling down on engagement touchpoints and co-creating shared success stories. [Sample KPI: increased giving amounts, increased alumnae/i giving participation] (Within 2 years)

## GOAL 5: Position the Denise Taber Finard '80 Women's Institute as a National Model of Intergenerational Women's Leadership

Advance women at every career and life stage through two high-impact pillars:

1. An undergraduate cohort program that cultivates empowered leaders through mentorship, global experiences, and civic engagement.
2. A regional hub offering industry-aligned, revenue-generating microcredentials for professionals. Together, these initiatives will amplify Sage's identity as a leader in women's empowerment and lifelong leadership. (Success Indicators: 100% of WI students have access to funded high-impact experiences, regardless of financial background, by 2028; annual WI conference attracts over 200 participants, national speakers, and regional media coverage by 2028.)

### Tactics:

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|--|--|
| <p><b>1. Recruit High-potential, Diverse Cohort:</b> Recruit a diverse, high-potential cohort of undergraduate students each year, with intentional outreach to underrepresented communities. [Sample KPI: double WI cohort by 2028, disaggregated funnel info] (Within 2 years)</p>   | <p>through national conference presentations, publications, and storytelling campaigns. Support additional FTE for grant writing, curriculum, and fundraising support. [Sample KPI: # of students completing high-impact experience, WI career/graduate school placement] (Within 2 years)</p>                             |
| <p><b>2. Design a Transformative Student Experience:</b> Develop an undergraduate- and graduate-oriented program focused on personal leadership, civic impact, global fluency, and professional readiness. [Sample KPI: student learning outcomes, WI yield, WI retention] (Within 2 years)</p>  | <p><b>5. Deliver Career-aligned Microcredentials:</b> Develop stackable, industry-recognized microcredentials in high-demand areas, such as nonprofit leadership, negotiation, civic engagement, public speaking, and entrepreneurship. [Sample KPI: See 2.2.5] (Within 2 years)</p>                                       |
| <p><b>3. Embed Mentorship and Faculty Leadership:</b> Connect students with accomplished regional women leaders through structured mentorship, and engage a rotating core group of faculty/staff champions to advise, instruct, and model Sage's values of empowerment and inclusion. [Sample KPI: # of students with mentors, mentor satisfaction] (Within 2 years)</p> | <p><b>6. Strengthen Employer Partnerships:</b> Co-create microcredential content with regional employers, chambers of commerce, and women-led organizations to support professional advancement and establish hiring pipelines. [Sample KPI: partner satisfaction, # of students completing pipeline] (Within 2 years)</p> |
| <p><b>4. Empower Through Signature High-impact Experiences and Projects:</b> Integrate high-impact experiences — including internships, mentorship, global travel, and capstone leadership work — with signature affinity project that reflects each student's passions, identities, and the Women's Institute's mission. Student achievements will be showcased</p>     | <p><b>7. Host a Signature Leadership Summit:</b> Convene an annual Women's Leadership Summit featuring national speakers, dynamic panels, and interactive workshops — open to the broader community and held in partnership with Women@Work. [Sample KPI: earned media, attendance at summit] (Within 2-4 years)</p>       |

### Estimated Strategic Imperative 2 Investments

Recurring prioritized investments: \$215,000

Recurring investments: \$325,000

One-time investments: \$165,000

Possible campaign goal: \$33.5 million

### STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE 3:

## **Empower Our People**

Invest in faculty and staff to cultivate an exceptional, mission-aligned workforce. We will fuel our community through competitive compensation, shared purpose, research, and professional growth — building a culture grounded in well-being, inclusion, innovation, and impact. Through this commitment, we will pursue national honor roll recognition as a “Great College to Work For.”

## GOAL 1: Implement a Transparent, Equitable Compensation Strategy

Develop and implement a transparent, sustainable strategy for fair, competitive, and equitable compensation that supports the recruitment, development, and retention of a dedicated and high-performing workforce. (Success indicators: establish a transparent, market-aligned salary structure; achieve board approval of a 5-year people strategy; demonstrate increases in employee satisfaction and retention.)

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### *Tactics:*

- 1. Address Compensation:** Launch a Compensation and Benefits Committee in fall 2025 to align priorities across Sage and Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, and develop a compensation philosophy grounded in equity, market alignment, and financial sustainability. [Sample KPI: committee charter approved, compensation philosophy finalized] (Within 2 years)
- 2. Develop a New Framework:** Conduct benchmarking and equity audits to define job categories, create salary bands based on position descriptions, produce a multi-year compensation plan. [Sample KPI: salary bands completed, 5-year compensation strategy approved by board] (Within 2 years)
- 3. Create Feedback Loop for Benefits:** Optimize benefits offerings through regular review and employee feedback. [Sample KPIs: employee satisfaction, employee retention rates as measured by 3- and 5-year benchmarks] (Within 2 years)

## GOAL 2: Foster a Mission-Driven, Inclusive Workplace Culture

Advance a thriving, values-aligned culture rooted in recognition, professional growth, well-being, collaboration, and belonging. (Success Indicator: Great Colleges to Work For Honor Roll status by 2029)

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### Tactics:

- 1. Enhance Employee Support with Technology and Development Resources:** Improve onboarding and performance evaluation processes using modern systems and best practices, while expanding employee support services — including HR navigation, a 24/7 AI-powered help tool, ombudspersons, structured leadership development, and mentorship programs. [Sample KPI: employee satisfaction, response time to help tool issues] (Within 2 years)
- 2. Reward Great Work:** Expand recognition programs for excellence in teaching, service, and innovation, and develop clear career paths and a promotion processes for all employee types. [Sample KPI: attendance at recognition events, employee satisfaction] (Within 2 years)
- 3. Focus on the Whole Employee:** Enhance workplace well-being through Thrive@Russell Sage-inspired flexibility, mental health support, and wellness programs, and promote belonging and inclusion through mission-focused messaging and inclusive practices. [Sample KPI: employee engagement with Thrive events, employee satisfaction] (Within 2 years)
- 4. Evolve with Feedback:** Implement suggested changes from employee surveys in the fashion of Student Life’s “We Heard You” campaigns to increase employee satisfaction and achieve Great Colleges to Work for Honor Roll designation. [Sample KPI: time to completion of emerging issues, Great Colleges to Work For Honor Roll status] (Within 2 years)

## GOAL 3: Advance Faculty Innovation in Teaching and Learning

Support faculty in developing high-impact, student-centered curricula that evolve in response to 21st-century demands and community needs. (Success Indicator: increase total courses utilizing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles by 35% before 9/1/28)

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### Tactics:

- 1. Increase and Incentivize Professional Development Around Curricular Design and Pedagogy:** Ensure curricula are relevant to contemporary markets and are engaging and attractive to students. [Sample KPI: faculty engagement with Center for Teaching and Learning and Sage online supports, student satisfaction] (Within 2 years)
- 2. Reinforce Boyer-model:** Continue to expand Undergraduate Research Day and RSC showcases and support and incentivize Boyer-model research at all levels (research focus on discovery, integration, application, and teaching as equally valuable; to advance knowledge, connect disciplines, address societal needs, and improve learning). [Sample KPI: student engagement with Research Day, faculty engagement with Research Day] (Within 2 years)
- 3. Foster Teaching and Research Innovation:** Encourage creative faculty approaches to instruction, scholarship, Boyer Model student research, and engagement through grants, recognition, and shared best practices. [Sample KPI: faculty satisfaction, # of students engaging with research] (Within 2 years)
- 4. Clarify Roles and Support Intentional Succession:** Strengthen onboarding and role clarity, and invest in professional development programs that support leadership pipelines and intentional succession planning across the institution. [Sample KPI: # of participants in professional development sessions, employee satisfaction] (Within 2 years)
- 5. Support Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** Improve internal structures to enable faculty collaboration across departments on new pathways and credentials. [Sample KPI: # of students on new pathways, achievement of microcredentials] (Within 2 years)

## GOAL 4: Support Purposeful Research and Engagement

Promote meaningful faculty and student research that advances scholarship, fuels community collaboration, and deepens institutional impact. (Success Indicators: Increased faculty satisfaction, increased external funding for research)

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### Tactics:

- 1. Pursue External Funding:** Identify and cultivate funding partners to sustain and expand faculty and student research projects. [Sample KPI: # of partners, amount of new external funds] (Within 2 years)
  - 2. Support Research-Driven Partnerships:** Provide administrative support for faculty collaborating with community and industry partners. [Sample KPI: partner and participant engagement, partner and participant satisfaction] (Within 2-4 years)
  - 3. Disseminate and Celebrate Research:** Increase visibility of faculty and student research through Sage publications, presentations, and public showcases. [Sample KPI: # of mentions in internal media, earned media] (Within 2-4 years)
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### Estimated Strategic Imperative 3 Investments

*Recurring prioritized investments:* \$23,000

*Recurring investments:* \$600,000

*One-time investments:* \$100,000

*Possible campaign goal:* \$6 million

#### STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE 4:

## **Empower Our Future by Investing Boldly in Students, Spaces, Systems, and Strategies**

With our distinct two-campus presence, stake our claim in New York state's Capital Region as a vital force in economic growth and community well-being. We will strengthen our physical infrastructure, streamline operations, and modernize systems to foster a seamless, data-informed, and student-ready institution. Through integrated campus environments, bold fundraising, mission-aligned technologies, and a relentless commitment to continuous improvement, we will drive growth, resilience, and institutional distinction.

## GOAL 1: Execute a Strategic Improvement Plan for Space and Infrastructure

Launch near-term space and facilities enhancements to improve student experience, support enrollment growth, increase partnership potential, and ensure campaign readiness. (Success Indicator: innovation space serving students by 2030)

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### *Tactics:*

- 1. Prioritize High-Impact Improvements:** Develop and implement a phased capital improvement plan that addresses deferred maintenance, enhances recruitment/retention, and maximizes return through balanced investment in visibility, accessibility, function, and satisfaction. [Sample KPI: employee satisfaction, student satisfaction, # of projects completed] (Within 2 years)
- 2. Create Innovation Space:** Seek funding and partners for a cross-disciplinary innovation hub that supports experiential learning and student entrepreneurship. [Sample KPI: identify funding sources, inclusive planning] (Within 2-4 years)

## GOAL 2: Develop a Unified Facilities Master Plan Across All Campuses

Create an integrated, long-term Sage-Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences master plan that promotes sustainable growth, academic excellence, and operational efficiency across campuses. (Success Indicator: unified master plan by 2028)

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### *Tactics:*

- 1. Right-Size and Optimize Space:** Conduct a comprehensive utilization study to align campus footprint with academic needs, sustainability goals, long-term cost efficiency, and institutional values. [Sample KPI: baseline utilization study, inclusive plan with prioritization and budget sustainability] (Within 1-3 years)
- 2. Build Plan to Address Deferred Maintenance:** Integrate strategic renovation and investment/divestment planning to address long-standing space issues and preserve essential infrastructure. [Sample KPI: establish priority list, # of projects completed, budget management] (Within 1-3 years)
- 3. Create New Revenue Streams:** Identify and activate revenue-generating space opportunities, including retail partnerships, leased office/lab spaces, incubator hubs, and full-capacity housing models. [Sample KPI: # of new revenue streams, % of housing capacity utilized/leveraged, revenue generated] (Within 1-3 years)
- 4. Stay Agile:** Remain nimble in response to regional partnerships or real estate opportunities that align with Sage's strategic direction. [Sample KPI: participation numbers in local boards, organizations, nonprofits; new partnership outcomes] (3 years and beyond)

### GOAL 3: Launch and Sustain a Transformative Comprehensive Campaign

Mobilize internal and external stakeholders through a bold, mission-driven campaign that expands philanthropic impact, strengthens alumnae/i and community engagement, and elevates institutional visibility. (Success Indicator: achieve an incremental campaign goal of \$50 million, toward a \$75 million campaign goal, by 12/31/29)

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*Tactics:*

- 1. Personalize Outreach:** Implement a digital donor relations platform for tracking engagement and delivering targeted giving opportunities based on academic program, residential status, career trajectory, and commuter status, establishing segmented donor engagement pathways and personalized stewardship. [Sample KPI: full utilization of AI systems platform, add 10% to 15% to core donor base] (Within 2 years)
- 2. Strengthen Stewardship:** Strengthen relationships with high-capacity donors through exclusive events, campus visits, and impact-driven reports, and enhance donor retention with stewardship programs, including thank-you notes, appreciation events, and impact reports. [Sample KPI: add stewardship coordinator, increase high-impact exclusive signature events by 40%, donor satisfaction increase] (Within 2 years)
- 3. Grow Standard Pipelines:** Expand annual giving initiatives (Giving Day, departmental fundraising challenges, and reunion-driven campaigns) and increase planned giving efforts by educating alumnae/i on estate gifts, endowed scholarships, and legacy donations. [Sample KPI: increase planned giving marketing by 50%, increase planned giving pledges] (Within 2 years)
- 4. Tap into Community Knowledge:** Build, staff, and support appropriate advisory groups to support external engagement, incorporating students where appropriate, and including a presidential advisory committee, campaign committee, health advisory board, and business advisory board. [Sample KPI: establish a functional coordination structure by 12/1/26, increase community partner engagement by 15%] (Within 1-3 years)

## GOAL 4: Cultivate an Efficient and Collaborative Operational Environment

Strengthen cross-campus systems (across Sage and ACPHS), structures, and technologies to ensure faculty, staff, and administrators can deliver high-quality, coordinated services to students — and to one another — with consistency, clarity, and agility. (Success Indicators: successful transition and incorporation of systems within the merger; improve audit of efficiency and satisfaction with systems by 20%)

### Tactics:

- 1. Unify CRM Across the Student Lifecycle:** Implement an integrated CRM platform that spans undergraduate and graduate admissions, student services, and development to provide seamless support across all touchpoints. [Sample KPI: reduced undergraduate-to-graduate friction (fewer touchpoints, quicker response), student and employee satisfaction] (Within 2 years)
- 2. Audit and Align Technology Ecosystem:** Conduct a comprehensive audit of classroom and enterprise technologies across Sage and Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences to eliminate redundancies, prioritize upgrades, maximize cybersecurity, and ensure alignment with institutional goals. [Sample KPI: create baseline audit, % of redundant systems eliminated, # of prioritized upgrades and integrations] (Within 2 years)
- 3. Visualize and Leverage Data:** Invest in real-time data dashboards that drive transparency, enable assessment, and support cross-functional decision-making. [Sample KPI: dashboard adoption, # of indicators actively tracked, use of dashboard in cabinet reports] (Within 1-3 years)
- 4. Integrate Technology into Onboarding and Evaluation:** Embed tech accountability into onboarding, training, and performance review processes to promote system adoption and agility. [Sample KPI: % of timely and effective reviews, # of reviewers and new employees using the tool] (Within 1-3 years)
- 5. Centralize Technology Investment Review:** Formalize a system-wide process for reviewing, approving, and renewing technology purchases to align with institutional strategy and maximize efficiency. [Sample KPI: formalization of process, # of annual reviews] (Within 1-3 years)
- 6. Establish Governance Framework:** Create a cross-campus Data and Technology Governance Framework to standardize data access, promote responsible use, and support integrated decision-making. [Sample KPI: governance process approved, # of shared data/tech decisions] (Within 2-4 years)

## GOAL 5: Build a Culture of Continuous Improvement and Institutional Renewal

Commit to ongoing reflection, assessment, and reinvention by investing in transparent data systems, shared practices across all campuses, and technology-driven feedback loops that promote accountability, innovation, and institutional learning. (Success Indicator: hub launched by 2027, successful alignment of structures and systems achieved by 2028)

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### Tactics:

- 1. Foster Sage-Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences Integration and Collaboration:** Identify barriers and opportunities for collaboration across the merged institution, aligning structures, systems, and strategies to support seamless academic and operational integration. [Sample KPI: integration framework approved, student/employee satisfaction] (Within 2 years)
  - 2. Document and Share Best Practices:** Launch an AI-powered Operational Excellence Hub — a searchable, living database of documented workflows and institutional processes — to promote consistency, knowledge transfer, and continuous improvement. [Sample KPI: # of hits/utilization of tool, attendance and engagement in professional development sessions around assessment practices] (Within 1-3 years)
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### Estimated Strategic Imperative 4 Investments

*Recurring prioritized investments:* \$130,000

*Recurring investments:* \$350,000

*One-time investments:* \$425,000

*Possible campaign goal:* \$30.5 million