

# *This Is a Student*

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Welcome to a new school year. It is so good to see everyone here, gathered together in a way we haven't been able to for some time.

This past year has been challenging on a number of fronts. From COVID-19 to inflation to increasing polarization, worldwide trends have affected us here in Provo. As a result, all of our tasks have been harder than usual this past year.

Notwithstanding these trends, the past twelve months have been filled with great accomplishments. Even during challenging times, our students have continued to shine, both in academic pursuits and in extracurricular activities.

In academics, BYU students earned prestigious scholarships, including a Truman Scholarship, a Goldwater Scholarship, and a Fulbright Scholarship. Moreover, twelve BYU undergraduates received Boren Scholarships from a grant made by the U.S. Department of Defense for students doing language study abroad. The twelve scholarships awarded to BYU students were three more than those earned by second-place University of Chicago.

In athletics, it was a year filled with national championships. Whittni Orton won the NCAA women's cross-country championship, and Conner Mantz won the men's cross-country championship, marking only the second time in history that the winners of the men's and women's races were from the same school. Two BYU women track-and-field student-athletes also won national championships this past spring: Courtney Wayment in the steeplechase and Ashton Riner in javelin. The women's soccer team reached the national championship game, finishing second in the nation—matching the women's cross-country team, which also placed second.

And in a combined effort of both BYU Grounds and the landscape management program, a student team from BYU won its fourth-consecutive National Collegiate Landscape Title, with BYU's thirty-seven competing students earning eighteen of the seventy-five scholarships awarded.

In short, despite the challenges of the day, BYU students excelled in the classroom, on the field, and even in preparing the field.

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*Kevin J Worthen, president of Brigham Young University, delivered this university conference address on August 22, 2022.*

We also made progress on other institutional matters this past year. Construction continued on our new music building, which is on schedule to be completed this coming year. The other academic units currently occupying the Harris Fine Arts Center have already begun the temporary move to the former Provo High facility so that the HFAC can be taken down in preparation for a new arts building on that site.

And in late-breaking news, I am pleased to announce that the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities officially renewed BYU's institutional accreditation for another seven years. Congratulations, and thanks to all involved in that extensive reaccreditation process.

It truly is an exciting time to be part of this university. I am so pleased with so much of what we are collectively accomplishing.

#### **“Committed to the Mission of the University”**

This is my ninth annual university conference address. At the first one in 2014, I emphasized and analyzed the BYU mission statement.<sup>1</sup> In the annual university conference addresses since then, I have discussed the Aims of a BYU Education,<sup>2</sup> explained the concept of inspiring learning,<sup>3</sup> announced a university strategic plan,<sup>4</sup> and introduced a statement on belonging.<sup>5</sup> In just a few minutes, I will discuss both an updated strategic plan and a new brand messaging statement. While that may sound like a lot of creativity—or, more likely, a manifestation of my inability to focus on a subject for more than one year—each conference address and each “innovation” really has been just a variation on the theme of my first annual university conference address: the BYU mission statement.

Our mission statement remains our fundamental university constitution and the primary measuring rod for our efforts. Its influence is evident to most campus visitors. The peer evaluation site team from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, which visited our campus virtually this last April, noted early in its summary that “members of the Brigham Young University community are clearly committed to the mission of the university.”<sup>6</sup> I hope all who come here sense that commitment. It is one

of our distinctive features. Even as we discuss new applications of the principles the mission statement contains, none of those documents and innovations—including those I will discuss today—stand independent of that inspired, and inspiring, document.

It is also important that we periodically remind ourselves that the mission statement itself has a primary focus that is easy to overlook if we are not constantly reminded of its centrality. In that regard, I am reminded of the story of legendary football coach Vince Lombardi. In 1960, the Lombardi-coached Green Bay Packers lost the NFL championship game to the Philadelphia Eagles, 17-13, with the final drive by the Packers ending just short of the goal line on the last play of the game. Given the nature of sports, I am certain there were a lot of discussions during the off-season about what innovations the Packers might use to get over the top, what adjustments might alter the result in a future championship game, and what shiny new thing might make the difference. In that context, with everyone waiting for the new direction, Lombardi began his first meeting with the team in 1961 with a simple but powerful statement: “‘Gentlemen,’ he said, holding a pigskin in his right hand, ‘this is a football.’”<sup>7</sup>

Vince Lombardi thus reminded the team—who were so anxious to improve—that they should not lose focus on the key fundamentals.

Following that pattern, as we anticipate all the important instruction and discussions that will take place this week and this year on topics ranging from the latest pedagogical innovations to new disciplinary discoveries, administrative efficiencies, and university goals, let me begin the school year with this simple but powerful observation: “This is a student.” And this is a student, and this is a student, and these are students. [A series of student portraits was shown.] This is why we exist. This is the primary focus of our mission. As I noted in that initial annual university conference address in 2014:

*At the end of the day, students are the product we produce. . . . How they turn out—what they do and, more important, **who they are**—is the ultimate metric by which our work will be measured.<sup>8</sup>*

## The Updated BYU Strategic Plan

With that reminder of the centrality of the mission statement and its student focus, let me provide some explanation about the updated strategic plan that is included in your university conference program today.<sup>9</sup>

Last fall, following the emphasis given to President Spencer W. Kimball's 1975 address "The Second Century of Brigham Young University"<sup>10</sup> by Elders Jeffrey R. Holland<sup>11</sup> and David A. Bednar<sup>12</sup> in 2021 and the accompanying injunctions that we evaluate how we are doing in fulfilling the aspirations, invitations, and expectations outlined in that stirring talk, the BYU President's Council spent considerable time reviewing the second-century address, section by section, line by line, with the intent of deepening our understanding of the prophetic vision of BYU set forth by President Kimball. At each of our weekly President's Council meetings, we took as much as an hour to consider, discuss, and internalize the prophetic direction in that remarkable speech—which I believe was the primary fount from which the BYU mission statement was drawn six years later.

As we went through that exercise, we took special note of major things that were emphasized in that address but not included in any meaningful way in our strategic plan. We simultaneously noted other parts of the strategic plan in which we could see that more detailed goals were identifiable or that changes in circumstances had altered some of the specific details of the original plan. The result is the updated version of the strategic plan that is in your program.

I will not walk you through the entire document section by section, but I would like to highlight a few features, changes, and additions to provide background for what I hope is your further consideration and discussion in the coming weeks, months, and year.

**First**, note that there are still three main objectives, and those objectives largely remain the same. This updated strategic plan is not so much a revision of the strategic plan as it is a refinement. Our main strategic objectives remain:

1. "Ensure alignment with the university mission."<sup>13</sup>

2. "Enhance the educational experience of students."<sup>14</sup>

3. "Enlarge the influence of a BYU education."<sup>15</sup>

The two biggest differences in this updated plan are the inclusion of specific action items for many of the priorities and a decidedly second-century-address tone.

**Second**, you will see that students are a prominent part of the updated plan. The original version of the plan mentioned the word *student* only three times. In this updated version, students are mentioned twenty-one times. Part of this disparity is explained by the fact that the original plan did not contain specific action items while this updated plan does. However, it goes well beyond that. There is an entirely new section—section 1.B—that reminds us that just as we need to consider the mission alignment of our faculty, staff, and administrative candidates,<sup>16</sup> we also need to "admit *students* who are committed to the type of education described in the BYU mission and aims and who are willing and eager to learn in an environment of study and faith."<sup>17</sup> The updated plan also contains a reminder that one of the key components of the mission-alignment evaluation of faculty, staff, and administrative candidates is the "commitment and ability to integrate faith in Jesus Christ and testimony of His restored gospel . . . with *students*."<sup>18</sup>

**Third**, there is an express recognition that *all* employees—faculty, staff, and administrative, both those in academic units and those in academic-support units—are critically involved in shaping our students in the way described in the mission statement. Just as the new item Action 1.C.1 recognizes the need for the university to "provide support . . . to increase the ability of *faculty*, particularly new hires, to authentically incorporate gospel truths into all student interactions and to teach their subject bathed in the light and color of the restored gospel,"<sup>19</sup> the item Action 1.C.2 commits the university to "provide support . . . to increase the ability of *staff and administrative employees* to authentically incorporate gospel truths into all student interactions."<sup>20</sup> Even though most administrative and staff employees are not engaged in classroom instruction, they are a

critical part of our effort to “advance faith-based, high-quality teaching and learning,”<sup>21</sup> as the title to section 1.C notes.

In short, the updated plan makes absolutely clear that our aspiration is to engage the whole campus in educating the whole student. It is an effort that is holistic in both the scope of the participants and the effect on the students.

Many of the academic support units are already engaged in this holistic process in remarkable ways. This past winter semester, the BYU Office of Information Technology (OIT) set a goal of having their full-time employees interview each of their more than five hundred student employees to find out their interests and how their employment at OIT might help them achieve their academic and career goals. Other academic support units, such as BYU Dining Services and BYU Residence Life, are developing formal learning outcomes for the employment opportunities they provide to students. And in some situations, the academic and academic-support units combine and coordinate their efforts to inspire student learning in remarkable ways. The results can be life-changing for our students and our community, as this video demonstrates.<sup>22</sup> [A video was shown highlighting environmental science student Hanna Burgin.]

This is a student—a student blessed by the efforts of the whole campus community to help her develop as a whole person.

**Fourth**, as already mentioned, the document has a decidedly second-century tone and focus. For example, in his second-century address, President Kimball asserted that “gospel methodology, concepts, and insights can help us to do what the world cannot do in its own frame of reference.”<sup>23</sup> Relying on that prophetic promise, the section for our goal to “promote a sense of belonging among all members of the campus community”<sup>24</sup> makes clear that our belonging plans and efforts will be “based on gospel principles”<sup>25</sup> at every step. That will necessarily mean we do some things differently than would be done in other places. Such an effort will require that the BYU Office of Belonging take the lead in planning and directing the work to ensure that we remain in alignment with gospel methodology, concepts, and insights. This will help us avoid the

divisive and polarizing forces generated by some approaches to this important issue so that we can have a truly unified, and unifying, gospel-based belonging effort that will have long-lasting effects.

This same focus on gospel methodology is found in the item Action 2.A.2, which challenges us to “design inspiring learning activities” that will “increase students’ ability to seek truth and solve problems through study and faith using gospel methodology.”<sup>26</sup>

As I have confessed on several occasions, I am not sure I fully understand what President Kimball meant by the term “gospel methodology” or how—or even if—it applies to all the various aspects of our different roles on campus. I strongly sense, however, that it has something to do with the manner in which we teach and learn, using the Savior as our model. I am even more certain that that kind of gospel-methodology learning involves personal revelation to both the teacher and the student.<sup>27</sup> A poignant and powerful illustration of that was demonstrated by the experience of Erika Hunter, a recent graduate of the BYU McKay School of Education.

Erika enrolled in Professor Sarah K. Clark’s Elementary Education 443 class. Professor Clark began her course, as she usually does, by explaining how deeply each of her students is loved by God, as they are His children. She informed the students that that knowledge alone would reduce or even eliminate some of the most challenging struggles they face as teachers. She told the students that as public school teachers—which they would become—they couldn’t walk into a classroom and teach the gospel directly to the students, but they could always bring the Savior with them into that space.

Erika completed the course, and some time later she began her work as an intern at an elementary school. She later explained her experience in an email to Professor Clark:

*On the first day of school as a second-grade teacher this August, I loved it! The second day, I was unsure. And by the third day, I was ready to quit. It was so hard. I really had to will myself just to try and make it through each hour. It was a couple weeks into the school year, and after what felt like much suffering*

... , I remembered your lesson about remembering who we are. . . . As I was driving to work, I thought about how I am a child of God. I thought about how each of my students was too—even the ones who really pushed my buttons. That thought changed everything. Because of that simple truth, I seemed to have more patience with my students and with myself that day. I felt more urgency in helping my students succeed. I gained more compassion for the struggles they were facing. I continued that pattern of thought and perspective day after day as I drove to school, and the dark pit that I was in seemed to [get] brighter and brighter. . . . Thank you so much for listening to inspiration and being willing to share that message with me.

This is a student—a student who received personal revelation because her professor received and shared personal revelation about gospel methodology, concepts, and insights.

To conclude my overview of the updated strategic plan, I draw your attention to the change in the wording of objective 3. The original objective 3 was to “expand opportunities for a BYU education” and focused solely on increasing the number of students who could attend BYU—an important goal that still remains. However, the updated objective 3 broadens the scope of the original objective. Our desire is not just to expand the number of students on campus but to “enlarge the influence of a BYU education.” One source of that enlarged influence will come from an increase in the number of students who go forth from here to bless the world, but that influence can and will be magnified and multiplied by an effort to more intentionally and consistently elevate the reach of our message to key constituencies.

### **BYU’s Brand Initiative**

President Kimball has noted that one way BYU could become an “educational Mt. Everest”<sup>28</sup> was by communicating to the world the unique truths that BYU has to offer. In his second-century address, President Kimball described

*Brigham Young University as becoming an “educational Everest.” There are many ways in which BYU can tower above other universities—not simply because of the size of its student body or its beautiful campus,*

*but because of the unique light BYU can send forth into the educational world.*<sup>29</sup>

I read that as a charge to not hide our unique educational candle “under a bushel”<sup>30</sup> and a charge to share our gospel-based insights and ideas with the world—not for the praise of the world but for the benefit of the world. That requires a more concerted and coordinated effort.

To that end, as the items Action 3.B.1, 2, and 3 direct, we are now finalizing the creation of a strategic communication committee led by Keith Vorkink, Carri Jenkins, and other key communication people on campus to “develop and implement a strategic communications plan” that will both “increase key external audiences’ understanding and awareness of BYU’s unique mission” and also “educate and inspire our campus community about BYU’s unique mission.”<sup>31</sup>

By what some would call fortunate coincidence—but what others would term “celestial correlation”—our plans to be more strategic with our communication efforts are beginning just as our multiyear brand initiative has reached a point at which the team leading that effort has been developing a brand messaging statement. This messaging statement, which will serve as a brand narrative, was recently approved by the President’s Council after review by the BYU Board of Trustees. As this will be a key part of the communication efforts in the coming years, let me share a few insights about it.

As I mentioned, this brand narrative, or messaging statement, is part of a multiyear brand initiative. Many of you, like me, will at first think that a brand initiative is about logos and school colors. But it is much more than that. It is about helping others have a more complete and more accurate understanding of who we are. As Jeff Bezos once famously observed, “Your brand is what other people say about you when you’re not in the room.”<sup>32</sup> It is what people think when they see or hear your name and you are not there to explain yourself. Logos are a part of that effort because such visual representation can be impactful. But logos and brand names are only successful if they evoke the message or impression that the brand initiative is designed to create.



So a brand initiative, such as the one we have been engaged in these past years, involves study about what others think of us as well as what we aspire to be. It seeks to eliminate any gap between those two. One tool for that is a brand narrative or messaging statement. The statement is not likely to be presented as a whole on many occasions—nor is it a replacement for the BYU mission statement. Rather, it is designed to provide language to describe various aspects of the mission in a way that reinforces our central message—usually as snippets or phrases.

With that background, let me share with you the recently adopted messaging statement:

*We believe a world yearning for hope and joy needs the graduates of Brigham Young University (BYU). As disciples of Jesus Christ, BYU graduates are motivated by love for God and His children. BYU graduates are directed by living prophets and prepared to serve, lift, and lead. This preparation demands a unique university model: at BYU, belief enhances inquiry, study amplifies faith, and revelation leads to deeper understanding.*

*At BYU, helping students to develop their full divine potential is central to both our teaching and our scholarship. As the flagship higher education institution of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, BYU strives to emit a unique light for the benefit of the world—a light that will enable BYU to be counted among the exceptional universities in the world and an essential example for the world.<sup>33</sup>*

Let me briefly provide just one short example of the power of this language in describing what happens at BYU. As most of you know, the history of higher education in the United States reveals a trend of private universities moving from being institutions with religion at their center to institutions in which there is at best an uneasy truce between religion and academics.<sup>34</sup> At many institutions, religious beliefs are barely tolerated—and in some, they are completely ignored or ridiculed. One faculty member at a prominent university

*argued that the primary goal of a [university] education is the pursuit of truth through rational inquiry, and . . . religion has no place in that. . . .*

*. . . [He said,] “Reason and faith are not yin and yang. Faith is a phenomenon. Reason is what the university should be in the business of fostering.”<sup>35</sup>*

That is not an uncommon view at many universities. At BYU, we are a countertrend in that regard. We believe that faith and reason can not only coexist but can mutually reinforce one another. To use the language of the messaging statement, “Belief enhances inquiry, study amplifies faith, and revelation leads to deeper understanding.” We, in essence, double down on the traditional view. As the messaging statement indicates, that kind of approach requires “a unique university model.” Let me share a description of the BYU model to which we are committed:

*Divine revelation and a century of experience teach that the educational future belongs not to those who withdraw from or secularize the sacred, but to those who sacramentalize the secular. . . . In the final analysis, the entire university enterprise—its classrooms, its laboratories, and perhaps most of all the long hours spent in one-to-one counseling—is a sacramental act, a form of worship; even its demanding drudgery is a manifestation of the love of God for man and the love of man for God. In answer to the ever-recurring question of how BYU is different, perhaps we can say, “Elsewhere, little if anything is sacred. Here, everything is.”<sup>36</sup>*

Just as with the mission statement, the brand messaging statement reminds us that students are at the core of what we do: “At BYU, helping students to develop their full divine potential is central to both our teaching and our scholarship.” Our students are not only the focus of our efforts to develop graduates who will eventually bless “a world yearning for hope and joy” but are also often the best means of conveying that unique light to others right now. Let me provide one concluding example.

As I mentioned earlier, our women’s soccer team played for the national championship this past fall. That remarkable athletic accomplishment gave them a platform to demonstrate their love of God and their Christian discipleship in a more visible and unique way. The national

championship match was originally scheduled to be played on a Sunday. Reflecting our understanding of the sanctity of the Sabbath day, BYU has a policy that it will not compete on Sundays. As required by its rules, the NCAA accommodated BYU's policy and rescheduled the game to Monday. That unusual move by itself generated publicity about the gospel principle of Sabbath worship and the importance of religious convictions. Instead of practicing on Sunday, members of the team attended church at a local ward, where some of them shared their testimonies in the fast and testimony meeting. That had an impact on those present and well beyond, as evidenced by social media posts. Moreover, it brought attention to the fact that one of the members of the team, Josie Shepherd, was scheduled to begin her service as a missionary by entering the home MTC on the Monday of the championship game. The responsible ecclesiastical leaders gave permission for her to begin her MTC experience by participating in the missionary Zoom meeting from the team hotel on the day of the game. That led to other questions about missionaries, which allowed four other members of the team to publicly address their decision to interrupt their education and soccer careers to serve missions.

These are students—disciples of Jesus Christ who, led by prophets, can provide uplift to a world yearning for hope and joy.

This kind of student requires a unique kind of education: an education that requires a unique kind of faculty, staff, and administrators—faculty, staff, and administrators who prioritize the eternal development of their students over the praise and prestige of other pursuits.

More important, this kind of education requires faculty, staff, and administrators who are disciples of Jesus Christ, motivated by love of God and of His children to bring others to Christ, who is the one true source of all light.<sup>37</sup> We will succeed in this remarkable mission only to the extent that we focus on Him in all we do. As the mission statement makes clear: “Any education is inadequate which does not emphasize that His is the only name given under heaven whereby mankind can be saved.”<sup>38</sup>

If we remain true to our unique educational model, we will, as President Kimball prophesied, “become the fully recognized university of the Lord about which so much has been spoken in the past.”<sup>39</sup> That is the destiny of BYU. “Surely,” as President Kimball observed, “we cannot refuse that rendezvous with history.”<sup>40</sup>

May we all walk together “in the light of the Lord”<sup>41</sup> in this extraordinary work is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Notes

1. See Kevin J Worthen, “The Why of the Y,” BYU annual university conference address, 26 August 2014; see also Mission of Brigham Young University (4 November 1981).

2. See Kevin J Worthen, “Inspiring Learning,” BYU university conference address, 22 August 2016; see also Aims of a BYU Education (1 March 1995).

3. See Worthen, “Inspiring Learning.”

4. See Kevin J Worthen, “How to Act While Being Acted Upon,” BYU university conference address, 24 August 2020.

5. See Kevin J Worthen, “An Obligation to the World,” BYU university conference address, 23 August 2021; see also BYU Statement on Belonging (23 August 2021); in “BYU Announces the Formation of a New Office of Belonging,” Announcements, BYU News, 23 August 2021, news.byu.edu/announcements/byu-forms-new-office-of-belonging.

6. BYU Peer-Evaluation Report, Spring 2022 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness of Brigham Young University (Year Seven), Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), 6–8 April 2022, 3.

7. David Maraniss, *When Pride Still Mattered: A Life of Vince Lombardi* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999), 274. As reported by David Maraniss, Lombardi's biographer, wide receiver “Max McGee, from the rear of the squad, delivered the immortal retort, ‘Uh, Coach, could you slow down a little. You’re going too fast for us’” (274).

8. Worthen, “The Why of the Y”; emphasis added.

9. See updated BYU Strategic Plan (6 June 2022).
10. See Spencer W. Kimball, "The Second Century of Brigham Young University," BYU devotional address, 10 October 1975.
11. See Jeffrey R. Holland, "The Second Half of the Second Century of Brigham Young University," BYU university conference address, 23 August 2021.
12. See David A. Bednar, "Look unto Me in Every Thought; Doubt Not, Fear Not," BYU leadership meeting address, 16 April 2021.
13. BYU Strategic Plan, section 1.
14. BYU Strategic Plan, section 2.
15. BYU Strategic Plan, section 3.
16. See BYU Strategic Plan, Action 1.A.1, 1.A.2.
17. BYU Strategic Plan, 1.B; emphasis added.
18. BYU Strategic Plan, Action 1.A.2; emphasis added.
19. BYU Strategic Plan, Action 1.C.1; emphasis added.
20. BYU Strategic Plan, Action 1.C.2; emphasis added.
21. BYU Strategic Plan, 1.C.
22. A video was shown about the hybrid bermudagrass collaborative project between BYU Grounds and the BYU Department of Plant and Wildlife Sciences. See Hanna R. Burgin, Glenl A. Wear, Neil C. Hansen, and Bryan G. Hopkins, "Variable Impacts on Growth of Deficit Irrigation on *Cynodon dactylon* (L.) Pers. × *Cynodon transoalensis* Burt Davy and *Poa pratensis* L.," *International Turfgrass Society Research Journal* 14, no. 1 (June 2022): 152–56, doi.org/10.1002/its2.71.
23. Kimball, "Second Century."
24. BYU Strategic Plan, 1.E.
25. BYU Strategic Plan, Action 1.E.2; Action 1.E.3.
26. BYU Strategic Plan, Action 2.A.2.
27. See Doctrine and Covenants 88:122.
28. Spencer W. Kimball, "Installation of and Charge to the President," *Inaugural Addresses*, 14 November 1980, Brigham Young University, 9; see also Kimball, "Second Century."
29. Kimball, "Second Century"; see also Kimball, "Installation of and Charge to the President," 9.
30. Matthew 5:15.
31. BYU Strategic Plan, Action 3.B.3.
32. Jeff Bezos, quoted in William Arruda, "The Most Damaging Myth About Branding," *Careers, Forbes*, 6 September 2016, forbes.com/sites/williamarruda/2016/09/06/the-most-damaging-myth-about-branding.
33. "For the Benefit of the World," BYU Core Brand Message (10 August 2022).
34. See, generally, James Tunstead Burtchell, *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from Their Christian Churches* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1998). See also George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).
35. Lisa Miller, "Harvard's Crisis of Faith: Can a Secular University Embrace Religion Without Sacrificing Its Soul?" *Newsweek* 155, no. 8 (22 February 2010): 43–44; quoting Steven Pinker.
36. Ernest L. Wilkinson and W. Cleon Skousen, *Brigham Young University: A School of Destiny* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1976), 846.
37. See 3 Nephi 18:24; D&C 88:6–13.
38. Mission of BYU; emphasis added.
39. Kimball, "Installation of and Charge to the President," 10.
40. Kimball, "Second Century."
41. 2 Nephi 12:5.



## BYU Strategic Plan

The BYU strategic plan articulates three objectives, as well as their respective priority areas and specific action steps, that support the achievement of the Mission of Brigham Young University and the Aims of a BYU Education.

### 1. Ensure alignment with the university mission.

#### 1.A. *Make mission-fit hiring decisions.*

- **Action 1.A.1.** Ensure that every college, department, and academic support unit has a written hiring document that recognizes the university's strong preference for hiring faithful members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who are committed to the BYU mission. This document should include (a) a process to evaluate each candidate's mission fit, (b) a process to review the academic freedom policy with the candidate, and (c) measurable objectives to increase the breadth and depth of the pool of applicants who are faithful members of the Church.
- **Action 1.A.2.** Evaluate each candidate's commitment and ability to integrate faith in Jesus Christ and testimony of His restored gospel into interactions with students and in the classroom.
- **Action 1.A.3.** Evaluate each faculty candidate's commitment to faith-based, high-quality classroom teaching as their primary responsibility.

#### 1.B. *Admit students who are committed to the type of education described in the BYU mission and aims and who are willing and eager to learn in an environment of study and faith.*

- **Action 1.B.1.** Assess the components of the holistic admissions process to align more fully with the BYU mission and aims.
- **Action 1.B.2.** Strengthen university outreach efforts to increase the breadth and depth of the mission-fit student applicant pool.

#### 1.C. *Advance faith-based, high-quality teaching and learning.*

- **Action 1.C.1.** Provide support (e.g., resources, training, other services) to increase the ability of faculty, particularly new hires, to authentically incorporate gospel truths into all student interactions and to teach their subject bathed in the light and color of the restored gospel.
- **Action 1.C.2.** Provide support (e.g., resources, training, other services) to increase the ability of staff and administrative employees to authentically incorporate gospel truths into all student interactions.

#### 1.D. *Advance student-centered mentoring and scholarship.*

- **Action 1.D.1.** Ensure that all faculty rank and status documents include expectations for and evaluation of student mentoring, including student-centered scholarship.
- **Action 1.D.2.** Increase funds for the Inspiring Learning Initiative.

#### 1.E. *Promote a sense of belonging among all members of the campus community consistent with BYU's Statement on Belonging.*

- **Action 1.E.1.** Regularly assess the campus climate for belonging.
- **Action 1.E.2.** Develop a comprehensive plan based on gospel principles to establish and support campus-wide belonging efforts.

- **Action 1.E.3.** Develop a plan based on gospel principles to establish and support belonging across the student life cycle—from the university’s initial outreach through students becoming lifelong alumni.

1.F. *Enhance BYU’s position as a leader in topical areas that are “central to the Church’s purposes” (as stated in the BYU mission), including languages and the institutions of family, religion, and constitutional government.*

- **Action 1.F.1.** Develop a strategic plan for the Wheatley Institute.

## **2. Enhance the educational experience of students.**

2.A. *Pursue the Inspiring Learning Initiative.*

- **Action 2.A.1.** Enhance the quality and quantity of experiential learning activities in and out of the classroom, including faculty-led, student-centered scholarship and student employment.
- **Action 2.A.2.** Design inspiring learning activities to increase students’ ability to seek truth and solve problems through study and faith using gospel methodology.
- **Action 2.A.3.** Increase funds for the Inspiring Learning Initiative.

2.B. *Improve access to limited-enrollment programs.*

- **Action 2.B.1.** Increase the number of students who enroll in limited-enrollment programs.
- **Action 2.B.2.** Increase the number of professional faculty positions and strategically allocate them.
- **Action 2.B.3.** Develop a university-wide process to track individual students who apply to limited-enrollment programs.

2.C. *Leverage the strengths of online learning to enhance the student learning experience.*

- **Action 2.C.1.** Develop a plan to cultivate student and faculty skills in using, evaluating, and implementing digital tools.
- **Action 2.C.2.** Provide pedagogical flexibility so all students can flourish.

## **3. Enlarge the influence of a BYU education.**

3.A. *Increase the number of students receiving a BYU education.*

- **Action 3.A.1.** Increase student FTE enrollment by up to 10 percent by 2025.
- **Action 3.A.2.** Hire new FTE at a rate commensurate with increased enrollment, with a strong emphasis on hiring professional faculty.

3.B. *Elevate BYU’s unique message to key audiences.*

- **Action 3.B.1.** Create a University Strategic Communications Committee.
- **Action 3.B.2.** Organize and align strategic communications efforts across campus.
- **Action 3.B.3.** Develop and implement a strategic communications plan that includes objectives to (a) increase key external audiences’ understanding and awareness of BYU’s unique mission and (b) educate and inspire our campus community about BYU’s unique mission.