

MIDDLEBURY

Strategic Plan

Excellence. Purpose. Joy.

Three Strategies · Seven Initiatives · Three Foundational Commitments

STRATEGY ONE Strengthen Our Core <i>3 Initiatives · 24 Key Actions</i>	STRATEGY TWO Serve Our World <i>2 Initiatives · 13 Key Actions</i>	STRATEGY THREE Prepare for Our Future <i>2 Initiatives · 6 Key Actions</i>
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PLAN VISION STATEMENT

Our Vision

We strive to be the best residential liberal arts institution in the world—excellent, purposeful, joyful—for our students and for our world.

At Middlebury, we have long distinguished ourselves as both the town's college and the most global liberal arts college in the world; the college most alive to the languages and cultures of the world; the college most dedicated to addressing the crisis of climate change. We will continue to be that place.

In an era of dramatic social, technological, and global change, it is time for Middlebury to lead in demonstrating that liberal arts learning is more vital than ever; that the students best-prepared for the shifting future are the ones who can combine multiple forms of intelligence: Critical intelligence, creative intelligence, technological intelligence, historical intelligence, and the forms of ethical and entrepreneurial intelligence necessary for them to thrive and for their communities to flourish.

In a time of civic fracturing, it is time for Middlebury to lead as a profoundly civic-minded institution: A college *for* our students and *for* our world.

We are a place defined by what we are for, not what we are against: A private institution with a public purpose.

Three Guiding Words

Excellence

What our students deserve and what we demand of ourselves—at every level and in everything we do.

Purpose

Rooted in our founding as “the town’s college” and our identity as a public-minded private institution.

Joy

A joyful sense of purpose, rooted in the once-in-a-lifetime experience of a Middlebury education.

Our ambition is to be the best residential liberal arts institution in the world, purposefully and joyfully excellent in everything we do—for our students and for our world.

PLAN STRUCTURE

Three Strategies, Seven Initiatives

The plan is organized around three linked strategies, each supported by initiatives and key actions. Three commitments—to diversity and pluralism, academic freedom, and academic excellence—underpin everything we do and are stated here as foundational commitments.

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Foundational Commitments

Diversity and Pluralism — We will build a truly plural Middlebury: A staff, faculty, and student body drawn from around the nation, world, and all backgrounds and perspectives; advancing teaching and scholarship on the rich diversity of the world’s histories, cultures, and traditions of thought; and celebrating the difference-makers in our history.

Academic Freedom — We will make Middlebury a model of academic freedom, supporting faculty and students in teaching and learning across perspectives, fostering civil discourse and civil disagreement.

Academic Excellence — We will uphold academic integrity and rigor by fostering a culture of honesty and trust, maintaining clear standards for academic honesty, and supporting faculty in implementing assessments and grades that promote critical thinking, originality, and deep learning.

STRATEGY ONE

Strengthen Our Core

Middlebury's core is the College, its students, faculty, staff, and our residential liberal arts teaching and scholarly mission. That core is grounded in our campus in Vermont, extended by our Schools Abroad, and enlivened each summer by the Language Schools, the Bread Loaf School of English, and Bread Loaf Writers' Conferences. To achieve our ambitions, we must strengthen our core.

Initiative One: Our People

Our college mission begins with our people—students, faculty, and staff on our Vermont campus. We must resolve the question of our long-term goals for our student body size and associated student-faculty ratio. As we do so, we must open our doors to extraordinary students, faculty, and staff from all backgrounds, invest in our students and those who teach and support them, commit to supporting and rewarding a shared culture of excellence, and align our resources accordingly. To do so, we will:

1. Determine goals for our student-body size and associated student-faculty ratio.
2. Enhance affordability for low- and middle-income families by making Middlebury tuition-free for families with incomes below \$150,000 in the near future, and seek to do so for families with incomes below \$175,000 as soon as possible thereafter.
3. Undertake a comprehensive review of our admissions policies and practices to ensure we are attracting and enrolling extraordinary students across backgrounds and fields of interest, including an evaluation of our current test-optional approach to standardized testing.
4. Develop a world-class advising and mentoring system, blending academic advising, career advising, and life advising with robust support for physical and mental health.
5. Uphold academic integrity and rigor by reinforcing a culture of honesty and trust; modernize policies to address emerging technologies; support faculty in implementing assessments and grades that promote critical thinking, originality, and deep learning.

6. Recruit and support outstanding teacher-scholars and staff; reward excellence with competitive, merit-based faculty compensation; review and, as needed, amend the current compensation system for staff to ensure a similarly ambitious staff compensation model; and advance efforts toward establishing a living wage for lowest income employees.
7. Strengthen support for innovative teaching and a culture of research, scholarship, and artistic creation, while also enhancing opportunities for staff professional development.
8. Welcome and support faculty, staff, and students from all walks of life through intentional outreach, structured onboarding, and mentorship; advance teaching and scholarship on the world's rich diversity of histories, cultures, and traditions; and celebrate Middlebury's difference-makers.
9. Explore opportunities for post-doctoral and cluster hires that enhance institutional capacity to engage with the rich diversity of the world's history, cultures, and ideas.
10. Align budgeting, long-term planning, governance, staffing, and institutional infrastructure with our priorities. Where programs or structures no longer advance our goals or are unsustainable, we will pursue redesign, consolidation, or sunseting, while improving effectiveness and reducing silos.
11. Highlight Middlebury's distinctiveness and ambition and enhance our ability to attract extraordinary students, faculty, and staff through bold, creative, and mission-driven storytelling on who we are and what we are for.

Initiative Two: Community and Connection

A Middlebury education is inseparable from life on our campus and in Vermont. We will invest in the spaces, traditions, activities, and just plain fun that make college life vivid and memorable. To do so we will:

1. Foster a vibrant and joyful campus life by creating gathering spaces across campus—food trucks, a campus pub, fire pits, an outdoor skating rink, volleyball courts, and expanded venues for live music, club sports, and the arts—while establishing shared times for celebration and revitalizing fun traditions that strengthen our residential community.
2. Broaden access for faculty, students, and staff to the beauty and power of our Vermont setting—from the Green Mountains to the Snowbowl, Rikert Outdoor Center, and our garden Knoll—while promoting year-round recreation and supporting physical and mental well-being.
3. Sustain our people and our mission by examining how our structures, calendar, and schedules shape our experiences, to create time and space for joy, meaningful engagement, and long-term well-being.
4. Celebrate the vibrancy of athletics by investing in coaching, facilities, and student-athlete support to sustain and advance our position at the forefront of Division III athletics; make Middlebury Saturdays, across sports and seasons, fun occasions for our shared gatherings and joyful time together.
5. Invest in physical spaces that bring us together, including a new student and community center designed to foster connection, shared experience, and a strong sense of place.
6. Explore additional spaces to support learning and community, including expanded teaching and research facilities and a health, wellness, and recreation center.

Initiative Three: Human Intelligence in the Twenty-First Century

We must fashion a distinctive 21st-century liberal arts curriculum dedicated to strengthening the forms of human intelligence—across the arts, humanities, natural sciences, social sciences, and languages—crucial to living and working in a rapidly evolving and ever more cosmopolitan world: Creative intelligence, entrepreneurial intelligence, civic intelligence, global intelligence, critical intelligence, and more. We will build the campus infrastructure and outreach to support that reinvigorated liberal arts curriculum. To do so we will:

1. Complete the faculty-led review of our general education core curriculum, comprehensively reimagining it for the first time in decades, and articulating the foundational principles, core competencies, and general education requirements of a 21st-century curriculum; explore how credit is defined and awarded; and support faculty-led efforts to implement curricular change.
2. Reimagine the first-year student experience by exploring place-based Orientation, peer mentoring, “big question” first-year seminars, and the creation of a “Fall Febmester” program that blends international and immersive experiential learning opportunities in startups, nonprofits, arts organizations, and other professional settings.
3. Support faculty in creating new and nimble clusters of cross-disciplinary study and team-teaching opportunities.
4. Seek to ensure that every Middlebury student has access to a funded global experience to equip them for the historical understanding, sophisticated judgement, and cultural fluency they need for leadership in the diverse and changing world they are entering.
5. Seek to ensure that every Middlebury student has access to a funded internship or other research or experiential learning opportunity that connects what happens in the classroom to the lab, the community, and the world beyond our campus.
6. Establish the Middlebury AI Studio—a secure, institution-hosted platform providing guided, creative, and responsible access to leading AI tools, enabling new forms of teaching and discovery.
7. Explore a “Middlebury Plus One” year, providing graduating seniors competitive access to support for founding and startup ventures; the completion of a first arts or writing project; entry into public service; or the opportunity to begin exploring an advanced degree in partnership with other institutions of higher education.

STRATEGY TWO

Serve Our World

From the beginning, Middlebury has known itself as “the town’s college”—a way of naming our commitment to the town of Middlebury and our broader dedication to the civic worlds around us. We are a public-minded private institution, committed to being ever more so: For our town, state, nation, world, and planet.

Initiative Four: The Town’s College and a College for Vermont

The social and economic health and vibrancy of our town and state are essential to our well-being. We will bring the energy and imagination of our students, faculty, and staff to advance the good of the place where we live. To do so we will:

1. Partner with the town and state to create an innovation zone to spark the local and regional economy and advance the entrepreneurial spirit of students, strengthening ties between local innovation initiatives and the College.
2. Launch a Vermont Policy Solutions Studio in partnership with state and local government to address complex challenges; create clusters of community-engaged courses to enable faculty, students, and staff to work alongside neighbors and civic partners on local and regional issues.
3. Broaden community access to libraries, arts spaces, and athletic venues; establish an Arts Engagement Initiative through performances, exhibitions, and community arts programming.
4. Continue and expand work addressing the urgent need for affordable housing in our town and the surrounding county.
5. Explore a loan forgiveness program for graduating seniors who commit to extended public service or innovation initiatives in Vermont.

Initiative Five: The Nation's College and a College for the World

Middlebury will expand its longstanding commitment to public service by opening pathways for educators and professionals across the nation to access our distinctive programs. We will connect students more directly to opportunities in government, policy, and international affairs, while strengthening language learning, global study, and immersive experiences across our worldwide network. By deepening partnerships and expanding access to our Schools Abroad and global sites, we will create a more connected, globally engaged Middlebury that prepares students to contribute meaningfully at home and abroad. To do so we will:

1. Expand access to our Language Schools and the Bread Loaf School of English to public school teachers from around the nation; continue to advance our Master of Arts in Teaching program; strengthen the Bread Loaf Teacher Network; and pilot initiatives to equip high school educators with the knowledge and skills to teach in an age of artificial intelligence.
2. Explore new opportunities to support the ongoing education of public service professionals in areas of Middlebury's distinctive expertise, including environmental studies, climate solutions, conflict resolution, and global security.
3. Leverage Middlebury's Washington, D.C., office to connect students to research and internship opportunities and to alumni and practitioners across government, policy, and international affairs.
4. Provide all interested students with the opportunity to develop the language proficiency necessary to study abroad; explore opportunities to increase access to summer language schools, language tables, and language houses.
5. Identify two to three international sites as global hubs—convening spaces for students, faculty, and alumni that facilitate collaboration and partnerships with local universities, businesses, government entities, NGOs, civil society, and arts organizations.
6. Establish one to three additional global sites—in addition to our program in Oxford—where students can study abroad with English as their primary medium of instruction, with particular focus on social science and STEM majors seeking global impact in their studies and future careers.

7. Deepen links between our Schools Abroad and areas of Middlebury's global strengths: Conflict Transformation, Economics, Environmental Studies, Geography, Global Health, Global Security, and Political Science.
8. Expand opportunities for cultural immersion by globalizing winter term; establishing short-term faculty-led courses abroad; and creating greater opportunities for faculty and students to engage with our Schools Abroad.

STRATEGY THREE

Prepare for Our Future

To say we live in a period of rapid and complex change is an understatement. Our age is one of dramatic technological innovation, intensifying climate change, remarkable advances in medicine, and a rapidly altered world of work. To prepare ourselves, our students, and our world for that future, we must embrace a spirit of agility and innovation while staking out a distinctive position in areas where Middlebury has the demonstrated capacity to lead.

Initiative Six: The Middlebury Labs

We embrace a spirit of creation and interdisciplinary problem-solving to deploy the full power of the liberal arts in addressing the most urgent matters of history and the future, and to ready our students for agile and purpose-filled lives and careers. To do so we will:

1. Launch the Middlebury Solutions Labs—rotating, time-bound (three- to five-year) projects drawing teams of students, faculty, staff, artists, and field experts to solve complex problems of public concern through research, policy recommendations, arts initiatives, and new academic clusters with a goal of two to three new labs per year.
2. Launch the Liberal Arts and Artificial Intelligence Lab. The Lab will provide opportunities for maker-space-style experimentation with AI technologies to our students, faculty, and staff to explore how they can enable creative new forms of teaching, learning, and discovery. It will foster course development, active learning, scholarship, arts, and research. The lab will also provide a venue for exploring the ethical implications of AI: How we need to be thinking about its capacities both creatively and responsibly, including through deliberate consideration of the impacts of AI on the future of our climate.
3. Launch the Career and Life Purpose Lab—pairing every student with a dedicated mentor from the first semester through graduation, building a portfolio of experiences and career-readiness learning opportunities, and leveraging Middlebury's global network for internships, fellowships, graduate pathways, and career futures. (Works in close coordination with the “Middlebury Plus One” initiative.)

Initiative Seven: The Planet's College

Middlebury knows the planetary crisis of climate change is intense. We are home to the oldest undergraduate environmental studies program in the country, and our Energy2028 initiative is leading our transition to renewable energy. We now have an opportunity to further envision our campus as a living laboratory where teaching, research, operations, and partnerships advance climate solutions: For our town, state, nation, world, and planet. To do so we will:

1. Develop a comprehensive new climate action and resilience plan building on Energy2028, aligned with operations, capital planning, facilities, dining, transportation, and technology—updated every five years.
 2. Support our faculty in strengthening climate and energy education across the curriculum; engage Middlebury's local-to-global network for climate solutions, community partnerships, and policy and technology innovations.
 3. Explore a reimagined School of the Environment as a School of Climate Solutions for students and working professionals integrating science and technology to inform effective climate policy and implementation.
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