CALVIN TOMORROW: THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE
A REPORT OF THE ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO PLANNING TASK FORCE
SUBMITTED TO THE PLANNING & PRIORITIES COMMITTEE
CALVIN UNIVERSITY
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1. **Preface**

In early Fall 2021, the Planning & Priorities Committee established the Academic Portfolio Planning Task Force (APP) by revising the charter of a task force that had previously operated under the auspices of academic prioritization.[1] The revised composition and mandate were intended to support a long-term migration of task force work toward more comprehensive and multi-year academic planning in the context of existing university commitments and guiding documents, analysis from the Strategic Budget Review (SBR), and developments in higher education.

While initial momentum case analyses from the SBR indicated a need for significant budget adjustments that would have required APP to recommend major expense-reducing overhauls to the divisional budget through the elimination of programs and positions, subsequent developments lifted that requirement, expanding the compass of APP's attention to more closely match its new remit and changing the emphasis of task force work. Certainly savings still had to be realized somewhere, but those were largely realized through uptake on the Voluntary Exit Incentive Program offered to a subset of faculty in the Fall, followed by the Credit Hour System Transition approved by Faculty Senate and the Board of Trustees in January, making it possible for APP to operate without the insistence upon immediate budget-reducing eliminations of programs and positions and opening up new horizons for agenda-setting within the academic division.

With this openness, APP shifted its focus, midway through the academic year, toward identifying the most compelling student experience possible. While this includes consideration of individual programs as part of an appropriately weighted portfolio of offerings, it is not limited to or even focused on that level of analysis. Rather, this approach brings into view the entire framework for the university's academic programs and articulates "signature" features of a Calvin experience.

Articulating these signature features strengthens the whole by focusing not primarily on each individual program, but on the bigger picture Calvin students have in common – domains and engaged practices of learning that, like the Calvin Core, are relevant to students regardless of their major, minor, or certificate. This is helpful because while the major (or minor or certificate) is essential to depth of preparation, it is not the defining feature of a Calvin education. Students apply and enroll exploring various majors, they change majors (some change multiple times), and they take a critical mass (and often a majority), of credits outside their majors. A more holistic approach attends to this reality and sharpens its focus on strengthening Calvin's education for *everyone*, in all aspects of its educational experience.

Such work still strengthens individual program areas by identifying program opportunities that align with the overall academic framework, inviting program revisions that align with that framework, developing an identity, direction, and strategy for the division as a whole, and

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[1] The charter that establishes the task force is included as an appendix to this report.

aiming at attracting students in large numbers (rather than just the students interested in one field or major) by helping prospective students and parents, regardless of their major, to see and experience the qualities of Calvin's learning experience regardless of a student's stated academic interests.

Founded on this emphasis on the overall shape of the learning experience, this report outlines diverse recommendations that emerged from APP deliberations and concludes with a number appendices relevant to various aspects of the committee's work. This report is provided to Planning & Priorities Committee (with the unanimous support of APP), but that is not the "endpoint" of the work. Future work on the priorities emerging from this report will need to be operationalized by various offices (operationalizing is not the work of Academic Portfolio Planning or Planning & Priorities), will require significant collaboration, and should benefit from a significant marketing and communications campaign designed to maximize its impact (this report does not do that work).

2. Assumptions and Aims

As we deliberated together about Calvin's portfolio, APP landed on some key assumptions.

- *Start with investment, not scarcity.* As Calvin has experienced over the past seven years, academic prioritization generally responds to fiscal distress and introduces targets that require cuts to balance year-over-year budgets. APP has a longer-term investment orientation, that is, a focus on deploying resources over multiple years to define an overall portfolio of learning experiences that will strengthen our mission and grow enrollments.

- *Assume growth, not contraction.* Many universities have decided as part of their strategic plans to contract or maintain their current enrollment numbers. Calvin's SBR team has moved the opposite direction by identifying aggressive growth targets for undergraduate (2,900 TUFTE by 2027 and 3,000-3,200 TUFTE by 2032) and non-traditional learners (800-1,500). As a result, APP must work toward a growth-focused portfolio – one that can support these levels of enrollment.[2]

- *Think positive-sum, not zero-sum.* Calvin's prioritization processes have generally assumed that freeing resources for some programs would require cuts in others. Indeed, we have often cut programs that were "inefficient" on their own even if they had some degree of missional or strategic value in the portfolio as a whole. The SBR process has taken a comprehensive, cross-divisional, multi-year view of university resources, that opens the door to investment based on a more integral considerations.

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[2] The work of APP is focused on supporting an academic portfolio appropriate for incoming classes of 715 FTIAC (the SBR base-case) and able to support or drive growth up to 825 FTIAC. See footnote ten for reference to APP work related to scenarios in which the university consistently misses 715 FTIAC or consistently misses related revenue targets.

- *Emphasize portfolio, not (solely) academic programs.* Because it focuses intensely on program cuts, the Academic Program Review process was program-centric; APP, in contrast, focuses on the overall portfolio of the academic enterprise, including the interconnections of academic programs and learning experiences that are not strictly speaking "curricular."

- *Build from strengths, not fears.* Many universities are lurching toward ideas out of fear of decline or even dissolution. APP's approach has been to identify Calvin's strengths and to imagine how to foster innovation and operations that build from those existing strengths.

- *Focus on performance, before marketing.* APP's scope encompasses an excellent academic portfolio; our focus is a bundle of learning experiences – both existing and new – that do indeed provide a vibrant learning experience and equip students as Christ's agents of renewal. While APP's proposals must be *marketable*, our role does *not* include developing communication tactics for or branding of the portfolio. That said, we do hope to identify ways in which our programmatic and performance-focused investments can help to make Calvin's strengths clear. This will be essential to marketing and recruitment efforts in the future. Making some of the bigger features of a Calvin education visible and legible – explicitly naming them – will be especially important for reaching students and other stakeholders who do not have a history with, and sometimes do not have exposure to, Calvin University.

Above all, we assume that Calvin University will be, by 2026, a *destination university and a hub of local, national, and international academic engagement*. Calvin has long been among the premier undergraduate Christian institutions in the United States, but our aim is to be *the* premier Christian liberal arts university,[3] reaching new learning communities, living into our vision of trusted partnership with institutions, communities, and broader publics in our region and around the world, and inspiring and preparing graduates to think deeply, act justly, and live wholeheartedly as Christ's agents of renewal in the world. To achieve this requires that we aim at nothing short of both *providing* and *being known for* the most compelling and transformative student experience available. This report aims to set the agenda for the academic components of that experience.

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[3] There is, of course, no shortage of commentary on liberal arts education. Clearly, what is required of a "liberal arts university" with its origins in professional education, an outsized impact in liberal arts scholarship, and a vision of the future that marries undergraduate and graduate, professional and non-professional, residential and non-residential programs is an understanding of the liberal arts that embraces the most salient features of the tradition without being bound *exclusively* to the academic fields and experiences stereotypically associated with residential liberal arts colleges in the United States. Any such understanding will justify investment in the academic fields typically associated with liberal arts and the experiences associated with residential undergraduate education while also generously encompassing professional education and extending and translating experiences and practices typical of liberal education into graduate and non-residential contexts. Useful sources for thinking about this challenge include Richard Detweiler's *The Evidence Liberal Arts Needs: Lives of Consequence, Inquiry, and Accomplishment*, as well as recent unpublished reflections by Calvin faculty member Will Katerberg. This report assumes that liberal arts education is woven into the entire strategic framework of the academic division.

3. Setting the Strategic Framework for Calvin's Academic Program

These assumptions, along with the APP mandate, led us to focus on mapping the academic experience as a whole, lest we lose the (portfolio) forest in our focus on the (programmatic) trees. We aim to contribute to Calvin's efforts to build the most compelling student experience of any Christian university, and in the academic division, this will mean investing in individual schools and programs, cross-cutting domains of learning, and distinctive pedagogies and practices of engaged education. Understanding these various dimensions of our academic portfolio's strategic framework will allow us not only to plan for and build that more compelling student experience but also to assess and prioritize program opportunities in light of that framework and to develop faculty and staff for participation in it.

Specifically, we believe a portfolio that fosters the most compelling student experience will combine:

1. **An emerging school-based university structure** that offers attractive academic programs (e.g., core, undergraduate majors/minors/certificates, graduate degrees and certificates) *and* supports co-curricular learning through strategic leadership and operational excellence. *This report <u>reinforces</u> schools as an organizing feature of our academic program.*

2. **Domains of learning** that students, alumni, and other stakeholders come to recognize as distinctive strengths of the university. The domain we have identified are generated out of our mission and theological commitments, and they present attractive opportunities to large subsets of prospective learners. Like the cross-university "webs" of relationships and collaborations envisioned in both Vision 2030 and the university structure masterplan, these domains tie together work across our schools and disciplines. *This report <u>develops</u> this existing emphasis of Vision 2030 and the university structure masterplan by articulating domains of learning that crisscross the schools and tie their work together.*

3. **Pedagogies and practices of engaged learning** that are not optional enhancements of academic programs but are deeply integrated into the overall student experience of a Christian liberal education and attend to vocational discernment. *This report <u>builds upon</u> our Educational Framework by committing to pedagogies and practices of engaged learning.*

Together, these three emphases will help to identify priorities, guide investments of time, attention, and money, focus faculty and staff development, strengthen assessment and governance, deliver a more compelling and coherent student experience across the university, make legible our commitments to students, and provide a strong foundation for marketing Calvin University to communities that do not already know us.

3.1 Schools

Vision 2030 articulates Calvin's intentions to become a liberal arts *university*, and the university structure masterplan emphasizes the role of schools in shaping the academic program, explicitly framing future directions in terms of disciplinary and professional affinities. Five schools have already emerged and have begun to serve as hubs for program-building and governance, direction and strategy, community, culture, and commitments. We are recommending continued investment in the School of Business, School of Education, School of Health, School of Humanities, Arts, & Social, Sciences, and School of STEM, as well as prioritizing the establishment of a School of Engineering, Computer Science, & Data Science.[4] While investing in and building around schools should lead to innovation and community, it can lead to "siloization," fragmentation of experience, identity, and brand, and even alienation. In order to promote development of these schools while stewarding the strengths and identity of the whole institution, we will need to invest intentionally in academic interests, student experiences, teaching practices, faculty development, and institutional culture that transcend our schools. To do this, we recommend investing in domains of learning and practices of engaged learning.

3.2 Domains of Learning

The same documents that articulate Calvin's commitment to schools also insist upon resisting the "siloization" of the university by emphasizing its *webs*:

> We ...envision a future with fewer silos, more webs. This is a vision for 'distinction-amid-relation,' where we as a university covenant to bless and affirm the unique gifts of each field, discipline, and area of expertise (distinctions), and also embed these distinct gifts within supportive networks (relations).

Consider, for example, how the University Structure task force articulated selected "design considerations" for a new structure:

> **Design consideration 1** – "Affinity groups, hybridity, dual affiliations": Establish clear lines for direct accountability of each role/unit coupled with greater use of secondary affiliations.
> **Design consideration 2** – "New unit focused on graduate, continuing studies, and distance learning students": Establish a "Global Campus" to foster program incubation and excellent operations in strategic initiatives for new learning communities.

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[4] We should note two additional points here: (1) The establishment of a School of Engineering, Computer Science & Data Science will affect the name, identity, and administration of the School of STEM. (2) The establishment of a School of Engineering, Computer Science, & Data Science will depend upon securing a lead gift for the school. In addition to seeking that gift, we should seek gifts for the three schools (Education, HASS, and STEM) that do not currently have their own endowments, and we should actively cultivate gifts that reinforce Calvin's liberal arts identity.

Design consideration 5 – "A Calvin-specific approach to distinct schools: permeable, interdependent, interconnected": Establish seven schools with both administrative *and* public-facing functions coupled with fewer departments housing multiple disciplines/programs and numerous ways of connecting schools to each other.

While previous work has identified select extant networks that function as webs, we would be remiss to imagine that these webs will sustain themselves or become visible and legible features of the university without intentionality. Indeed, the structural frame of Calvin's academic enterprise – our schools and departments – is less likely to work as a web without investment in building a broader portfolio that that emphasizes interconnections across programs and other learning experiences. In order to emphasize these connections, we recommend investing in domains of learning.

In identifying these domains, we again take our cues from past work. Specifically, Calvin's Vision 2030 calls us to carry out our mission through *relationships* with God, neighbor, and the broader environment:

> *By 2030, Calvin will become a Christian liberal arts university with an expanded global influence. We envision Calvin University as a trusted partner for learning across religious and cultural differences and throughout the academy, the church, and the world. Calvin University will be animated by a Reformed Christian faith that seeks understanding and promotes the welfare of the city and the healing of the world. We welcome all who are compelled by God's work of renewal to join us in the formative pursuits of lifelong learning, teaching, scholarship, worship, and service.*

The statement's emphasis on partnership and relationship in our work as Christ's agents of renewal invites us to focus on how cross-cutting domains within our academic portfolio can reflect relationships of shalom, address our enduring mission to contemporary issues, make visible certain commitments and communities,[5] and remain attuned to the experiences, gifts, and needs of our local community and global partners at this particular moment in time, so that we might collaborate with and learn from them as we promote their flourishing.

We defined several domains of learning with these criteria:

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[5] Kavin Rowe's book, *Christianity's Surprise* may be an interesting touchpoint for us. In it, Rowe argues that early Christianity was distinguished by institution-building *and* that these institutions made visible not only certain commitments, but also communities that were otherwise "invisible" at the time, especially the vulnerable (e.g., the sick, the poor). It is worth asking how our work to define cross-cutting domains may lay the foundation for analogous work in our institution, and how this work is rooted in our mission. The good examples of Calvin Prison Initiative and Ready for Life may stimulate our thinking about how broader, institution-wide domains of learning can be framed to make visible commitments, communities, and partners.

1. They are clearly generated out of our mission and our work to educate for *shalom*[6] (they are not merely possibilities that don't conflict with the mission).
2. They cut across schools and disciplines, as our university structure suggests they should.
3. They present attractive opportunities to subsets of prospective learners and to wide swaths of existing students, alumni, and other stakeholders.

The following chart displays (1) key relationships that reflect our missional identity and theological commitments, (2) where Calvin has made foundational arguments, rooted in Scripture and the confessions, about their special relevance to our mission, (3) examples of places where we already educate with these relationships in mind, and (4) other places where we have just recently taken aspirational steps (e.g., cohorts).

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[6] It is worth noting here that "educating for shalom" resonated with several members of the group because of its ties to Nicholas' Wolterstorff's work on philosophy of education and on Christian higher education, in particular. Other members of the group, though they might have resonated with Wolterstorff's work on the topic to one degree or another, thought that the phrase might not serve us well, as it is a tagline used by other institutions. Still, the concept seems useful enough, if coupled with this footnote, to include here, even if it may not serve as a clear enough or distinctive enough line for communicating with broader audiences who might not understand what we mean or might not understand how we mean anything different from another institution that might use the same phrase.

We live in relationship to….	…through…	…articulated in …	…and illustrated by work we currently do…	…and aspire to do.
God	worship; spiritual formation; deliberate and explicit integration of faith and learning across all subjects	institutional charter, faculty and staff handbooks	investment in faith and learning through dVI, CCCS, Kuiper Seminar; chapel	ministry leadership cohort; expanded and enhanced faculty and staff development in faith integration
each other	citizenship, ethical leadership, and just action that seeks renewal, restoration, healing of the city, promoting the thriving of communities in our region and around the world	Educational Framework; FEN	CPI; dVI modules for faculty development; Henry Institute; interfaith relationships	Common Good Coalition; Civic Hospitality Project; public scholarship COP; a center that promotes the thriving of local communities and global partners
our environment	practices of discovery and an ethic of sustainability	STARS; Statement on Sustainability	Plaster Creek; Ecosystem Nature Preserve; Clean Water Institute	Sustainability Fellows; best Christian thinking on supply chain
our own bodies[7]	attention to the health of mind and body	Health Sciences - Academics | Calvin University	Nature RX; Counseling Center; community-based nursing; partnerships with local providers; top DIII athletics	Health Ambassadors; School of Health
what we create	our engagement with the arts, business, and technology	Arts | Calvin University Business | Calvin University Computer Science | Calvin University Engineering | Calvin University	Design Hub; Arts Council; Center for Faith and Writing; digital humanities; Calvin Center for Innovation in Business; Calvin Startup Garage; Young Women's Business Institute	Digital Life Cohort; Arts Collective; Calvin Human-Centered Design Hub; best Christian thinking on business, engineering, education and the digital revolution (perhaps, e.g., through a center for faith and technology)

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[7] "Our own bodies" was regarded as infelicitous by some members of the group who said it might sound like we mean each one to one's own body. This is obviously not what we mean, but we mean to emphasize that seeking shalom includes regard for human health. While some suggested that "thriving" or "flourishing" fit here, thriving or flourishing are much more comprehensive topics that relate to every dimension of this table. Thus, we call attention to that goal in the paragraphs that lead into this table.

It is important to note that the goal here is not to diminish or disadvantage other areas of disciplinary learning where faculty and staff excel. In fact, the goal is to complement and enhance disciplinary learning. To do so, we should identify areas of cross-disciplinary strength – whether existing or aspirational – that enhance our new structure and from which we can build rapidly over the next 2-5 years.[8]

3.3 Pedagogies and Practices of Engaged Learning

One of Calvin's four "all-college" goals is, not surprisingly, *learning.* Its tagline is the following: "Deep, Broad, Engaged." Arguably, we deliver on our promise of depth through majors, minors, and certificates. The Calvin Core delivers on our promise of breadth, which will only be enhanced by investment in the domains listed above. But what of "engaged" learning?

While the *engaged* nature of learning is – or should be – part of curricula for general education and majors, it should also be the focus of strategic and coherent investment in order to build a consistent experience of engaged learning across the university. And this requires connecting the curriculum and co-curriculum. As the *Educational Framework* asserts, "developing life-long habits of effective and enthusiastic learning prepares us for lives of faithful service in the kingdom," and "the curriculum and co-curriculum *together* nurture knowledge of ourselves and our gifts."

The *Educational Framework* amplifies the co-curricular point by identifying "means by which [learning] outcomes can be achieved" that are largely practices outside the conventional curriculum. The full list includes:

- finish a major—or two (or develop their own strategic interdisciplinary major)
- participate in musical ensembles, theater productions, student organizations, or athletics
- work with a faculty member on a summer research project.
- complete an internship using skills developed in a major or practiced in a student organization
- attend January Series lectures
- serve as a Resident Assistant in one of Calvin's living communities.
- become an Academic Help Ambassador (AHA) in a residence hall.

These are helpful signposts, but they are self-described as merely "illustrative." We might restate them in categories of pedagogies and practices of engaged learning where our portfolio already has pockets of strength. These include:

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[8] It is worth noting that previous documents have included Calvin's centers and institutes as "webby" parts of the university's new structure. It is conceivable that the domains of learning identified here can also help us to understand where and how existing or new centers and institutes can strengthen Calvin's entire framework and position the university as trusted partner among local communities, global partners, and broader publics where it concerns the "welfare of the city and the healing of the world."

1. **Undergraduate research** through deep mentorship (examples: Civitas; McGregor; STEM in Summer)
2. **Artistic creativity** through co-curricular collaboration (examples: Rangeela; Calvin Theater Co; Dance Guild; musical ensembles;)
3. **Global and off-campus programs** that promote cross-cultural learning and cultural intelligence (examples: short-term, long term, foreign language abroad, programs in many countries and cultures around the world, Global Business Certificate)
4. **Leadership, entrepreneurship, and service** through community partnership (examples: Service Learning; Nexus Financial Planning; Ready for Life; Worship Apprenticeships, Calvin Startups, Kim Investment Management (KIM), Women's Business Network)
5. **Internships, co-ops, and action-learning projects** that link employment, vocation, and learning (examples: discipline-specific efforts; DC Semester; Calvin Action Projects)

Many of these are considered "high-impact learning practices;" organized well, they can be important vehicles for achieving the outcomes of a liberal arts education. All of these have historically been strengths of a Calvin education, though they have not always been woven throughout the fabric of the institution in ways that touch every student.

We see these practices of engaged learning as integral to excellent academic programs and recognized domains of cross-disciplinary learning – and we are not alone in that perspective. Most universities highlight one or more of these practices, and some of our strongest aspirants – e.g, Elon or Hendrix – bundle up their active use of these practices as an indispensable feature of the student experience and . Our challenge is to show how Calvin's distinctive mission reframes these practices as contexts for deep faith formation, vocational discernment, and restorative action. *We invite development of a proposal that would build engaged learning into the experience of every Calvin student.*[9]

4. Program-Level Recommendations

While this year's process focused on development of a strategic framework for Calvin's academic program, it also included a review of existing programs and consideration of possible new investments.[10] For this work, APP members had access to new metrics[11] and extensive data collected from departments.

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[9] This may be as developed an integral of the Calvin Core or "LifeWork2.0" – both of which have been suggested – or in some other fashion. Thought partners for development of this part of the strategic framework should coordinate with the Provost's Office.

[10] While this report does not focus on program eliminations, we have also identified select program areas that *could* be eliminated for further savings or for resource reallocation to growth areas *if* the university does not meet its enrollment targets in coming years.

[11] These metrics have been presented to Faculty Senate and specified in an appendix to this report. Metrics were developed to reflect the institution's valuing of "webs" of relationships between programs, to measure revenues and costs in dollars, and to consider demand as suggested by internal and external sources.

An examination of program-level data in light of the opportunities, assumptions, and strategic framework above led to the following recommendations:

- We recommend consulting with departments about sunsetting the following minors. [12] This work should be undertaken in consultation with other affected departments.
    - Computer Science minor for education
        - This minor is a relic of a past education credentialing regime and no longer relevant.
    - Scientific Computation and Modeling minor
        - This minor was custom-built for a purpose it no longer serves. Care should be taken in addressing it so that other departments that rely upon its courses still have those advantages.

- We recommend revising or reconfiguring the following minors for increased efficiency, increased alignment with strategic framework, and interest generation.
    - African and African Diaspora Studies minor
    - Gender Studies minor
    - Medieval Studies minor
    - Recreational Leadership minor
    - Urban Studies minor

- We recommend that the School of STEM, School of Education, and Provost's Office explore, with the faculty of Science Education Studies, joint appointments for the faculty currently assigned to that department.
    - Science Education Studies

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[12] All six of the first named programs in this section are minors. Two things are worth noting about minors: (1) We ask that departments and schools together make the effort to clean up defunct or inefficient minors beginning next year and on a regular basis. Such work should be done in the course of other normal reviews (e.g., ten-year reviews, periodic reviews by APP, and others), but should also be part of a more frequent regular rhythm. (2) We will not commit to hiring in order to sustain minors. As is already the case at the department level and with other programs (e.g., majors and certificates), responses to voluntary or involuntary departures that generate an open line will vary according to demand for the program in question. It is already the practice for deans and the provost to consider program vitality, including demand, when recommending whether to refill or to reallocate one or more lines. Decisions not to refill one or more vacated lines because they cannot be justified by the vitality of the program, of course, amount to decisions not to resource a program and may have adverse consequences for that program. This is sometimes a natural result of attrition and does not require the APP process as background to a decision. When a faculty line is vacant, the provost's office recommends to PPC whether and where to allocate that line. The framework and program priorities outlined in this document could conceivably result reallocating a vacated line away from a program with low total demand, external demand, or overall vitality to another program or to a priority outlined in this report.
Of course, a decision not to resource a program after faculty depart is quite different from a decision to eliminate a program that requires people to depart. Recent prioritization decisions have been the latter sort of decision. This footnote refers to the former sort.
It is also true that a decision to reallocate lines is quite different from a decision to reduce total lines. This footnote refers primarily to the former, reallocation, and not primarily to the latter.

- We recommend the following self-studies be conducted in 2022-2023 and submitted to the dean, provost, and APP.
  - Sustainability-related programs (to simplify, organize around synergies, capitalize on strengths, and make legible to external audiences)
  - World Languages (to propose the language program portfolio of the future)

- We recommend the following areas for new investment that can support the future growth of Calvin University.
  - In addition to investments in the cross-cutting domains and practices of engaged learning outlined above, we recommend investment in and invite proposals for the following program areas.
    - The already-launched Calvin Cohorts
    - Programs in the School of Business (e.g., business analytics) or collaborating with the School of Business (e.g., arts administration)
    - Programs in data sciences and analytics (along with prioritization of a School of Engineering, Computer Science, & Data Science, as mentioned above)
    - Programs in the School of Health (e.g., a pharmacy assurance program or 3+2 degree) or collaborating with the School of Health (e.g., medical ethics, medical humanities, medical missions, medical Spanish)
    - Programs incubated through Calvin's Global Campus to reach new learning communities, especially for graduate students and other adult learners in key strategic areas in health, education, data analytics, information technology, and business (with use of careful studies of demand recently secured by the Global Campus team, viability evaluations using the "lean canvas" approach developed by that team, and seed funds to staff new initiatives until they are mature)
    - Accelerated graduate degree pathways (e.g., accelerated master's programs of 3+2 or 4+1 variety for Calvin undergraduates, mapped out systematically, in a university-wide pattern)

All programs are invited to (1) seek ways to grow, (2) articulate cross-disciplinary, interdependent, collaborative, and engaged learning practices, (3) explicitly, visibly, and legibly connect with the domains of learning articulated above, and (4) make explicit and operationalize their claim to liberal arts education.

5. **Faculty Personnel Implications**

APP has determined not to recommend reductions in personnel. We anticipate that the effects of the Voluntary Exit Incentive Program and other attrition will align the total number of full-time faculty with the number needed for our current operations given the credit-hour system transition beginning in FY24 (181.5). Implications for and approaches to managing the faculty include the following:

(1) The administration will need to work to rebalance the number of tenured and tenure-track faculty, on the one hand, and lecturers, on the other. Currently, we plan for 165-165.5 of the former and 16-16.5 of the latter.

(2) The number of full-time faculty may grow with gifts, seed money to support new programming, or, occasionally, conversion of staff positions to faculty positions.

(3) Where faculty positions are required to resolve faculty *supply* issues (e.g., to add faculty due to leaves of absence, resignations late in the academic year, or to back-fill for faculty who have significant research releases), the administration will prioritize visiting lines and post-doctoral fellowships.

(4) Responses to increased student demand will first be sought through the increased presence of contingent faculty (adjuncts and others). Should enrollment growth increase university-wide average course enrollments by more than .99 students or negatively affect the student-faculty ratio, the administration will consider additional full-time faculty lines.

(5) Any responses to decreased student demand for credit hours will first be sought through reductions to contingent faculty (adjuncts, lecturers, and others).

(6) If a program is eliminated, the university will have the option (a) to discontinue the employment of faculty in that program and reallocate resources toward areas of greater efficiency and growth or (b) to invite faculty to continue at the university, teaching in another area for which they are qualified or teaching in the Calvin Core.[13]

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[13] Any program eliminations, especially when they involve reductions in personnel, should be made with at least one full year between announcement and implementation. This will require APP to work even further ahead, as data-analysis, deliberation, consultation, and decision must precede announcement and implementation.

ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO PLANNING TASK FORCE
DRAFT

Mandate

The Academic Portfolio Planning Task Force (APP) of the Planning and Priorities Committee (PPC) will provide guidance concerning the composition of the entire academic portfolio in the context of

1. the university's mission, vision (e.g., Vision 2030), strategic plan, university structure masterplan, and other relevant guiding documents;
2. multi-year, integrated scenario planning for the university and division budgets derived from the Strategic Budget Review;
3. analysis of current and future systemic developments in higher education.

The main responsibilities of the Task Force will include:

- advising on resource allocation within the division, including existing programs, prospective programs, and areas of strategic investment;
- developing criteria and metrics for systemic analysis of program vitality that are tethered to the university's guiding documents, related to program effectiveness and efficiency, and reflect the relationships between programs;
- recommending a strategic, multi-year pathway to a sustainable portfolio of programs;
- conducting regular reviews of programs on a five-year rotation *and* as exigencies arise, making recommendations, in consultation with the academic deans, to the PPC regarding levels of program support;
- communicating any recommendations to the Educational Policy Committee and Professional Status Committee annually;
- ensuring that there are clear, appropriate, and enforceable confidentiality guidelines for sensitive information.

The provost, who will serve as co-chair, will occasionally brief the faculty senate on approaches, metrics, analyses, and outcomes, with appropriate attention to confidentiality.

Reporting Relationship

The APP will report to the PPC. All members of the APP may be present when business from the task force is being discussed by the full PPC.

Composition

Task Force membership will normally consist of thirteen voting members and additional non-voting advisors. Changes in the composition of the task force may be made by recommendation of the task force and approval of a majority vote of the full Planning and Priorities Committee.

Voting members include:
- The provost and one faculty member on PPC, chosen by PPC, who will serve as co-chair.
- Seven additional faculty selected by the provost and the designated PPC faculty member, in consultation with their academic dean. This group must include at least one representative from each school. No department can be represented by more than one faculty member.
- One faculty senator, chosen by the provost and the vice-chair of faculty senate.
- One member of the academic division staff.
- The associate provost and the dean for academic administration.
- Additional voting members may be chosen by the designated task force members and endorsed by PPC for the purposes of ensuring broad and effective representation of the university community, and expertise in specific areas related to the task force responsibility.

Non-voting advisors may be included as needed (e.g., director of institutional effectiveness and analytics, deans, financial services staff).

Review
The Task Force will review its mandate in Spring 2023 and submit a recommendation to PPC

APPENDIX B
Assessing and Governing the Portfolio: A Sketch

APP's goals are at the intersection of missional learning and enrollment growth. Calvin has a brief window of opportunity for strategic investment in a portfolio that compels various types of learners to join us.

APP does not see a satisfactory return on investment in a preoccupation with academic programs as discrete curricular offerings. A portfolio that fosters the most compelling student experience will combine a frame with a cross-threading web:

1. **A "frame" of university structure** that offers attractive academic programs (e.g., core, majors/minors, graduate degrees and certificates) *and* supports co-curricular learning through school and departmental leadership and operational excellence.
2. **Domains of study and engagement** that are (1) clearly generated out of our mission (not merely "aligned" with mission), (2) generally cross-disciplinary, and (3) attractive to subsets of prospective learners.
3. **Practices of engaged learning** that are more than complements to academic programs but are deeply integrated into the overall student experience as a part of learning and vocational discernment.

Briefly, what might that mean for two key stakeholders: leaders in programs and leaders in governance?

Implications for Program Investments

While demand and financial vitality will continue to play a role in evaluating programs, we will add considerations of this strategic framework to considerations.

What does this portfolio approach mean for a program that is inefficient or low demand based on the chief metrics of prioritization? A portfolio perspective might suggest such programs still have a great deal to contribute to the overall student experience because they are – or could be – deeply connected to a strategic domain of study and/or to practices of engaged learning. Any plans to include such programs in Calvin's portfolio would need to take into account those alternative "metrics."

What does that mean for a program with high efficiency and/or high major/minor demand? From a portfolio perspective, building from the strength of such a program does not necessarily mean imagining additional curricular offerings (e.g., adjacent majors or minors; new concentrations or certificates). Program leaders might consider instead how to strengthen the student experience by imagining new cross-disciplinary opportunity or by introducing/improving practices of engaged learning.

Implications for Governance

Two of our key governance committees consider the academic portfolio, and while the provost's office may launch and direct resources toward many of the initiatives described above, these committees are essential to curricular approvals and to the allocation of faculty lines and select other resources for curricular programs. These two – EPC and APP/PPC – have historically focused on improvement of the academic enterprise by proliferating and strengthening, or by contracting and reducing, academic majors and minors. Calvin provides few incentives *in the governance process* for imagining ways to strengthen the student experience outside formal discipline-based curricula. EPC's process for program improvement, for example, is almost entirely geared toward outcomes that are assessed through performance in discipline-based courses. Until recently, APP/PPC envisioned program-level analysis almost entirely in terms of demand for courses in core or majors. Again, EPC's and APP/PPC's approaches are not in themselves misguided; indeed, they are required both by accreditors and by good fiscal accounting. But a portfolio approach would put those metrics into a broader context of a student academic experience that extends beyond courses and degrees.

APPENDIX C
APP Data and Metrics

The Academic Portfolio Planning Task Force collected and considered data from various sources this year. APP sometimes considered this data in group sessions and sometimes used it in paired or small-group work. Individual members were able to access the data and used it in various ways to inform their proposals and participation in group deliberations and decisions.

Data Collected from Departments
Using Airtable, APP requested substantial quantitative and qualitative data from departments. This data reflected APP interests in a wide variety of concerns from programmatic distinctives to diversity, equity, and inclusion to the webs of interdepartmental collaboration, as well as low-enrolled courses and steps already taken to make the department more effective and efficient. The Airtable form that APP used to collect this information from department chairs can be provided to PPC members upon request.

Metrics Developed in Collaboration with Institutional Effectiveness & Analytics
APP also developed multiple indicators of departmental financial vitality developed in collaboration with Institutional Effectiveness & Analytics. These included the following:

A five-measure composite financial scoring tool
1. Credit hour revenue over instructional costs
2. Credit hour revenue over total costs
3. Major revenue over total costs
4. Percentage of low-enrolled courses
5. Credit-load ratio

Of these five measures, four (1-4) were new to Calvin, and the first three measures included both actual revenues and expenses *in dollars* for the first time. This represented a significant improvement over using only proxies for revenues and expenses. We were also able to calculate these using both actual revenues (e.g., the actual tuition paid by specific students) and expenses (e.g., the actual compensation of faculty) and average revenues (e.g., the average net tuition revenue per student) and expenses (e.g., the average compensation of faculty) over one-year and three-year periods. The ability to see results according to both actual and average calculations is especially valuable for various reasons, including our wariness of both (a) "penalizing" departments that have a disproportionately high percentage of students receiving large merit- or need-based discounts and (b) "rewarding" departments enrolling a disproportionately high percentage of low-need, low-merit students.

Two of these five measures (1 and 2) were developed with specific intentions to reflect the value of "webs" between departments and schools.

<u>Contribution margin</u>
We also calculated the contribution margin of each department, netting out their total credit hour revenue and total departmental expenses.[14]

<u>Demand-related data</u>
We accessed additional demand-related data from Calvin's enrollment division and from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

Basic Principles for Engagement with Data
Two basic principles guided our engagement with data:

- While data may be useful for answering questions, it is best used in this context for asking, developing, and refining questions and directions. A number of examples demonstrate why this is an important principle. Here are two: (1) Much of our data is departmentally focused and much of our analysis needs to be program-focused. The data often does not *answer* definitively our questions about programs, but it helps us to hone our questions and refine our directions. (2) Demand data is relevant but often "squishy" or somewhat mismatched. For example, Calvin program types and names are not neatly matched to IPEDS categories. Nevertheless, as long as we do not expect it to answer our questions, the IPEDS data remains helpful in shaping our insights.
- Relatedly, our decisions best and most important decisions are not *data-driven "no-brainers,"* but *data-informed judgment calls*. No data, information, metrics, or analytics could absolve us of these judgment calls. Even if we had worked to establish data-based criteria to make lead us to our final decisions, the foundational work of choosing the metrics and establishing the criteria would itself have reflected judgment calls that might only have been masked later.

The Future of this Data
The data collected by APP will be of ongoing use:

- We recognize that collecting data from departments on short notice during the compilation of the next year's course schedule was a burden, especially for department chairs. Thankfully, the data collected from departments will, to a significant extent still be relevant next year. APP may also revise the form that was used to collect the data and ask departments to complete it on a specific cycle, or it may be collected during normal departmental ten-year reviews.

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[14] Among interesting observations regarding contribution margin: We have no negative contribution-margin departments. And yet Calvin must resolve a number of budgetary challenges and attract and support the attraction and education of more students. On the one hand, this may suggest that Calvin may not be able to sustain even positive contribution-margin departments or programs that aren't delivering as well as other programs are. On the other hand, Calvin has gone through very significant program reductions and resource reallocations without resolving its budgetary challenges, and in doing so it has cut some programs connected with historic strengths and contributing to the overall curriculum. So it may be that the most relevant observation to make is that Calvin should add to its focus on departments and programs a cross-school emphasis on the whole student experience, which this report emphasizes.

- The measures of departmental financial vitality will be automatically updated every year. These will be of ongoing value not only to APP, but also for decision-making by departments, deans, and the provost's office.

APPENDIX D
Center & Institute Memo

In the course of our work, some APP members produced a memo on the role of Calvin University's centers and institutes in shaping our academic portfolio and supporting the most compelling student experience possible while also contributing in their distinctive ways to faculty development, scholarship, and public engagement.

Dean David Wunder has been working with center and institute directors to collect and synthesize feedback on the original memo and to cast a vision for integrating centers and institutes – sometimes more fully, and sometimes simply more visibly and legibly – into the fabric of the institution. Sharing the entire strategic framework developed in this report will be a next step toward aligning their work while supporting and promoting their special contributions to the community.

APPENDIX E
Preliminary Sketch of APP Workplan for FY23

Next year's APP work will benefit from the strategic framework developed in this report. Next year's task force will need to chart its course carefully, but a very preliminary sketch of its work follows.

Fall Semester

- Review recommendations from spring 2022 and evaluate progress in consultation with the provost's office (e.g., assess provost's progress in working with deans, department chairs, and program directors on implementing program revisions and planning for investments; assess provost's progress in establishing priority investments in domains of learning; assess provost's progress in convening group to define Calvin's university-wide plan for pedagogies and practices of engaged learning)
- Review and incorporate strategic framework into APP evaluation work
- Review input from consultants and researchers
- Consult provost's office for refreshed list of peer, private cross-app, and aspirational schools and conduct review of IPEDS data for those schools
- Consult provost's office on new workflow for new program proposals.
- Invite employee input into growth opportunities aligned with strategic framework
- Invite additional data for "deep dives" on select programs on new APP rotation

Spring semester

- Consider data collected in the fall semester along with self-studies by departments from which they were requested, data collected on "deep dive" departments, and information on potential strategic investments and growth opportunities
- Develop preliminary recommendations for sunsetting, merging, watching, growing, or investing in programs in light of strategic framework
- Consult with departments that may be affected by changes
- Report to PPC and inform Faculty Senate
- Notify any programs that will be modified, ensuring that full-time faculty are given at least one full academic year of notice – and preferably two – if they will be adversely affected[15]

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[15] This work should conform to the faculty handbook and section five of this report, including bullet-point six and footnotes twelve and thirteen.