

Living Leadership

Brescia's 2010-2015 Strategic Plan



Choose to Lead.



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I. Introduction

This strategic plan, entitled *Living Leadership*, heralds an era of growth for Brescia. While Brescia's long-term vision remains unchanged, a new overarching strategic objective articulates a five-year vision where students abound and thrive in a growing, dynamic community. The five-year strategic objective is:

To strengthen Brescia's competitive position and embrace our values while growing our student community to 1,200 full-time students by 2015.

Four descriptive vision elements, nine bold objectives, and 27 key initiatives will drive Brescia toward its strong future. This plan maps out Brescia's destination for 2015 and its five-year route on the journey of growth. Equally important as growth, if not more so, is what Brescia will be like as it grows and changes. Brescia's ongoing, strong commitment to its core values, evident throughout this planning process, will guide us as we pursue growth, to ensure that the essence of Brescia endures.

Living Leadership contains seven sections. Following this introduction is Section II, which elaborates on the strategic planning process. Section III revisits Brescia's vision, mission, and values, while Section IV addresses the first of three powerful questions, "Where are we now?" and provides highlights from our environmental scan and brand positioning. Section V turns to Brescia's future and gives insight into 'Where are we going?' The vision is clarified with Brescia's four vision elements and nine specific strategic objectives. Section VI of this plan details 'How will we get there?' by identifying the 27 key initiatives that Brescia will undertake during the life of this plan. Implementation of the plan and the measurement of its success, are detailed in Section VII.

II. The Planning Process

Brescia's previous Strategic Plan, *Learn, Live, Lead*, expired in May of 2009, and the planning process for *Living Leadership* began in the summer of 2009. The diagram below illustrates the four phases in this process.



The first phase of the process involved the convening of the Joint Long-Term Planning Committee whose initial task was to review the previous plan. The Committee was co-ordinated by Jim Mei and assisted by a consultant specializing in strategic planning. After initial meetings of the committee, a half-day workshop was held in October 2009 to seek input from a broad sampling of Brescia's community members. Between October and January 2010 the committee convened numerous times to develop the strategic objectives identified at that meeting. In January 2010 a second workshop was held for members of the Brescia community. Approximately 65 people participated in this workshop and generated in excess of 100 draft initiatives intended to realize the strategic objectives.

III. Vision, Mission, and Values

a) Vision

The first planning workshop offered the opportunity to revisit Brescia's vision. Participants unanimously agreed that Brescia's vision continues to resonate and should remain unchanged. The vision is as follows:

Brescia will be the university college of choice for women seeking an inclusive community of learning that combines academic excellence with opportunity for service and leadership.

b) Mission

Upon review of Brescia's mission statement, it was determined that its language could be strengthened. Brescia's revised mission statement has replaced the word 'respond' in the last sentence with the word 'lead' to reflect Brescia's focus on leadership. In addition, the word 'to' has been replaced by the word 'in' to make the sentence grammatically correct.

Brescia University College is a student-centred community that educates women to think critically and to participate actively in society. A Catholic college in the Ursuline tradition, we prepare our graduates to lead with wisdom, justice, and compassion in a changing world.

c) Values

The planning process reinforced the importance of living Brescia's core values:

- We value women and their potential for leadership in society;
- We value pedagogical initiatives that encourage women's learning styles and enable them to develop their voices, confidence, and leadership skills;
- We value creative, holistic education;
- We value academic excellence;
- We value experiential learning;
- We value the celebration of the spiritual dimension of the human person;
- We value the building of community in participative and collaborative ways;
- We value the struggle to raise social awareness and to promote social change;
- We value the physical environment that enhances the spiritual search for truth and beauty.

IV. Where are we now?

a) Environmental Scan

Beginning any institutional strategic planning process with an environmental scan is critical in that it ensures that the organization is looking forward:

- In June 2008 the Brescia University College Council of Trustees approved “A Vision for the Future: Brescia’s Master Plan, 2008-2020.”
- In the summer of 2008 Brescia engaged a market research firm to collect and analyze data identifying the needs of potential Brescia students.
- In the winter of 2009 Brescia retained an architectural services firm to gather additional data resulting in a capital needs assessment.
- This research culminated in the hiring of a leading North American consultant in post-secondary educational positioning, and Brescia embarked on a rigorous process of rebranding.

b) Brescia Positioning for the Future

Deriving from these reports, surveys, and disciplined rebranding process were truths about Brescia and the position we hold within post-secondary education. These truths now guide us in our every day work and have provided a wealth of information that has informed this strategic planning process.

From these insights we have come to recognize that we have a truly distinctive positioning as Canada’s only women’s university, founded in 1919 on the Ursuline values of compassion, community involvement, and leadership for women. We are the embodiment of “living leadership” not simply paying lip service to the concept. Our faculty, staff members, and students are committed to making a difference in the broad community of which we form a part. We believe that women can make a difference in the world. Individually and collectively, we are committed to living our lives with our four brand attributes firmly in mind: student centred; compassionate; invigorating; and empowering. Academic programming and extra- and co-curricular learning are increasingly built around these concepts, as is all planning. We value the concept of protecting our world and are committed to learning more about environmentalism. Plans for the future will be shaped around becoming careful stewards of the earth.

As is the case for all post-secondary institutions in Canada, and even globally, we inhabit an increasingly competitive landscape and are committed to continuing our efforts to heighten awareness about our unique offerings to students. Decreased government funding, an economy that is only slowly recovering from the recession, and the needs of today’s Millennial students, contribute to the challenges faced by

post-secondary institutions today. And Brescia, like all affiliated and federated universities, struggles with its semi-autonomous position. These institutions need to work harder to gain acceptance for independent vision, growth, and external profile. Brescia is aware of these external factors and constraints and *Living Leadership* addresses them boldly and with the conviction that present change will lead to future success.

We are confident that our “product” in the post-secondary arena is unparalleled. Distinguishing traits and characteristics for Brescia include: future plans for expansion – both in terms of student numbers, academic programming, and facilities; our leadership position in certain niche areas, including Foods and Nutrition; our innovative partnerships; and a distinctive positioning as Canada’s only university for women and how that enables us to redefine women’s education. These all contribute to make us a unique destination for students, both domestically and internationally, and provide us with a strong strategic advantage.

V. Where are we going?

a. Overarching Strategic Objective

The environmental analysis and brand positioning provided a glimpse of what could be possible for Brescia and what challenges lie ahead. This led to the development of our overarching strategic objective:

*To strengthen Brescia’s competitive position and embrace our values
while growing our student community to 1,200 full-time students by 2015.*

This strategic objective confronts Brescia’s greatest challenge head-on and sets the focus on measurable growth.

b. Vision Elements

While the overarching strategic objective sketches the endpoint of Brescia’s aspirations for 2015, it does not fill in the details. After much discussion, analysis, and wide consultation, the committee identified four vision elements as describing Brescia most effectively in 2015:

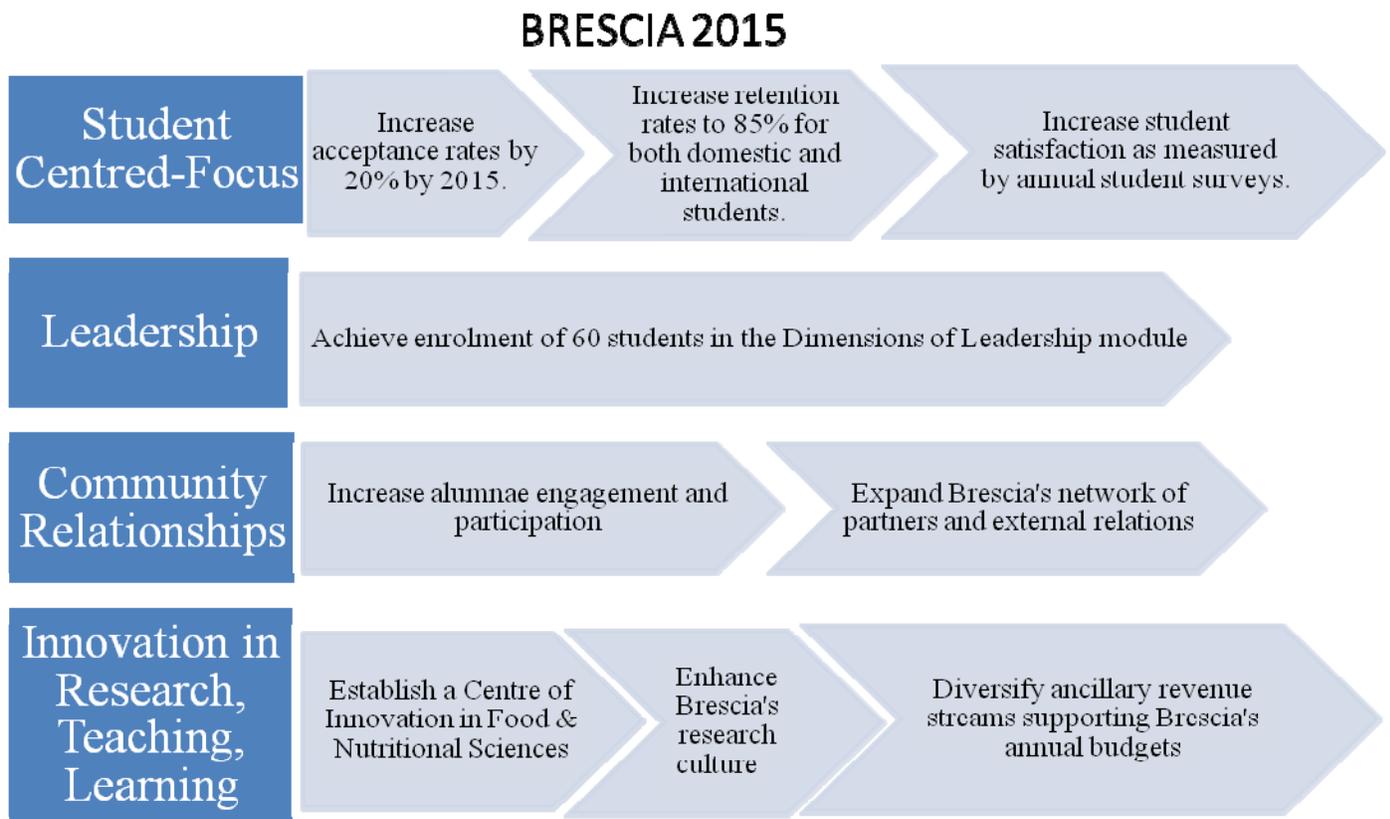
1. **STUDENT-CENTRED FOCUS:** Brescia is recognized as an institution where every program, resource, and decision is focused on enhancing the educational, social, spiritual, and cultural experiences of all of our students. In continuing this tradition, Brescia will maintain its strategic focus on appropriate faculty complements in support of anticipated growth.
2. **CANADA’S PRE-EMINENT LEADERSHIP DESTINATION:** Brescia lives its mandate as a centre for women’s leadership by modeling and promoting different approaches to community

leadership, locally and globally, always embracing its Ursuline Catholic values and remaining fiscally sound, socially responsible, and environmentally attentive.

3. **COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS:** Brescia has strong, well-supported internal communities while maintaining positive relationships across a broad spectrum of external community, corporate, private, educational, and government partners.
4. **INNOVATION IN RESEARCH, TEACHING, AND LEARNING:** Brescia demonstrates a strong commitment to support faculty research and teaching in ways that address the distinct and diverse learning needs and preferences of Brescia students, encouraging their future success.

c. Strategic Objectives

The next step in the planning process was to develop bold objectives for each of the vision elements. A total of nine strategic objectives were established that represent Brescia in 2015. The objectives and their corresponding vision elements combine to describe Brescia’s future state and are mapped out in the chart below.



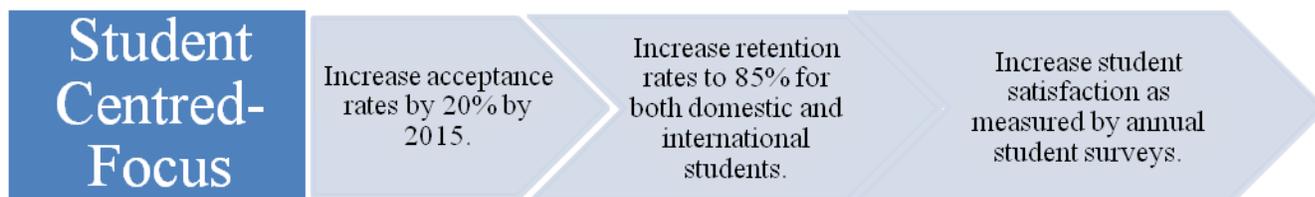
VI. How will we get there?

St. Angela Merici, the 16th century founder of the Ursulines, entreated her community to make change only after serious consideration. Her words served as an inspiration for us as we worked through the strategic plan, with the intent of creating a bright future for Brescia:

If, with change of time and circumstances, it becomes necessary to make fresh rules or to alter anything, then do it with prudence, after taking good advice.

All members of the Brescia community have lent ideas and serious thought to the strategic planning process and we feel that change as outlined in this strategic plan is done with wise counsel.

The four vision elements and nine strategic objectives add up to a vision for Brescia's future in 2015. The next step in the planning process was to determine how Brescia was going to achieve its vision. A brainstorming session with 65 participants from the Brescia community yielded a total of 119 initiatives. The Committee worked to prioritize these initiatives based on their resource intensiveness and strategic impact. The Committee narrowed the field of 119 initiatives down to 27 top-priority and measurable initiatives, which are listed below with their corresponding vision statement and strategic objectives:



OBJ. #1: Increase acceptance rates by 20 per cent by September 2015.

Expanding and promoting Brescia's unique learning environment will attract additional students.

1. Build a new student residence.
2. Implement a January admissions model at Brescia for a range of academic programs.
3. Increase Brescia's external advertising budget by 15 per cent annually.

OBJ. #2: Increase retention rates to 85 per cent for both domestic and international students.

The introduction of academic and non-academic programs will encourage Brescia students to complete their courses of study at Brescia. We recognize retention rates as a measure of meeting students' needs.

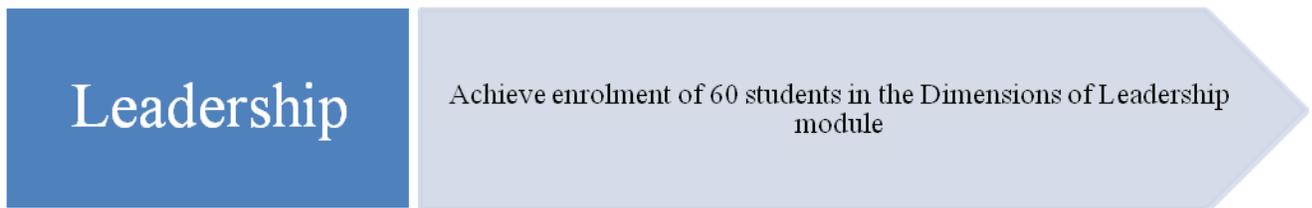
4. Implement academic and non-academic strategies that optimize learning for women.
5. Establish a robust program of career development.

6. Develop three new academic programs that are unique to Brescia.

OBJ. #3: Increase student satisfaction as measured by annual student surveys.

Active student engagement in campus life fosters student success and promotes Brescia as a student-centred Institution.

7. Increase *National Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey* scores by 3% against each of the five benchmarks of *Effective Educational Practices*.
8. Develop a survey that measures non-academic student engagement and is distributed to all students and evaluated on an annual basis.
9. Establish a Ring Ceremony for graduating students.



OBJ. #4: Achieve enrolment of 60 students in the Dimensions of Leadership module.

The continued development of Brescia as a centre for the study and promotion of women as leaders requires bold new actions in our academic program and in iWIL.

10. Hire a full-time faculty member to advance the Dimensions of Leadership module.
11. Develop a Summer Institute for Leadership.
12. Establish an annual national leadership award.



OBJ. #5: Increase alumnae engagement and participation.

Alumnae are the best ambassadors for encouraging community outreach and expanding Brescia's circle of friends and supporters.

13. Establish five regional alumnae chapters.
14. Launch a Parents' Association.
15. Increase Homecoming attendance by 10% annually.

OBJ. #6: Expand Brescia's network of partnerships and external relations.

Focusing our external relationships on our unique areas of expertise serves to strengthen our profile locally and globally.

16. Fund two scholarships for women from developing countries.
17. Establish a Leadership Advisory Council.
18. Increase the number of international partnerships by two annually.
19. Expand academic program offerings to include joint degrees and articulation agreements.



OBJ. # 7: Establish a Centre of Innovation in Food and Nutritional Sciences.

As a professional program, Food and Nutritional Sciences offers unique opportunities for community outreach and support.

20. Explore the launch of a PhD in Food and Nutritional Sciences.
21. Complete a state-of-the art Food Laboratory Complex.
22. Establish one or more Senior Research Fellowships in Food and Nutritional Sciences.

OBJ. #8: Enhance Brescia's research culture.

Research activities by faculty and students reinforce Brescia's academic reputation and promote faculty and student involvement in the life of the University.

23. Establish one additional master's program
24. Hire a research officer to support faculty research.
25. Achieve a minimum annual increase of 25% in Tri-Council grant applications.

OBJ. #9: Diversify ancillary revenue streams supporting Brescia's annual budgets. Brescia's continued growth requires new sources of funding.

26. Enhance conference services operations.
27. Establish permanent Food Services at Brescia.

VII. Measuring Success

Recognizing that *Living Leadership* is a bold and ambitious plan, Brescia has extended the timeframe of the plan to five years instead of the three or four years we have historically used. In addition, as Brescia progresses through the life of this plan, and as the post-secondary environment changes, the Long-term Planning Committee will monitor the plan regularly. The Committee will assess whether changes in the objectives or initiatives need to be made as we move forward with implementation. The plan is intended to be a dynamic and living guide for Brescia and its progress. To this end the Committee will prepare and submit a report each year to College Council and the Council of Trustees outlining the achievements of the plan and recommending adjustments, if warranted by changing circumstances.



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