THE MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY PLAN
OUR COMMITMENT TO TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING
The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago.  
The next best time is now.
THE MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY PLAN
OUR COMMITMENT TO TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING
BOLD NEW VISION

for

MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY
Since its birth just over 80 years ago, Monmouth University has aspired to set the standard for meeting the ever-changing demands of higher education. From its origins as a junior college, serving the needs of local Depression Era high school students, Monmouth has evolved over the decades, growing in size and reputation, broadening its academic scope, and responding to the shifting sands of the nation’s evolving educational landscape. Today, Monmouth holds a place of strong stature as a private, mid-sized, primarily residential university that is comprehensive in nature yet with a broad underlying commitment to the liberal arts.

Despite this dramatic evolution, the foundation on which Monmouth was established has grown and remained steadfast. The university’s commitment to excellence and integrity in teaching, scholarship, and service has not wavered, nor has its underlying values and mission: to educate and prepare Monmouth students to realize their potential as leaders and to become engaged citizens in a diverse and increasingly interdependent world.

It is upon this foundation that Monmouth must continue to build, especially in light of the many far-reaching challenges facing higher education today. While the university has numerous achievements throughout its history and has established itself as a leading comprehensive university, the climate in which Monmouth is competing – for students, faculty, staff, and financial resources – has become intense and unyielding.
MONMOUTH MUST PREPARE – proactively, aggressively, and comprehensively. The university must directly address the many external factors that are reshaping colleges and universities. We must insert ourselves passionately into the debate over the value of the college experience, both inside and outside the classroom. We must lay the proper groundwork to respond to the seismic demographic shifts that are accelerating the changing face of campus communities. We must continue to confront – honestly and creatively – issues surrounding affordability and cost. We must respond forthrightly to public criticism of higher education and the perceived readiness of college graduates to face the demands of the job market.

The sea change taking place in higher education is creating widespread disruption to the longtime status quo, and universities must seize the moment to respond to changing conditions. Change is inevitable. At Monmouth that change must be thoughtful and deliberate, and, where appropriate, bold and courageous. A multitude of factors are putting higher education at a critical crossroads, and how the university chooses to harness our collective resources, acumen, and foresight to move ahead will be a defining moment.

With change inescapably before us, we must articulate a new vision for Monmouth and create nothing short of a transformative learning experience for Monmouth students. This new vision – The Monmouth University Plan: Our Commitment to Transformative Learning – has taken shape over many months, conceived, shaped, and refined by a dedicated group of faculty and staff.
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Led by the Strategic Plan Steering Committee and Theme Committees, the process has been an inclusive and transparent one. The core of the process was widespread engagement through a range of participation mechanisms and analysis of community members’ thoughts and ideas, culminating in a strategic plan that will propel Monmouth forward in dynamic, innovative, and wide-ranging ways.

The plan that follows sets forth the first steps toward that new vision. First and foremost, it introduces the three core elements through which we will achieve transformative learning – at both the undergraduate and graduate levels:

1. an intellectually challenging and rigorous academic experience built on a strong foundation in the liberal arts;
2. learning experiences that are both high impact and immersive and that extend beyond the classroom; and
3. preparation for life after Monmouth.

While it is true that the essence of these core elements already is a part of the current Monmouth experience, Our Commitment to Transformative Learning seeks to enhance their breadth and impact, to bring a higher level of personalization to them for each student, and to infuse them seamlessly throughout every aspect of campus life. In effect, they will be woven into the fabric of the university and become the defining ingredients of not only who we are, but also what we aspire to become.
As transformative learning becomes a way of life for our students, we also recognize the importance of continuing to invest in the members of our campus community who guide, mentor, and challenge them. Without the proper investment in leaders engaged in our community, our aspirations for our students inevitably will fall short. We will be purposeful and deliberate in our decisions to make the faculty and staff investments that will be most impactful for our students.

**THIS BOLD NEW VISION** for Monmouth is but the first step, an initial phase that erects a framework for what lies ahead. Still to come is the hard work of implementation, of setting priorities and making often-difficult choices, of dedicating the necessary resources, and exerting prudent leadership to turn vision into reality. In between vision and reality, we will hold ourselves accountable by establishing specific metrics and goals – goals the university community agrees upon during the implementation stage – to measure our progress. The status quo is not satisfactory given what we want to achieve for our students. Yet, the bedrock on which this entire initiative will be built already is firmly in place, and the energy, wisdom, and commitment of the campus community are palpable and infectious. As the name suggests, the plan is a shared, interdependent commitment among all of us. It represents our stewardship of a collective vision of a new Monmouth University, one that will distinguish itself for its intense focus on a transformative learning experience that enables students to reach their full potential and enter a world prepared to contribute the best of themselves.
“The best time to plant a tree,” says the Chinese proverb, “was 20 years ago. The next best time is now.” Given the foresight of the university’s forebears, we are able to reap the fruits of what was planted for us many years ago. But in that same spirit, we must commit ourselves to a new season of planting – and with it a new spirit of change – so that future generations will harvest what we sow today.
THE THREE CORE ELEMENTS
OF
TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING
AT MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY
This strategic plan – Our Commitment to Transformative Learning – has at its core three essential elements, the building blocks on which this transformation of the educational experience will take place. They represent what we believe are the critical components of a Monmouth education, the defining characteristics that shape our identity and distinguish the university from any other. Most of all, they are the indispensable ingredients for how we will prepare young men and women for the lives ahead of them.

From the outset, it is important to understand how these three core elements were determined. The development of this strategic plan was an organic undertaking and included in-depth, inclusive engagement from throughout the Monmouth community. We undertook a process that sought to identify and categorize best practices and transformative ideas, elements that, taken as a whole, will become the signature Monmouth experience for our students. Along the way, we asked challenging questions: What new initiatives would create a transformative learning experience for all students? How can we broaden students’ perspectives to include global concerns and focus on issues outside of themselves? In what ways can we create a learning experience that is singularly unique to Monmouth?

What emerged from this exercise of broad campus engagement were three Core Elements and strategic areas around which we will align our resources and develop the necessary structures to move them forward in the years ahead. While there are, understandably, areas of overlap among the components of all three parts, it is the totality of these core elements working interdependently that will propel the plan forward.
CORE ELEMENT ONE

We are committed to creating an intellectually challenging and rigorous academic experience built on a strong foundation in the liberal arts.

A proper college education is not simply an extension of learning beyond high school. It should be an intellectually challenging and rigorous experience, and Monmouth University is committed to providing nothing less. Monmouth is singularly positioned to offer an academic experience that infuses divergent yet highly sought-after elements of higher education. On the one hand, Monmouth will extend its strong legacy as a liberal arts institution, helping shape young minds by challenging them to think critically and exposing them to curricula that enhance their cultural and global literacy. At the same time, given our size and position as a primarily residential university, Monmouth shares many of the positive characteristics of larger research institutions, including a comprehensive array of career-specific program offerings. Beyond this wide variety of study areas, the university has centers for research and pedagogical support, faculty who are active and respected scholars, and opportunities for collaborative research with students.

This dual commitment is distinctive, especially for a university of our size. By remaining true to our strong liberal arts foundation, we are able to design our general curriculum – including a group of required core courses – in ways that expand students’ intellectual vistas and broaden their exposure to new ideas and possibilities, a consequence that is especially important as Monmouth continues to attract better-prepared and globally oriented undergraduates.
INTELLECTUALLY CHALLENGING & RIGOROUS ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE
BUILT ON A STRONG FOUNDATION IN THE LIBERAL ARTS
EXPERIENTIAL & ACADEMIC INTERNSHIPS THROUGH EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INFUSION IN ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

MENTORING PROGRAM FOR CAREER GOALS

SIGNATURE CURRICULAR EXPERIENCE
A rigorous and stimulating core curriculum is a defining component of the academic experience of many students; the curriculum holds the promise of strengthening our identity among students and beyond. Immersing students in a demanding college experience built on a regimen of reading, deliberating, writing, experimenting, and discussing will not only provide a break from the pedagogical approaches they have experienced previously, but also enhance their capacity to think and learn.

Toward that end, we will leverage and expand some of our best innovations. For example, our student Summer Research Program offered by the School of Science – a 12-week student-faculty collaborative research experience – can be replicated by other schools and departments, giving students new learning and experiential opportunities during winter break and summer sessions, whether it is to help build schools in Guatemala, explore ancient ruins in Greece, or witness first-hand the human and political drama in India and Argentina. In all, we will create more opportunities for students to have unforgettable, productive, hands-on experiences on and off campus and to celebrate more formally the fruits of their scholarly and artistic accomplishments.

**THE IMPACT OF THIS EXPERIENCE** will be to ignite students’ curiosity, to help uncover latent passions, and to apply a greater sense of purpose while at Monmouth. This personal exploration will, in turn, help inform more formal areas of academic study, giving them greater direction to select majors, minors, and graduate programs that will continue to stoke their interests.
These academic pursuits will be enhanced as well by fostering more meaningful student-faculty relationships. We will invest in a faculty that is committed to providing thoughtful, challenging, well-taught courses in both the general and specific curricula and that helps nurture and support each student's own intellectual passions and provides a path toward future growth.

**CORE ELEMENT TWO**

We are committed to providing high impact and immersive learning experiences that extend beyond the classroom.

Transformative learning does not just take place in a lecture hall but through a variety of ways, some experiential, technological, collaborative, and innovative. Monmouth will accelerate and expand efforts to employ high-impact pedagogical practices both within and beyond the classroom, and some steps in this direction already have been taken, notably the creation of Monmouth’s Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, as well as task forces on Academic Engagement, Grade Inflation, and Scheduling. With many widely accepted instructional best practices in the field of higher education already in place, our objective is to build a campus-wide culture of teaching excellence that includes such elements as: linked-learning communities, first-year and senior seminars, active-learning pedagogies, study abroad, common readings, experiential-education opportunities, teaching technology, community-based participatory research, and service-learning courses. We recognize, of course, that these elements work best when they are coordinated, supported, and more widely integrated into disciplinary curricula.
LEARNING EXPERIENCES
THAT ARE BOTH
HIGH IMPACT & IMMERSIVE
THAT EXTEND BEYOND THE CLASSROOM
A CENTRAL PART of a 21st-century Monmouth education will be the promotion of global and cultural literacy. From both a geographic and demographic perspective, New Jersey has long been a gateway, and the state’s current population reflects an incredible diversity of cultures, languages, ethnicities, and faiths. Monmouth University will build a culture that embraces that diversity and develops programs that celebrate and explore diverse cultural traditions. In that spirit, we will increase our commitment to study-abroad opportunities for our students as well as academic exchanges between our faculty, staff, and students and those of institutions abroad. And before our graduates enter an increasingly multi-lingual world, we will encourage greater study of foreign languages.

While the strategic plan inspires our students to look beyond the boundaries of campus and country, it also encourages students, staff, and faculty to engage more fully with activities on the campus itself, in particular, the arts and athletics, as well as other co-curricular activities. Monmouth has made tremendous strides in creating a robust variety of co-curricular activities, from gallery shows and musical and theatrical performances to the Global Understanding Convention and visiting and hosting authors, from NCAA Division I and intramural athletics to a diverse range of study and service trips. But these initiatives must be just the beginning, and moving forward, we will redouble our commitment to creating a campus environment that celebrates the noblest feats of culture, sport, and scholarship.
HIGHLY PERSONALIZED LEARNING EXPERIENCE

ACTIVE GREEK SOCIAL COMMUNITY

INTERNATIONAL SERVICE & FIELD TRIPS

FACULTY/STUDENT RESEARCH & TRAVEL EXPERIENCES
Although our classroom educational endeavors are central to our students’ experience, the reality is that they spend most of their waking hours outside of the classroom where considerable opportunities for personal growth and development reside, opportunities we will continue to leverage. For example, the Residential Life staff spearheads close to 700 campus programs each year that focus on student development, academic achievement, community service, school pride, diversity, and social growth. The Office of Counseling and Psychological Services supports our students’ individual needs as they make the transition to college life and adulthood while at the same time facilitating campus-wide programming on interpersonal relations, stress management, and violence prevention. The Offices of Health Services and Substance Awareness attend to our students’ overall health and well-being both as caregivers and as a key source of information about personal safety and responsibility. Support for these and other co-curricular activities helps provide an environment that is attentively conducive to the growth and development of our students.

Finally, our students attend Monmouth with a practical goal: to obtain high-quality education that will serve as the basis for pursuing their life’s purpose. This career-orientation plays to Monmouth’s strengths. Located in the center of one of the world’s largest metropolitan regions, we are ideally positioned to help our students develop and pursue their career interests. Our students already enjoy the benefits of such courses as “Animal Behavioral Internship,” an upper-level psychology course offered on location at Six Flags Wild Safari for students to observe the park’s animals and examine how psychological theories and principles can be applied to human behavior.
Also noteworthy for their high levels of student engagement are our archaeological field schools, both at local historic sites and on the island of Nevis in the Caribbean. They provide students with hands-on learning experiences and the foundation for careers in historic preservation and heritage management. Our alliance with Asbury Park High School provides opportunities for the Debate Team to help mentor and develop the debating skills of high school students. Excellent hands-on, career-centric activities also exist on campus, including The Outlook (student-run, award-winning newspaper), WMCX (student-run radio station), Hawk TV (student-run television station), and The Monmouth Review (student-run magazine for literature and art). As we further invest in developing partnerships to enhance learning, our objective will be to optimize our students’ access to experiences that give them a competitive edge in pursuing any number of career endeavors.
By building on our existing core strengths – a strong faculty and staff, impressive facilities, and an extraordinary location – Monmouth University is poised to transform the lives of its students and grow its reputation as a distinctive institution where the critical foundation of the liberal arts blends harmoniously and productively with the experiential learning that supports students’ career aspirations.

**CORE ELEMENT THREE**

We are committed to preparing students for life after Monmouth.

For Monmouth’s undergraduate students, a university education must not only help them transition productively and responsibly from high school and develop as independent adults, but it also must assist them in unearthing the talents and interests that ultimately will guide them in choosing a career. To carry out this integral role and prepare students for active citizenship and successful careers, Monmouth must continue to emphasize and expand upon the range of developmental and professional opportunities that are available to students.

Just as important is the capacity for Monmouth students to form enduring relationships with faculty and staff. Such mentoring relationships provide critical, ongoing direction that helps students navigate college life, and more long-term, creates bonds of support that continue throughout their lives, whether it be in providing job recommendations, advising on career matters, or simply serving as a sounding board for important life decisions. These connections often make a significant difference in students’ lives.
PREPARATION

for

LIFE AFTER
MONMOUTH
GLOBAL NETWORK FOR STUDENTS, ALUMNI & OVERALL MONMOUTH COMMUNITY

GLOBAL INFUSION TO CHALLENGE WORLDVIEW

PUBLIC INTEREST PROGRAMS, SCHOLARSHIP & RESEARCH
For graduate students, who typically are focused almost exclusively on their careers, support from the university is just as vital. Many students make the decision to enroll in one of Monmouth’s graduate programs in order to acquire the knowledge and skills that will help them advance in their chosen professions. Others pursue graduate degrees as a means for starting down new career paths. Whatever their circumstances, we will ensure that career support for our graduate students is tailored to fit their individual objectives and gives them the tools, acumen, and insight they need to thrive throughout their professional lives.

**MONMOUTH’S STRONG ALUMNI NETWORK** also serves as a valuable resource to the university’s students. Recognizing that engaging our alumni in a meaningful and ongoing way is critical to our success on several fronts, we are committed to enhancing opportunities for alumni to share their talents and connections with Monmouth students. Our alumni will continue to serve in important roles: as sponsors of new programs and initiatives on campus, as mentors to students, as guest lecturers in the classroom, as members of school advisory committees, and as adjunct faculty. Off-campus, alumni activities enable students and graduates to build important networks, particularly within areas of common interest and like professions.

Comprehensive preparation, particularly for undergraduate students today, requires learning beyond the classroom, and so it is critical that Monmouth students have access to internships, practicums, and even employment opportunities during their course of study.
A recent survey by the Association of American Colleges and Universities found that 73 percent of employers desired higher education to put more emphasis on the application of real-world knowledge and skills through internships and other hands-on experiences (Westerberg and Wickersham, 2011).

**WE RECOGNIZE** how vital this practical experience can be, and so Monmouth University offers internships in a number of disciplines, from education, nursing, and social work, to the humanities and social sciences. Internship and practicum experiences vary by discipline, as do the number of hours for each, but the common thread throughout these experiences is the invaluable work experience acquired through these opportunities before students graduate. Among the most prominent examples is the university’s partnership with the Washington Center Internships and Academic Seminars program, which gives students professional work experience in an agency tailored to their interests as well as access to the Washington Forum, a public policy lecture series. Monmouth has placed more students in this program than other peer schools and has seen our graduates go on to successful careers in the World Bank, U.S. Department of State, the CIA and FBI, and a number of other prestigious positions in the nation’s capital. Similarly, the School of Science carefully has cultivated a network of more than 50 companies that support Monmouth students in a variety of ways – through internships, hiring programs, and opportunities for collaborative research. The School of Science also offers a Professional Development Program in which students can participate in panels and workshops designed to bolster their career prospects.
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OUR FOCUS will be to increase these programs and external partnerships, which will, in turn, enhance internship opportunities and help give students a competitive advantage.

To better prepare our students to be competitive professionals, it is important to embed professional development opportunities within academic programs, and there are many examples at Monmouth where this is taking place. The Monmouth University Polling Institute, for example, develops student research and writing skills through large-scale research projects, such as the recent study that students undertook on the policy implications of Superstorm Sandy. The entrepreneurship class offered by the Leon Hess Business School focuses on the life cycle of launching a new venture, from product conceptualization, research into the prospect of venture funding, financial forecasting and growth management. The Office of Student Activities and Student Center Operations provides opportunities for student graphic designers to design promotional materials and advertisements. The School of Education cultivates partnerships with many area school districts for field experience and potential opportunities for student teaching. As members of intercollegiate mock trial and moot court teams, students engage in adversarial proceedings, learn the rules of evidence, and collaborate as they experience what attorneys can expect as participants in court procedures and dispute resolution.
Many departments and schools hold panels, networking events, and engage alumni to help students think about how to prepare themselves for their careers and make the most productive transition into the workforce.

Professional life for many students includes licensure or professional certification in order to continue their careers. Toward this end, the School of Social Work offers the Professional Education Program so that current social workers can earn the continuing education units they need to remain a licensed social worker in the state. Similarly, communication students can prepare for the Certification in the Principles of Public Relations exam, giving them a competitive edge in the job market. Moving forward, we will replicate and expand upon these many opportunities so that Monmouth students have every opportunity to excel in their chosen fields.
We will focus on educating students in ways that enrich their knowledge and inspire their intellect, as has been our tradition.

We will challenge students with new experiences inside and outside the classroom and afford them opportunities to test the waters of their life’s passion.

We will introduce them to talented and dedicated faculty and staff whose wisdom and guidance will be available to them for years to come.

And we will create occasions for students to interact with the Monmouth network, alumni whose fidelity to the Monmouth mission represents an invaluable resource. Taken together, these are the core transformative elements of what lies ahead for Monmouth University.
SIGNATURE PROGRAMMING

Collectively, the three core elements capture the signature personalized learning experience we aspire to offer every Monmouth student. These elements are essential to both undergraduate and graduate studies, and when tailored to both the specific programs and students’ individual needs, the result is a transformative learning experience – for everyone.

While the plan’s focus up to now has been weighted toward the needs of our undergraduate students, we recognize that our graduate programs must reflect the specific demands of students pursuing advanced professional degrees. For this reason, the plan seeks to build on Monmouth’s evolution from a college that offered only part-time, evening graduate programs almost 50 years ago to an institution focused on strategically growing the number of full-time graduate students within such program offerings as business, social work, education, nursing, and the allied health fields. Growth and diversification at the graduate level represent an area of opportunity for Monmouth, and we must move forward strategically to maximize its potential.

The planned increase in the number of full-time graduate programs and graduate students reflects the professional needs of our graduate students and is consistent with the Graduate School Strategic Plan of 2007 (updated and revised in 2010) in setting the future direction of graduate education at Monmouth.
The 2007/2010 plan was based on substantial research that showed students at Monmouth want professional programs of high academic quality that are reasonably priced and can be completed as efficiently as possible, typically in two years or less. The plan will continue this growth trajectory as well as explore non-degree graduate offerings.

Perhaps even more so than most undergraduates, Monmouth’s graduate students particularly value opportunities to engage very closely with faculty, either on our main campus or our nearby campus at Monmouth Park Corporate Center. Graduate students also tell us that they prefer to use online learning technologies to support the hybrid form of instruction versus programs that are offered totally online, and our plan is to support instructional needs in this way. By emphasizing market-relevant graduate programs tied to strong student demand, together with our faculty expertise in departments and through the Centers of Distinction, we will raise our commitment to graduate education in the years ahead to new heights.

Some of the preliminary steps in this growth strategy have been the forging of strategic partnerships given our desire to introduce market-relevant and sustainable graduate programs that meet the needs of employers. Our partnerships with healthcare providers and related industries are giving our students valuable professional internships and employment opportunities.
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DIVISION I & INTRAMURAL ATHLETICS

PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING-LIVING COMMUNITIES

RESIDENTIAL LIFE EXPERIENCES
For example, since 2010 we have offered a number of new graduate programs in allied health fields that highlight this ongoing strategic priority for the university. New and newly accredited programs in Mental Health Counseling, Physician Assistant, and Speech-Language Pathology have started since 2010 and are highly competitive, fully enrolled, and led by expert faculty. Our partnerships with area school districts also serve as the cornerstone of our graduate programs in Education and Social Work. In addition, we draw on our global connections and international university affiliates in China, India, Africa, and the Middle East to expand on graduate-level opportunities in these areas as well.

Many of these programs already have interdisciplinary research and/or projects and internships in the field that are signature elements of those programs. Given their success, we must have more of them. Going forward, we will develop more customized, trans-disciplinary graduate programs (e.g., business, communication, technology, health sciences, public policy, coastal studies) that meet the specific needs of regional and national employers and provide our graduate students with a solid foundation for successful careers.

On all these graduate fronts and more, our plan is to continue and sustain this ambitious trajectory based on a methodical analysis of program market relevance tied to strong student demand and faculty expertise.
Future generations will harvest what we sow today.