



MERCY COLLEGE
OF HEALTH SCIENCES

BUILDING OUR FUTURE

STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2030



OUR PEOPLE | OUR PURPOSE | OUR POTENTIAL



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LETTER FROM THE **PRESIDENT & BOARD CHAIR**

On behalf of the Board of Directors and leadership of Mercy Health Sciences University, it is our distinct privilege to present *Building Our Future: Strategic Plan 2026–2030*.

Over the past five years, guided by the vision and commitments established in *Charting Our Course*, Mercy College of Health Sciences has experienced extraordinary growth and transformation. Together, we strengthened our commitment to student success, expanded access to healthcare education through innovative academic pathways, deepened strategic partnerships, and invested in modern learning environments designed to prepare graduates for the rapidly evolving future of healthcare.

Most notably, we launched the largest philanthropic initiative in the institution's history – a transformational \$15.2 million campaign to build the Joyce E. Lillis College of Nursing – and established our philanthropic foundation known as the 1899 Society. This milestone reflects not only the confidence others place in our mission, but also our unwavering belief in the power of healthcare education to transform lives and communities.

As we look ahead, *Building Our Future* represents both continuity and bold ambition. Organized around three pillars – Our People, Our Purpose, and Our Potential – this strategic plan reflects who we are, what we value, and the future we are called to build together.

Our People challenge us to foster a culture where students, faculty, and staff feel supported, valued, and empowered to thrive personally, professionally, and spiritually.

Our Purpose calls us to boldly live out our Catholic identity and Mercy heritage by preparing compassionate healthcare leaders grounded in service, integrity, excellence, and care for the whole person.

Our Potential positions Mercy Health Sciences University to grow strategically and sustainably through academic innovation, expanded partnerships, cutting-edge learning environments, and a continued commitment to meeting workforce and community healthcare needs.

This plan arrives at a defining moment at the intersection of healthcare and higher education. The demand for skilled, compassionate healthcare professionals has never been greater, and the responsibility entrusted to institutions like ours has never been more important. *Building Our Future* is our response to that responsibility – grounded in the enduring values of knowledge, reverence, integrity, compassion, and excellence.

Importantly, this strategic plan reflects the evolution of our institution into Mercy Health Sciences University in the fall of 2026. This transition represents far more than a new name. It reflects the expansion of our academic vision, the growth of our mission, and our commitment to advancing healthcare education at every level while remaining firmly rooted in the legacy and values of the Sisters of Mercy.

We are deeply grateful to the Board of Directors, students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, healthcare partners, Sisters of Mercy, and community leaders whose voices, leadership, and support helped shape this plan and continue to strengthen our institution. For more than 125 years, Mercy Health Sciences University has prepared generations of healthcare professionals dedicated to serving others with compassion and excellence. That mission continues today with renewed energy and bold vision for the future.

Together, we build a stronger Mercy Health Sciences University – one that transforms students, advances healthcare, and extends our healing ministry for generations to come.

Go Guardians!

Adreain M. Henry, OD, EdD, MBA, MA
President

Joyce E. Lillis, MSN
Board Chair



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Father Dennis Holtschneider, EdD
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PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

The development of *Building Our Future: Strategic Plan 2026-2030* was grounded in reflection, collaboration, and a shared commitment to advancing the mission of Mercy Health Sciences University. Building upon the momentum and accomplishments of *Charting Our Course*, the University engaged in a thoughtful and comprehensive strategic planning process throughout 2025 and 2026 that invited meaningful participation from faculty, staff, students, administrators, alumni, healthcare partners, and members of the Board of Directors.

Mercy Health Sciences University was honored to partner with Father Dennis Holtschneider, CM, throughout the strategic planning process. Father Dennis brought decades of distinguished leadership experience in Catholic higher education, helping guide critical conversations around mission integration, academic innovation, enrollment growth, student success, institutional sustainability, and the evolving future of healthcare education. Most importantly, his counsel helped ensure the University remained firmly rooted in its Catholic and Mercy identity while positioning itself boldly for the future.

The strategic planning process formally began in spring 2025 through collaborative working sessions with the President and Cabinet. These efforts were followed by campus-wide surveys, listening sessions, focus groups, and meetings designed to gather broad input from the community. Faculty, staff, students, and institutional partners shared valuable perspective regarding the University's strengths, opportunities, challenges, and aspirations for the future. These conversations reinforced Mercy Health Sciences University's commitment to serving students with excellence while responding to the growing needs of healthcare systems and communities throughout the region.

During the summer of 2025, the Board of Directors participated in a strategic planning retreat that helped shape the foundational priorities and framework of the plan. Over the following months, draft strategies, goals, and initiatives were refined through multiple stages of dialogue, review, and feedback. The emerging framework was reviewed by the Board of Directors in December 2025, followed by additional refinement through the President's Council, Cabinet, and campus leadership teams in early 2026. The final strategic plan was formally approved by the Board of Directors in June 2026.

The result is *Building Our Future*, a strategic plan that reflects the collective voices, aspirations, and shared vision of the Mercy Health Sciences University community. Grounded in the enduring heritage of the Sisters of Mercy and focused on the future of healthcare education, this plan provides a bold and mission-centered roadmap for continued growth, innovation, and impact. As Mercy Health Sciences University enters its next chapter, this strategic plan positions the institution to expand educational opportunities, strengthen healthcare workforce development, and continue transforming students into compassionate leaders who extend Mercy Health Sciences University's healing ministry for generations to come.

INTEGRITY
CONSTRUCT A MORAL WAY
UPRIGHTNESS



MISSION, VISION, & VALUES

MISSION

Mercy Health Sciences University prepares graduates for service and leadership in the healthcare community by integrating its core values with a professional and liberal arts and science education.

VISION

Mercy Health Sciences University will be a recognized leader locally and nationally for transforming students into healthcare professionals who live out and extend our ministry of healing.

VALUES

Mercy Health Sciences University is a Catholic institution of higher education, rooted in the heritage of the Sisters of Mercy, guided by our core values of knowledge, reverence, integrity, compassion, and excellence.

Knowledge – The ability to instill in our university community a thirst to study continually, observe, and investigate the world for facts and ideas that can improve the health and well-being of humankind, as well as create a love for learning.

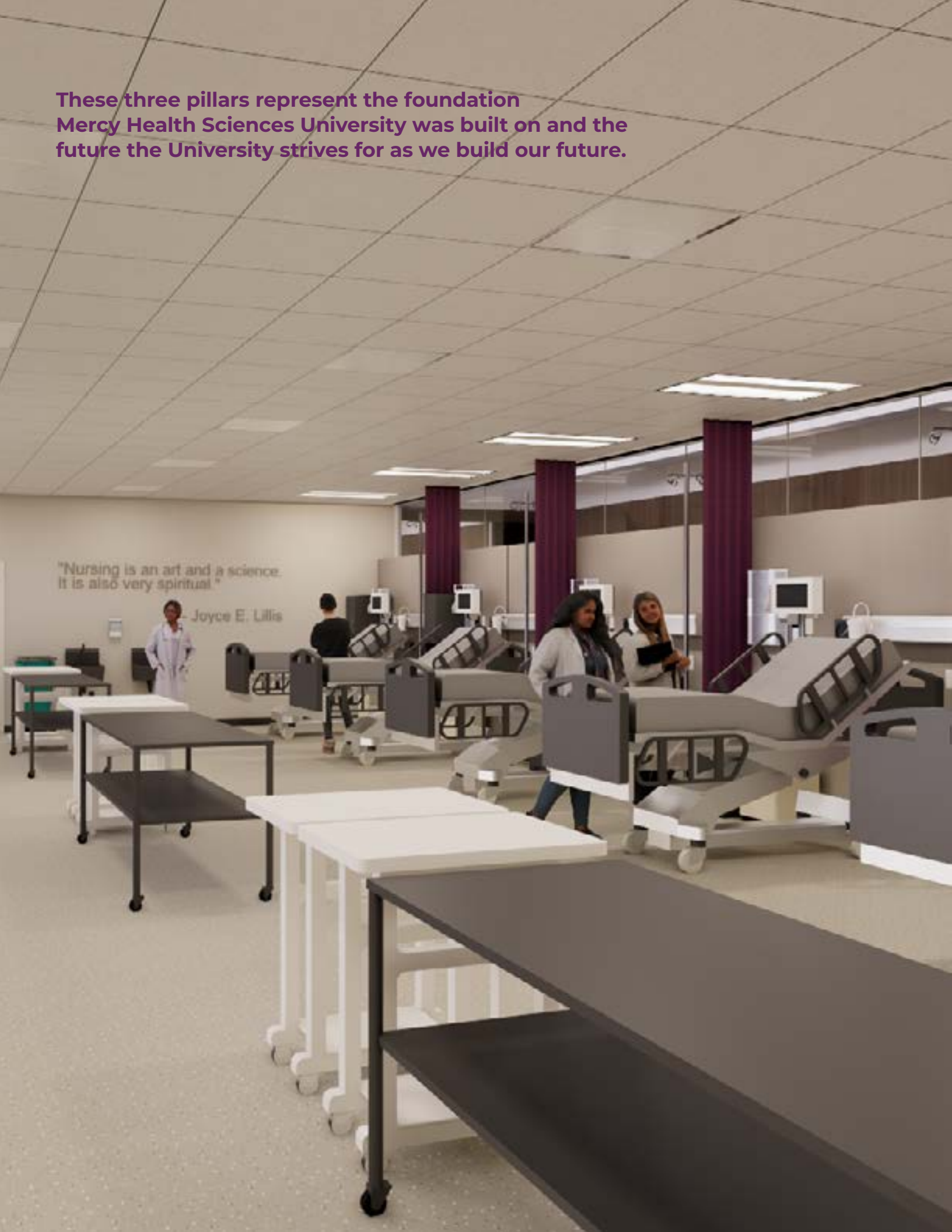
Reverence – Profound spirit of awe and respect for all creation, shaping relationships to self, to one another, and to God, as well as acknowledging that we hold in trust all that has been given to us.

Integrity – Moral wholeness, soundness, uprightness, honesty, and sincerity as the basis of trustworthiness.

Compassion – Feeling with others, being one with others in their sorrows and joy, rooted in the sense of solidarity as members of the human community.

Excellence – Outstanding achievement, merit, and virtue; continuously surpassing standards to achieve and maintain quality.

These three pillars represent the foundation Mercy Health Sciences University was built on and the future the University strives for as we build our future.



PILLAR I OUR PEOPLE

Mercy Health Sciences University will nurture and sustain a thriving, mission-driven culture by prioritizing the well-being, formation, belonging, and development of students, faculty, and staff.

PILLAR II OUR PURPOSE

Mercy Health Sciences University will boldly live out its Catholic identity, fostering a Mercy-centered experience and becoming the school of choice for a values-driven health sciences education.

PILLAR III OUR POTENTIAL

Mercy Health Sciences University will grow and modernize in strategic, sustainable ways to serve future generations of healthcare professionals.

PILLAR I

OUR PEOPLE

Mercy Health Sciences University will nurture and sustain a thriving, mission-driven culture by prioritizing the well-being, formation, belonging, and development of students, faculty, and staff.





GOAL A

Cultivate a culture where students feel connected, supported, and empowered to thrive.

- STRATEGY 1:** Improve student retention and academic engagement
- STRATEGY 2:** Provide mental health education and resource awareness
- STRATEGY 3:** Strengthen engagement in student activities to improve overall experience
- STRATEGY 4:** Broaden supplemental instruction support to exceed national benchmarks for licensure pass rates
- STRATEGY 5:** Enhance the *Mercy Experience* grounded in care for the whole person

GOAL B

Ensure Mercy Health Sciences University is a great place to work, where employees See The Vision, Know They Matter, Feel Appreciated, and Act Mercifully.

- STRATEGY 1:** Develop and implement employee well-being initiatives
- STRATEGY 2:** Increase employee professional development to enhance engagement and excellence
- STRATEGY 3:** Recruit and retain high-quality faculty and staff
- STRATEGY 4:** Strengthen a culture of engagement and accountability





PILLAR II

OUR PURPOSE

Mercy Health Sciences University will boldly live out its Catholic identity, fostering a Mercy-centered experience and becoming the school of choice for a values-driven health sciences education.



GOAL A

Deepen the integration of the Mission, Catholic identity, and Mercy heritage.

- STRATEGY 1:** Conduct curricula review for Catholic identity alignment
- STRATEGY 2:** Increase Sisters of Mercy heritage and Catholic identity formation opportunities
- STRATEGY 3:** Establish *Mercy in Action*

GOAL B

Become the school of choice for a values-driven health sciences education

- STRATEGY 1:** Make the VOTA Excellence Program foundational to the *Mercy Experience*
- STRATEGY 2:** Cultivate a culture of Mercy
- STRATEGY 3:** Offer expanded spiritual and mission-based opportunities
- STRATEGY 4:** Strengthen local and regional identity as a faith-based healthcare institution



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PILLAR III

OUR POTENTIAL

Mercy Health Sciences University will grow and modernize in strategic, sustainable ways to serve future generations of healthcare professionals.





GOAL A

Increase student enrollment

- STRATEGY 1:** Initiate new academic programs and delivery methods aligned with workforce needs
- STRATEGY 2:** Launch new graduate and professional nursing pathways
- STRATEGY 3:** Enhance liberal arts and sciences curricula
- STRATEGY 4:** Strengthen recruitment and marketing

GOAL B

Strengthen existing academic offerings and infrastructure

- STRATEGY 1:** Expand partnerships
- STRATEGY 2:** Leverage AI and emerging technologies responsibly
- STRATEGY 3:** Complete the construction of the Joyce E. Lillis College of Nursing

GOAL C

Sustain financial strength to build institutional capacity

- STRATEGY 1:** Maximize the use of inspirational learning environments
- STRATEGY 2:** Invest in state-of-the-art equipment and technology
- STRATEGY 3:** Ensure long-term institutional growth with respect to the Joyce E. Lillis College of Nursing, College of Allied Health, and College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- STRATEGY 4:** Advance financial stewardship
- STRATEGY 5:** Drive revenue growth through philanthropy





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