



Vision 2016 *Evolution to Revolution*

Executive Summary

Introduction

In scientific terms, evolution is marked by adjustments or adaptations over time that allow a species to become more suited to an ever-changing environment. Sporadic change is not enough; change must persist across generations. If a population is nimble enough to respond and adapt in the right direction, it can survive and even flourish in ways never attainable before.

The same can be said of Bay Path. From Bay Path Institute in 1897 through the years of Bay Path Secretarial School and Bay Path Junior College, to our current status as Bay Path College, we have successfully evolved to meet the changing needs of our students, the regional economic landscape, and the world around us. Resolutely mission-driven, we have never wavered from our promise to deliver innovative education to those students, most especially women, whose potential and capacity to succeed are recognized and celebrated through our impactful teaching, learning, and delivery models. Commensurately, we have approached the business of education with a level of pragmatism acknowledging that only through sustained fiscal health can we fully exercise our mission.

Looking Back: evolution through *Vision 2013*

Evolution was very much at the heart of our most recent strategic plan, **Vision 2013: A New American Women's College for the 21st Century**, as it indicated “*We are at a juncture in our own evolution as an institution, as well as in the evolution of higher education in this country. Fundamental to our vision and the direction of higher education is how we deliver education in new ways that use the power of the person and the power of technology.*” From our perspective, Vision 2013 served as a bridge connecting the College's vibrant past to a future that portends seismic change for higher education.

Through key Vision 2013 initiatives, we began to plan and prepare for the changes greeting us in the second decade of this century. We recognized that no aspect of higher education would be immune to change. Accordingly, we explored the macro

trends impacting education and Bay Path's unique opportunity for response: from the way students learn and faculty teach, to the impact of technology, to changes in the very populations we serve. In traveling this path, we sought to boldly create A New American Women's College for the 21st Century.

Our efforts during this period in many ways secured the foundation upon which Vision 2016 will be made manifest. At the undergraduate level, we comprehensively operationalized the many facets of Bay Path's "Thumbprint" and the WELL (Women as Empowered Learners and Leaders) Program. Our faculty also began the journey of creating more effective learning experiences through the infusion of high-impact practices through the use of iPads, one of the key provisions of our \$2 million Title III grant. Our commitment to adult women learners was strengthened as we piloted the first women's-only adult degree completion program and a core group of staff and faculty developed a white paper proposing a new enterprise be established to more strategically focus on this key and underserved market through online education. New graduate programs were created and launched respectively in Developmental Psychology, Applied Behavioral Analysis, Physician Assistant Studies and Cybersecurity Management and most recently our first terminal degree – the MFA in Creative Nonfiction Writing.

These initiatives also solidified our reputation. Ongoing program development and growth has been an overarching strategy for Bay Path during the past 15 years. To diversify our revenue stream at a time when the traditional program had plateaued, we designed our pioneering One-Day-A-Week *Saturday* program in 1999, providing access, convenience, and affordability to an historically-overlooked population. Just one year later we launched the first of our graduate degrees; over the ensuing 13 years we would deliver 14 additional master's programs to the marketplace. Providing relevant career-building opportunities for students, these programs fueled enrollment growth, positively impacting our financial metrics including several years of operating surpluses. These surpluses allowed the endowment to grow, thereby strengthening the foundation of the College.

Throughout this period we invested aggressively in our College. We renovated almost every building on campus, opened two sites across the state, and expanded the footprint of Bay Path in Longmeadow, growing from 32 acres to almost 52. We harnessed our resources in new ways and took calculated risks. In so doing, we beat the odds. We are the fastest growing women's college at the undergraduate level in the country.

Looking Ahead to *Vision 2016*: Bay Path's response to the higher education revolution

While we have demonstrated our core competency to evolve, we are keenly aware that the issues facing higher education are so compelling that the immediate future will not be secured through mere evolution. A revolution is underway.

Converging factors throughout history have led to revolution. The sweeping changes brought about by technology through the digital revolution are analogous to the agricultural and industrial revolutions. Each of these periods in our history profoundly transformed daily life, bringing about new paradigms. Today, the educational horizon is turbulent, demanding a revolutionary response the industry has not experienced in well over 100 years. Attempt to factor in cost, access by underserved populations, learning outcomes, delivery models, and competition from for-profit colleges, and you get a sense of higher education in the 21st century, making **Vision 2016: Evolution to Revolution** Bay Path's imperative.

It is within this context that a national priority must be addressed: the education of a significantly increased percentage of the population. Jamie Merisotis, President of the Lumina Foundation, thought leaders in higher education, noted in a November 2011 address:

“Economists and labor experts agree that, in any city or region, the key factor in economic growth and job creation is the education level of its residents. Experts say that two-thirds of all US jobs will require some form of postsecondary education by the end of the decade. Additionally, we face the social and equity imperatives, which are just as urgent as our economic situation. We understand that postsecondary education is the single best route to a stable and secure future—for individuals and for the communities in which they live.”

The research put forward by Lumina and others acknowledges that successful attainment of a national education goal will be contingent upon higher education being able to effectively provide access to two important and growing populations:

- 1) historically underserved students, including first generation, low income and racial/ethnic minorities; and
- 2) adults

Both of these populations present unique needs when it comes to higher education. It is incumbent upon us to radically change the way we design and deliver our programs to foster successful attainment of degrees. *Vision 2016* seeks to do exactly that.

There is an additional economic shift underway. In many growing and important sectors, job attainment and career progression are contingent upon employees holding master's degrees and higher. This presents an exciting opportunity for *Vision 2016* strategies.

The strategies of *Vision 2016* have been conceived to address the key challenges and opportunities of these major shifts in higher education and the impact on each of our three student populations: traditional-age undergraduate women, adult undergraduate women, and graduate women and men. The proposed initiatives are balanced in such a way to underscore our mission, never forgetting the needs of the students we serve, while allowing for our continued fiscal health.

Traditional-age women

As we propose the strategies within *Vision 2016* that directly relate to traditional-age undergraduates, we are especially mindful of the populations we serve. The majority of our students hail from modest backgrounds; 65% are first-generation students, over 26% are women of color, and approximately 50% are Pell eligible. They may arrive on campus lacking the experience and confidence to succeed. Efforts to recruit and retain these women are critical – our job is to fuel their aspirations and uncover their potential. This is becoming increasingly important as the stakes for degree attainment and career prospects get higher. For example, currently close to one quarter of our traditional undergraduates are science majors, pursuing such challenging disciplines as chemistry, biology, and neuroscience – the very degrees that will further their career options. However, these are also the most difficult programs, making it incumbent upon us to implement new measures to help them flourish. The old pedagogy just doesn't work any longer.

The *Vision 2016* strategies that will impact this population reflect the high impact educational practices, including faculty engagement, use of technology, and curricular and pedagogical reforms, that will provide our students with the skills and knowledge they need to be significant contributors in a 21st Century world and workplace.

Adult Women

Adult women who have never attained a college degree continue to be a major focus of Bay Path. Since our launch of the One-Day-A-Week *Saturday* Program in 1999, we have invested tremendous energy into determining how best to educate adult women and have successfully graduated thousands of women who use their education to positively impact their families, communities, and workplaces.

Yet the current model can only reach a finite number of women, in the regions of our three campuses. There are 76 million women without a bachelor's degree in this country. How can we help them access higher education?

During the second year of *Vision 2013*, we piloted a novel approach through the advent of our "Online Degree Completion" Program. The success of this completely online, all-women's program served as the impetus which encouraged us to think more ambitiously about a large scale model of online women's education.

We have extraordinary aspirations for this program, believing that we are uniquely prepared to impact women across the country and eventually the globe. Designed to deliver career-promoting degrees, the program is distinguished from other online educational options in that we are bringing to bear our significant experience with adult women. Their motivations, needs, and learning styles, while uniquely female, differ from their younger counterparts. From a pedagogical perspective, we know that adult women differ in terms of preferred learning styles and environments and have

differing aptitudes regarding use of technology. While accessibility and convenience are paramount to this population, we also know that education must accommodate the complexity of their lives, as they work and raise families, and, frequently, try to make up for years spent outside of the classroom.

Accordingly, as is conveyed as a priority within *Vision 2016*, we will develop and deliver the country's first all-online, all women's bachelor degree program.

Graduate Education

Many of our undergraduates, traditional age and adult alike, continue with their education by earning a master's degree (a significant percentage at Bay Path) and increasing their earning power even further. In fact, individuals who hold a master's degree earn on average 15% more than those with a bachelor's degree alone. Enrollment (co-ed) in graduate programs at Bay Path has exploded over the past decade – over 200% from fall of 2008 to fall of 2012 – driving significant revenue growth. Ongoing program development at the graduate level is a cornerstone strategy and perhaps no more important than in health-science related degrees, where employment growth over the next decade is projected to be as high as 30% in some fields.

Summary

The three primary goals of *Vision 2016*, namely a transformed experience for traditional-age undergraduates, a pioneering online education for adult women, and an aggressive expansion of our graduate programs in the health sciences, form the basis of our plan. We recognize that successful implementation of the strategies and attainment of key objectives is contingent upon a strong, innovative, and lean organization. Goal #4 of *Vision 2016* presents our shared commitment to effective leadership, management and deployment of institutional resources.

The significant undertakings we have planned for each of our core areas underscore the complexity and drive of this institution. In recognition of this, and with aspirations for an even bolder future, we will take the first months of *Vision 2016* to determine how our own internal revolution of learning would be leveraged within the context of a University structure. Having confirmed that Bay Path already fits the Commonwealth's definition of University and having obtained affirmation from key constituents through a rigorous assessment process, we will proceed with the Board of Trustee's vote to continue the evaluation process of reorganizing under University status. This move, substantiated by the first three goals of *Vision 2016* and our revolutionary approach to education, would signal a new period for us as a national and global player in the higher education landscape. With great enthusiasm we will create an expanded public identity for the institution, by envisioning, building, and marketing the Bay Path of the future, as conveyed in the fifth and final goal of *Vision 2016*.

As with all revolutions, this one will have its turbulent moments. Yet we are confident in our ability to seize the challenges with optimism and fortitude. We have a strong and compelling mission; we have a healthy fiscal foundation; and we have a committed Board, faculty and staff, ready to be part of one of the most exciting periods in the evolution of America: higher education and Bay Path. Carpe Diem.

The Executive Staff