



## FAST FORWARD TO EXCELLENCE

I HAVE BEEN USING THE TIME SINCE COMMENCEMENT TO LISTEN TO MANY of your ideas of how we can make Syracuse University even better than it is today. Toward that end, I recently launched Fast Forward Syracuse, a framework for how we will get better by embracing change and prioritizing students as the primary focus of all we do. With input from students, faculty, staff, alumni, and other constituencies, this initiative will propel us to new levels of excellence and position us strongly to meet the challenges ahead.

The initiative's name was inspired by the student competition of the same name that was part of Inauguration activities in April. Working in teams, students presented ideas on how we can make Syracuse better. The results were innovative and inspiring. They demonstrated the great possibilities that flow from an entrepreneurial vision and collaborative mindset.

Fast Forward Syracuse embraces that same spirit of innovation and opportunity. It includes three interrelated components that will be developed and implemented with participation by students, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders. These three components are:

- A **Strategic Plan**, centered on academics, that lays out a shared vision for the University and identifies clear priorities needed to achieve it.
- A **Campus Master Plan** to guide decisions about the University's strategic infrastructure needs.
- An **Operational Excellence Program** to help the University be more effective, achieve efficiencies, and create opportunities to fund investment in the Strategic Plan and Campus Master Plan.

This initiative is not just about the inevitable changes that come with leadership transition. These are extraordinary times for higher education. Technology is changing the way we learn and do just about everything; access, affordability, and return-on-investment are growing concerns. Debates simmer over whether colleges and universities should be professional training schools, liberal arts schools, think tanks, research powerhouses, economic engines for communities, or all of these at once. These are big challenges that go to the heart of all we do and why we do it.

Fast Forward Syracuse will help formulate a vision to meet these and other challenges and propel Syracuse forward to new levels of excellence. It will build on our strengths and identify opportunities for even greater things. It will call on us to change and to take risks. It will require us to be nimble and move fast, and we are. Committees for each of the three groups have already begun their work.

While progress inevitably means change, one thing will remain constant: our institutional commitment to prioritize students in everything we do. They are the lifeblood of the University, and their experiences here will inform their character and shape their prospects for a lifetime.

Nobody knows that better than you. As alumni, you can speak firsthand to the impact your Syracuse University education has had on your own life. I hope you will add your own thoughts on how we can make it even more impactful for future generations. You can follow our progress or contribute to the dialogue by visiting our dedicated website at [fastforward.syr.edu](http://fastforward.syr.edu).

Sincerely,

Kent Syverud  
Chancellor and President