VISION 2020
A FUTURE IN FOCUS
Siena Terzo, left, 2011 and Siena Quarto, 2010
In 2005, the Bellarmine University Board of Trustees asked Bellarmine University President Joseph J. McGowan to present a Vision for what the school should aspire to become over the next 15 years.

The president responded with the imaginative and compelling Vision 2020, envisioning Bellarmine University as the premier independent Catholic university in the South, and thereby the leading private university in the Commonwealth and region.

In the following pages, we will highlight the great progress that has been made at Bellarmine in the eight years since then. Exciting growth in undergraduate and graduate enrollment, the strategic addition of new schools and academic programs (with more planned), improved support for existing schools and faculty, beautiful new campus buildings and a national championship in NCAA Division II men’s basketball – all these things demonstrate that the university is achieving the goals of Vision 2020.

And as Bellarmine continues to realize its full potential, its ascendancy is giving the city of Louisville and the Commonwealth of Kentucky something they have never had before, yet must have in order to be competitive: a nationally pre-eminent private university of significant size and stature, with an ever-broadening reputation for excellence and strength.

Such a private university is vital to any thriving regional city. It creates a more competitive, stimulating academic environment in concert with public institutions. It turns out more graduate and professional degrees and entrepreneurs. It produces inspirational leaders and attracts top-level talent. Ultimately, it not only supports economic development, it also enriches the area’s culture, character and personality in a way no other institution can.

Bellarmine University’s influence goes far beyond intellectual and economic measures, however. The inclusive spiritual principles on which Bellarmine was founded in 1950 create a bedrock of moral and ethical values among its graduates – values that are reflected in leadership, successful living, and service to others. Nothing could be more important to the future of our community.

Through Vision 2020, Bellarmine will keep the promise that was made on these hills more than 60 years ago. Not merely by enduring in the shadow of a proud history, but by stepping into the light to embrace a bold future.

In the following pages, we will:

- Outline the Vision for Bellarmine University;
- Describe how the community and region will benefit;
- Update our progress;
- Present our plans; and
- Ask for your help and support.
All of our leaders know that higher education is critical to successful economic development and quality of life. We need more people to attain higher levels of education – for good jobs in this challenging new economy, of course, but also for civility, culture and quality of life.

Public universities cannot do this work by themselves. Private universities cannot do it by themselves, either. It takes both public and private universities – in a mutually supportive, mutually beneficial, non-threatening relationship of collaboration and positive competition.

This relationship exists in other states and competing regions – but it has been absent here. Bellarmine University is now on course to complete that equation.

Our Vision is that, by the year 2020, Bellarmine will be the premier independent Catholic university in the South, and thereby the leading private university in the Commonwealth and region – educating with excellence each Bellarmine student in the knowledge, skills and values for successful living, work, leadership and service, to help create a sustainable future for our regional, national and international communities.

This Vision is firmly rooted in Bellarmine University’s mission. It is difficult, in fact, to imagine truly fulfilling our mission without realizing Vision 2020.

Our mission statement says that “Bellarmine University is an independent Catholic university serving the region, nation and world by educating talented, diverse students of many faiths, ages, nations, and cultures, and with respect for each individual’s intrinsic value and dignity. We educate our students through undergraduate and graduate programs in the liberal arts and professional studies, within which students develop the intellectual, moral, ethical and professional competencies for successful living, work, leadership and service to others. We achieve these goals in an educational environment committed to excellence, academic freedom, and authentic conversations that are not dominated by particular political or other narrow perspectives. Here we seek to foster a thoughtful, informed consideration of serious ideas, values and issues – time-honored and contemporary – across a broad range of compelling concerns that are regional, national and international. By these means, Bellarmine seeks to benefit the public interest, to help create the future, and to improve the human condition. Thus we strive to be worthy of our foundational motto: In Veritatis Amore, In the Love of Truth.”

Vision 2020 is ambitious and achievable.

Bellarmine is a bright, young, vigorous and growing institution, with a demonstrable record of success. It is in the midst of a dramatic transformation – for the great benefit of the region, the nation and the world we serve.

The rewards will be breathtaking, historic and transformational – a true legacy for generations to come in our community, state and region.

Our Vision is that by the year 2020, Bellarmine University will:

- Double the number of students to more than 5,000, from the 2,500 enrolled in 2005;
- Add more schools and academic programs, chosen strategically for their importance to the 21st century city;
- Double the number of campus facilities, from 30 in 2005 to 60;
- Continue to affirm and improve the commitment to the university’s essential work of teaching and learning by hiring excellent new faculty and supporting them with time for research and development.

Bellarmine University’s Vision 2020 is perfectly aligned with, and vital to the success of, Metro Louisville’s 55,000 Degrees initiative and the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education’s Stronger by Degrees initiative, both designed to increase educational attainment.
Let us amplify Bellarmine’s Vision statement.
What does “The premier independent Catholic university in the South” really mean?
And how will it secure our place as the leading private university in the Commonwealth and region?

**Premier** describes our unqualified ambition for competitive excellence at the very highest level, in everything we do.

**Independent** describes our legal status, of course – we are not owned or operated by the Catholic Church – but it also states without equivocation that we are an open institution deeply committed to academic freedom. Bellarmine University is a place where students, faculty and staff of all faith traditions, or no faith tradition, are free to search for truth, beauty and goodness in teaching and in research, wherever that search may lead.

**Catholic University** is the heart of our identity and the heart of this Vision statement. It roots us in the oldest and best tradition of higher education in the Western world and affirms our commitment to excellent teaching in the liberal arts, at the undergraduate, graduate and professional levels; to the intrinsic value of each individual; to a Catholic, international, welcoming and inclusive community of talented and diverse people studying a broad range of topics and issues; to ethics, morality, spirituality, faith, religion and worship; to the compatibility of faith and reason in the university’s work; to academic freedom; and to Catholic social teaching – social justice, service to others, our responsibility to alleviate suffering and to improve the human condition.

The reality is that Bellarmine University today is, demographically, a lay, ecumenical, interfaith community. We have an opportunity and a responsibility to create a model for “the new Catholic University” that uniquely exemplifies our heritage of academic excellence and freedom, spiritual awareness and character.

**In the South** sets out a feasible competitive geography. Notre Dame dominates the Midwest; Georgetown, Boston College and Fordham dominate the East; the University of San Francisco dominates the West – but the South is an open field for Bellarmine University.

And Louisville, the 16th-largest city in the nation, is the “Gateway to the South,” a region that is identified with growth and known as an attractive, welcoming, warm, friendly and gracious place to live, learn and play.
Every prosperous region of the country shares a common denominator for success: a thriving private university. What Notre Dame has done for South Bend, Emory for Atlanta, Duke for North Carolina and Vanderbilt for Nashville, Bellarmine University can do for Louisville. With soaring enrollment, strong new schools and impressive new campus facilities, Bellarmine is well on its way to helping Louisville move from good to great by helping the region to:

**Address the desperate need for more college graduates.** Bellarmine is increasingly attracting the best and brightest students. Many of them will remain in Louisville, in Kentucky or in the region following graduation, becoming the well-educated talent pool that we must have in order to attract and retain business in the knowledge-based industries that create economic development opportunity and the future. Bellarmine’s mission to instill in its graduates the moral and ethical values that are reflected in leadership and service to others will also elevate the character and personality of the entire area.

**Achieve a strong economic future.** The economic impact of private universities is significant. Nationwide, they employ three-quarters of a million people and had estimated revenues in 2001 of $120 billion – with a cumulative economic impact of nearly $300 billion.

Notre Dame’s economic impact on the South Bend area is $833 million. Duke’s impact on its service area is $2.6 billion. Vanderbilt’s impact for Nashville and middle Tennessee is $3.4 billion. And Emory’s impact on Atlanta is also estimated at $3.4 billion. In fact, for every $1 Emory spends, $1.24 is generated indirectly in Atlanta’s economy. This is what a premier independent university can mean to a local economy, just in the economic impact of its presence.

Existing corporations in Louisville and the region are benefiting as this Vision is realized – and so will their employees, and their employees’ families. Add to that the production of more and more graduate and professional degrees to spur further economic development, sustain vital communities and provide professional services.

**Strengthen the public university sector.** Vision 2020 is helping to create a more competitive, productive and stimulating higher education environment throughout the region.

Private universities need public universities to grow and succeed because we want to send our undergraduates to competitive graduate schools, and because we need to hire faculty from their graduate ranks, among other reasons.

Public universities need private universities to grow and succeed because private universities, which depend on private money to operate, must be responsive, innovative, experimental, resilient and open to change – and thus can move to markets and to matters of high academic quality with greater facility, ease and speed.

Ultimately, Bellarmine’s Vision 2020 not only promotes economic development, attracts top talent and raises educational attainment – it also enriches the region’s culture, character and personality in a way that no other institution can.
Building on the groundwork laid by the university administration, and with the enthusiastic support of the university’s Board of Trustees and the community, Bellarmine University has made tremendous progress toward the goals of Vision 2020 in the eight years since it was launched.
This groundwork includes a Strategic Plan that sets out five initiatives to guide our Vision 2020 agenda. We shall: celebrate our Catholic identity in the inclusive Merton spirit as the foundation of our commitment to student fulfillment, global consciousness, and environmental sustainability; establish and sustain a climate of excellence throughout the university; integrate an international focus and sensibility into all curricular and co-curricular programs; enhance our reputation, expand our market, and dramatically grow our enrollment; and develop our financial, physical, and human resources to the level required to achieve our vision for the new Bellarmine University.
Since 2005, Bellarmine has:

- Launched 23 new degree and certificate programs, including two new doctoral degrees – a Ph.D. in Education and Social Change and a Doctor of Nursing Practice – and a new Master’s in Taxation to address massive changes in federal tax laws.

- Demonstrated our Catholic identity in the Merton spirit with dozens of outreach initiatives including international service trips and Knights in Action, an annual day of service in which all entering freshmen are deployed throughout the community for service work before taking their first class.

- Added two new schools: a School of Environmental Studies and a School of Communication, bringing the total number of schools at Bellarmine to seven.

- Achieved recognition as one of the nation’s best private universities, in publications such as the Princeton Review, Forbes and U.S. News & World Report, which in 2012-13 (the university’s 19th consecutive year on the list) ranked Bellarmine No. 11 among regional universities in the South.

- Increased enrollment by 34 percent, from 2,548 in 2005 to 3,422 in 2012.

- Increased the university’s endowment by 80 percent, from $22,530,937 in 2005 to $40,392,507 in 2012.

- Launched an Institute for Media, Culture and Ethics and a Center for Economic Education.

- Increased the percentage of students living on campus to just over 50 percent, making Bellarmine a “primarily residential university,” according to the Carnegie definition for the first time in its history.

- Spotlighted Bellarmine and Louisville by winning the 2011 NCAA Division II National Basketball Championship.

- Increased the number of full-time faculty by 37 percent, from 114 in 2005 to 156 in 2012, to maintain an average student-to-faculty ratio of 12:1, while also reducing the teaching load to facilitate research and scholarship.

- Added men’s and women’s swimming as Division II sports.

- Purchased a Bellarmine Trolley, which is used to expand campus tours with prospective students and their parents, showcasing the benefits of the university’s location in the eclectic Highlands neighborhood.
Renovated storied Knights Hall, including a new floor and new chair-back seating.

Expanded and completely renovated the George G. Brown Center, doubling dining capacity in the University Dining Hall to 500-plus and creating new classroom and office space for the School of Communication.

Through a generous alumni donation, built a three-story signature entrance, St. Robert Gate, which welcomes students and visitors in the spirit of hospitality in its deepest sense, one of Bellarmine’s core values.

Built the Owsley B. Frazier Stadium and Joseph P. and Janet A. Clayton Field, a state-of-the-art playing field for our Division I lacrosse team as well as our Division II soccer teams and track and field events.

Developed the Bellarmine Farm to educate students about the natural world and provide a sustainable source of vegetables, fruits, herbs and flowers for use in the University Dining Hall.

Renamed the Bellarmine Office Building as Nolen C. Allen Hall and expanded it with a three-story, 19,500-square-foot addition to provide classroom and office space for the growing Physical Therapy Program, the School of Education and the School of Environmental Studies.

Renovated storied Knights Hall, including a new floor and new chair-back seating.

Recreated the Café Ogle as a food court with four branded dining concepts.

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More than halfway to the year 2020, the administration and Board of Trustees have extended the scope of planning even further into the future, with the goal of positioning the university and its graduates to meet the changing demands of life in the 21st century.

The No. 1 priority is a $25 million project known as Centro. This project will transform Horrigan Hall, one of the university’s foundational buildings, by adding a three-story, 47,300-square-foot building adjacent to it, with dramatic atrium space connecting the two.

Located within the addition will be a Graduate School of Management, a new Institute for Advanced Analytics, additional classrooms, a welcome center with a one-stop shopping for all enrollment needs and the Career Development Center.

Another 4,100-square-foot space will be added to the southern wing of Horrigan, which will be renamed Treece Hall in honor of Msgr. Raymond Treece, right-hand man to Msgr. Alfred Horrigan, Bellarmine’s founding president. This new space will house an expanded bookstore, a campus living room and offices.

Bellarmine University’s W. Fielding Rubel School of Business is accredited by AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) International, an accreditation earned by less than 15 percent of the world’s 13,000 business programs. Bellarmine’s graduate business programs have grown 40 percent since the fall of 2005, with the greatest opportunity for future growth in the Master of Science in Taxation program.

But while the graduate business programs at Bellarmine compete at the highest levels, their physical facilities lag woefully behind those of Bellarmine’s competitors. Centro will provide capital improvements that are absolutely essential for the Rubel School of Business to continue to build upon its long tradition of excellence.

The Institute for Advanced Analytics, meanwhile, will integrate the liberal arts and technology across the curriculum, maximizing our students’ ability to turn information into knowledge – to use big data to create ultimate solutions.

Bellarmine University continues to build on the Vision 2020 momentum with an ambitious slate of proposed academic programs, enrollment goals and building projects.

Proposed academic programs include:

- Ph.D. in Superintendent Education
- Ph.D. in Higher Education
- Institute for Advanced Analytics
- Master’s in Early Childhood Education
- Master’s in Environmental Science
- Master’s in Digital Arts
- Master’s in Industrial/Organizational Psychology
- English as a Second Language
- Bachelor’s in Marketing
- Film Studies

Planned capital improvements include:

- Bellarmine Centro
- Lifetime Sports & Recreation Center
- Knights Hall renovation and addition including Renovated lobby and skyboxes
- Parking structure
- New art, music and alumni buildings

These additional programs and projects will help us to achieve the goal of increasing total enrollment 54 percent by 2020, to 5,358 students.
When we unveiled Vision 2020 in 2005, we encountered our share of skeptics. While great advancements had been made over the course of Bellarmine’s 55-year history, there had never been a single plan of such magnitude, with such expansive reach: “the premier independent Catholic university in the South, and thereby the leading private university in the Commonwealth and region.” Really?

Yes, really. As you can see in the pages you’ve just read, we at Bellarmine University have every reason to believe in the ultimate realization of our Vision. Building upon the strong foundation laid in 1950, we are well into the most transformational phase of our history. Eight years in, we have made phenomenal progress, and the momentum continues to build.

This growth and momentum pull us forward into vital opportunities and urgent needs – for more classrooms, updated technology, faculty offices and collaborative spaces for students.

We will achieve the goals of Vision 2020 because we must. And not just for our students’ futures, but for the successful future of our city, our state and our region.

We need your support. In October 2011, we began the public phase of a $100 million capital campaign. We must complete this campaign by 2016 to implement our planned programming and capital improvements. That means we must bring in $9 million in each of the next four fiscal years.

Challenging? Yes. But we are up to the challenge. I ask you now to partner with us. Imagine what Vision 2020 will mean not just to Bellarmine University but to our community, our state and our region, and help us to complete this historic and absolutely vital transformation for the benefit of this generation and generations to come.

Joseph J. McGowan
President, Bellarmine University