Strategic Plan

ACD

American College of Dentists

"Set goals – high goals – for you and your organization. When your organization has a goal to shoot for, you create teamwork, people working for a common good."

These are the words of legendary University of Alabama football coach Bear Bryant. And these are the values – high goals and teamwork – the Officers, Board of Regents and many outside contributors embraced in an ambitious, thirteen-month strategic planning process for the College.

It was time to take a deep dive into the future, to understand how the dental profession would be challenged by emerging trends in the economy, technology, politics, society, culture, and health care writ large. And, while over time the College has effectively innovated new programs to meet changing professional needs and circumstances, it was nearly 30 years since the last strategic planning effort. It was time for a new plan, to chart a new strategic direction for the College.

Participants, divided into scenario world teams, explored a highly expansive range of potential future settings for the practice of dentistry and drafted strategy solutions in response to scenario-specific challenges and opportunities.

Consultants from Futures Strategy Group (FSG) guided the effort applying scenario planning principles and process. The executive committee appointed a core project team to contribute professional and subject matter expertise. FSG interviewed more than 30 oral health professionals from diverse backgrounds (e.g., age, gender, race, ethnicity, practice experience, etc.) to explore perceptions of the College and critical requirements for future relevance and success. The interview results helped determine the strategic planning agenda and the issues to be explored in a strategy workshop held in April 2023.

More than 30 individuals, including ACD executives and Regents, participated in the two-day workshop held at the Copley Plaza Hotel in Boston. Participants, divided into scenario world teams, explored a highly expansive range of potential future settings for the practice of dentistry and drafted strategy solutions in response to scenario-specific challenges and opportunities. The strategic output was prolific and rich, with the recent experience of the Covid pandemic reminding everyone that the future is complex and unpredictable.

In subsequent months, the Board participated actively in a series of virtual meetings to organize and synthesize the workshop results. Board members identified and debated critical themes and issues. In a vote, the Board prioritized eight strategies with six strategic goals to guide the College over the next five years. The goals are as follows:

1. **Evolve our leadership in oral health**
2. **Create exceptional value for committed future leaders**
3. **Develop and refine essential resources**
4. **Elevate our communications and expand our outreach**
5. **Infuse diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging in all we do**
6. **Ensure financial sustainability and responsible stewardship**

This strategic plan, approved by the full Board in October 2023, is a living and dynamic document. President Terri Dolan has assigned strategy implementation responsibilities to functional Board committees of the College. These committees will report to the Board on their progress at the 2024 Spring meeting. The Executive Committee will annually review the progress of the Strategic Plan and make adjustments as required.

I have no doubt that by fulfilling these goals and strategies, the Officers, Board of Regents and Fellows will advance the common good. In the process, we will advance the extraordinarily important mission of the College in promoting excellence, ethics, professionalism, and leadership in oral healthcare – and spreading its influence throughout the healthcare profession.

In Fellowship,

Robert M. Lamb, DDS
President, American College
of Dentists Foundation

GOAL

Evolving Our Leadership in Oral Health

Strategy 1

The ACD will uphold its leadership position as an expert on ethics and professionalism as oral health is more broadly recognized as a vital part of overall health and wellness.

The field of oral health, as with all health care, is characterized by accelerating change – in patient needs, institutional settings, practice models, workforce requirements, technology solutions, practice finance, student debt, and government policies. These changes will challenge the ethical and professional practices in the oral health field. The College will be at the forefront of these important conversations and continue to provide timely and useful resources for oral health practitioners – and the broader health care community.

Over the next five years the ACD will:

- Expand and increase awareness of the College's repository for dental ethics resources and ethics education using multiple media platforms.
- Promote ethical responsibility in the use of emerging technologies, practice models and systems for oral health related applications.

GOAL

Creating Exceptional Value for Committed Future Leaders

Strategy 2

Recognize and engage the most talented and diverse emerging leaders in dentistry.

People are at the heart of the College's mission. The process of recruiting current and next-generation ACD leaders will require fresh approaches and higher expectations regarding nominations, Fellowship, and retention. There is some urgency in this. Deepening our relationships with SPEA and dental school faculties is central to the objective of sustaining a dynamic Fellowship. We also recognize the continuing importance of maintaining high standards for nomination and values in recruitment and leadership development.

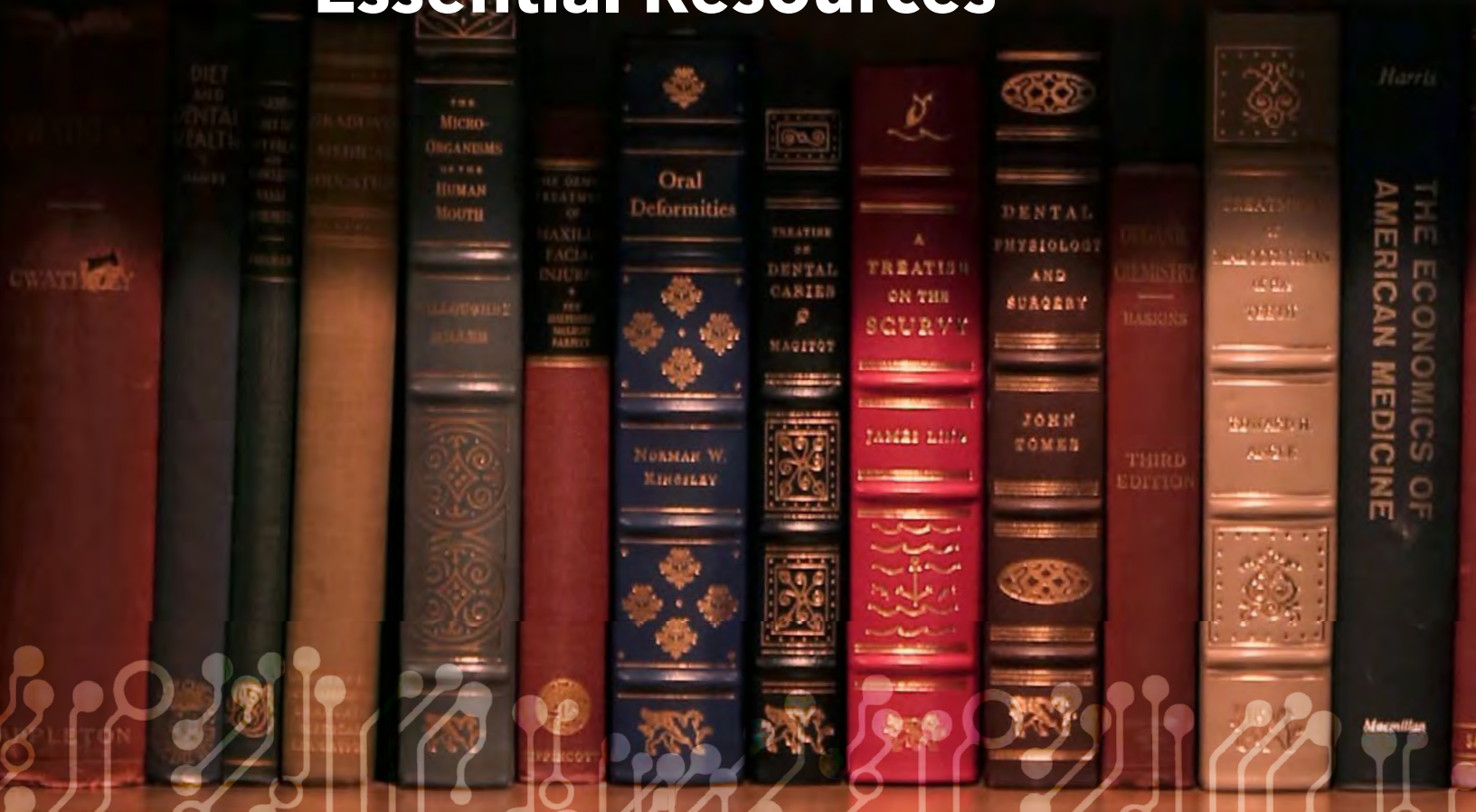
Over the next five years the ACD will:

- Provide mentorship and dissemination of best practices in the identification of qualified Fellowship candidates and nomination.

- Explore the desirability of new membership categories and/or differential dues obligations for graduate students, public health dentists, full-time faculty, military, recent graduates, and dental spouses, among possible others.
- Develop a campaign to nominate dental-school faculty to the ACD.
- Continue to actively nominate diverse fellows to enhance DEIB within the organization.
- Define, expand, and enhance the relationship with prominent student organizations.
- Maintain connections with SPEA alumni in order to provide ongoing communication and support, and to lay the foundation for the possibility of ACD Fellowship in their early career years.
- Update nomination process and Fellowship expectations in the Sections and College.

GOAL

Developing and Refining Essential Resources



Strategy 3

Invest in the continuous creation of ACD-branded professional development courses and materials on ethics and, separately, leadership best practices.

For the College to accomplish its mission, it is vital that we continually create and disseminate contemporary instructional courses and materials. We will target a wide range of stakeholders and broader audiences, including individuals, Sections, licensing organizations, educational institutions, and corporations. Developing these resources will require significant ongoing investment.

Over the next five years the ACD will:

- Provide and continuously develop leadership training opportunities for the entire oral health delivery team.
- Create ethics and leadership training modules with a certificate of completion (e.g., digital badges) and associated measurable outcomes.
- Create a Leadership Academy, which will cultivate a network of Fellows engaged with the professional issues central to the College's mission.
- Feature "Management and Administration" tracks for professional practices and Sections at the ACD annual meeting.
- Explore non-dues revenue opportunities.

GOAL

Elevating our Communications and Expanding Our Outreach

Strategy 4

Expand and enhance our communications to advance the ACD pillars—excellence, ethics, professionalism, and leadership—with members of the oral health delivery team.

We have valuable knowledge, experience, and insights to share across the field of oral health and across health care in general. *How* we share is apt to be as important as *what* we share. To be effective, the College recognizes the importance of social media channels and the need to continuously evolve our practices as communications technology and media change. We have much to say about the crucial role of oral health in medicine and general health.

Over the next five years the ACD will:

- Provide an active and accessible forum for social media interaction, support, and exchange of ideas.
- Promote the 2024 Ethics Summit on Medical-Dental Integration and plan for future summits.
- Develop ACD branded content, including webinars, podcasts and Zoom events.
- Promote the ACD YouTube Channel.

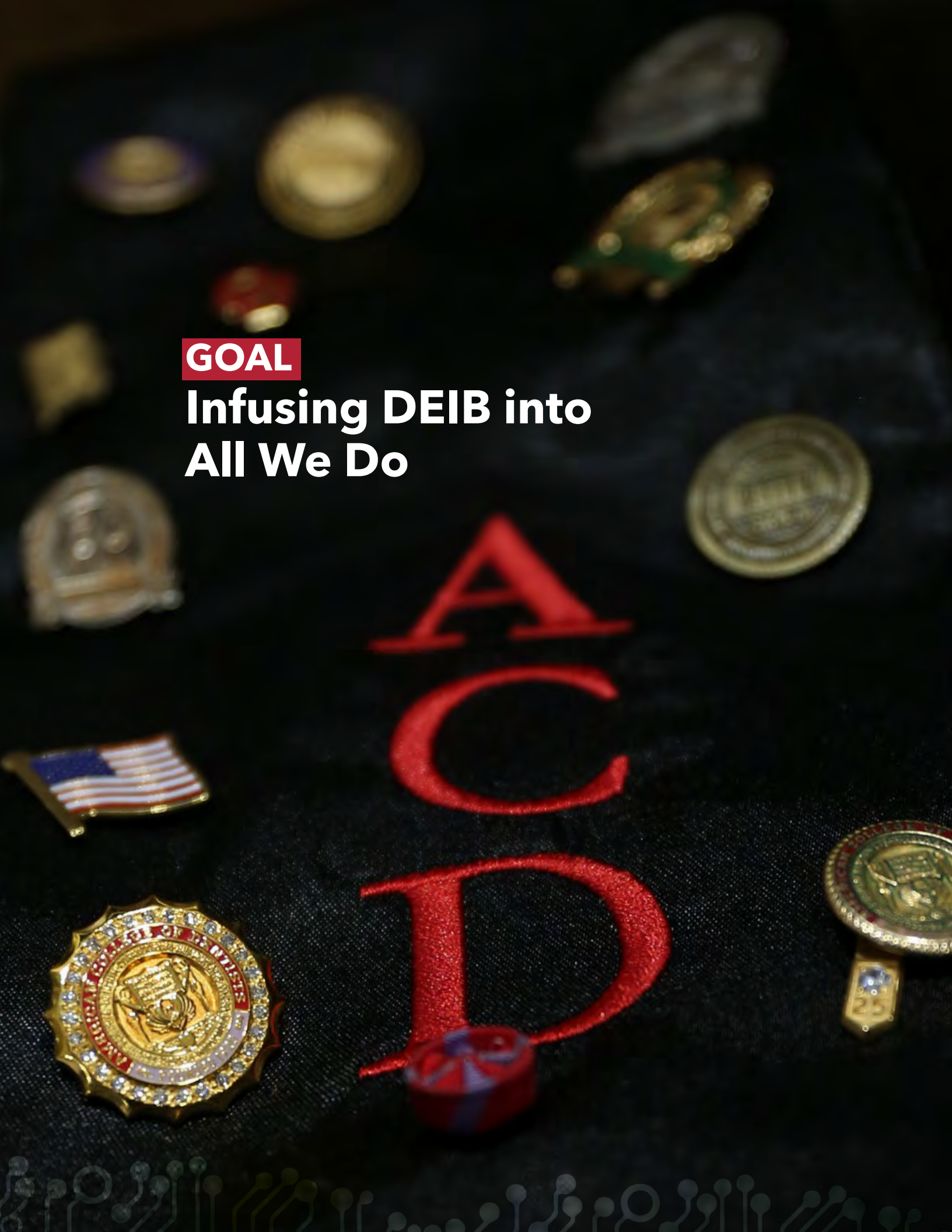
Strategy 5

Create, maintain, and foster interprofessional relationships with other health care professional organizations.

We recognize that Interprofessional relationships are an essential focus of ACD growth and development. The College recognizes opportunities for deepening and expanding strategic collaboration in, for example, research, conferences, and event sponsorships. Medical-dental integration is a particularly rich and compelling area of potential collaboration.

Over the next five years the ACD will:

- Identify priority targets for collaboration and possible partnerships (e.g., academic and research organizations, current affiliate organizations).
- Prioritize outreach efforts to dental specialty organizations.
- Continue outreach to ADA, AGD, AAPD, HDA, NDA, SAID and other related organizations.
- Promote the 2024 ACD Ethics Summit on Medical-Dental integration and plan for future summits.
- Consider ADEA, ASDA, ICD, PFA, and SPEA as rotating hosts of annual collaborative meeting.



GOAL

Infusing DEIB into All We Do

Strategy 6

Continue to support an organizational leadership and governance structure that is diverse including, but not limited to, age, gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

Fully adhering to the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging cannot be an 'add-on', but must be infused in our culture. A living, dynamic DEIB framework will shape our approach to nominations, continuing education, leadership, staff development and all we do and aspire to become.

Over the next five years the ACD will:

- Ensure that DEIB values are infused throughout the organization, the fellowship, and particularly in our approach to nominating, and onboarding and developing board members and staff.
- Continue outreach to ADA, AGD, HDA, NDA, SAID and other related organizations.
- Reach out, with intent to nominate, to those listed on the annual NDA "40 Under 40" and ADA "10 Under 10".
- Continue to actively nominate highly qualified diverse dental leaders to enhance DEIB within the organization.

GOAL

Ensuring Financial Sustainability and Responsible Stewardship

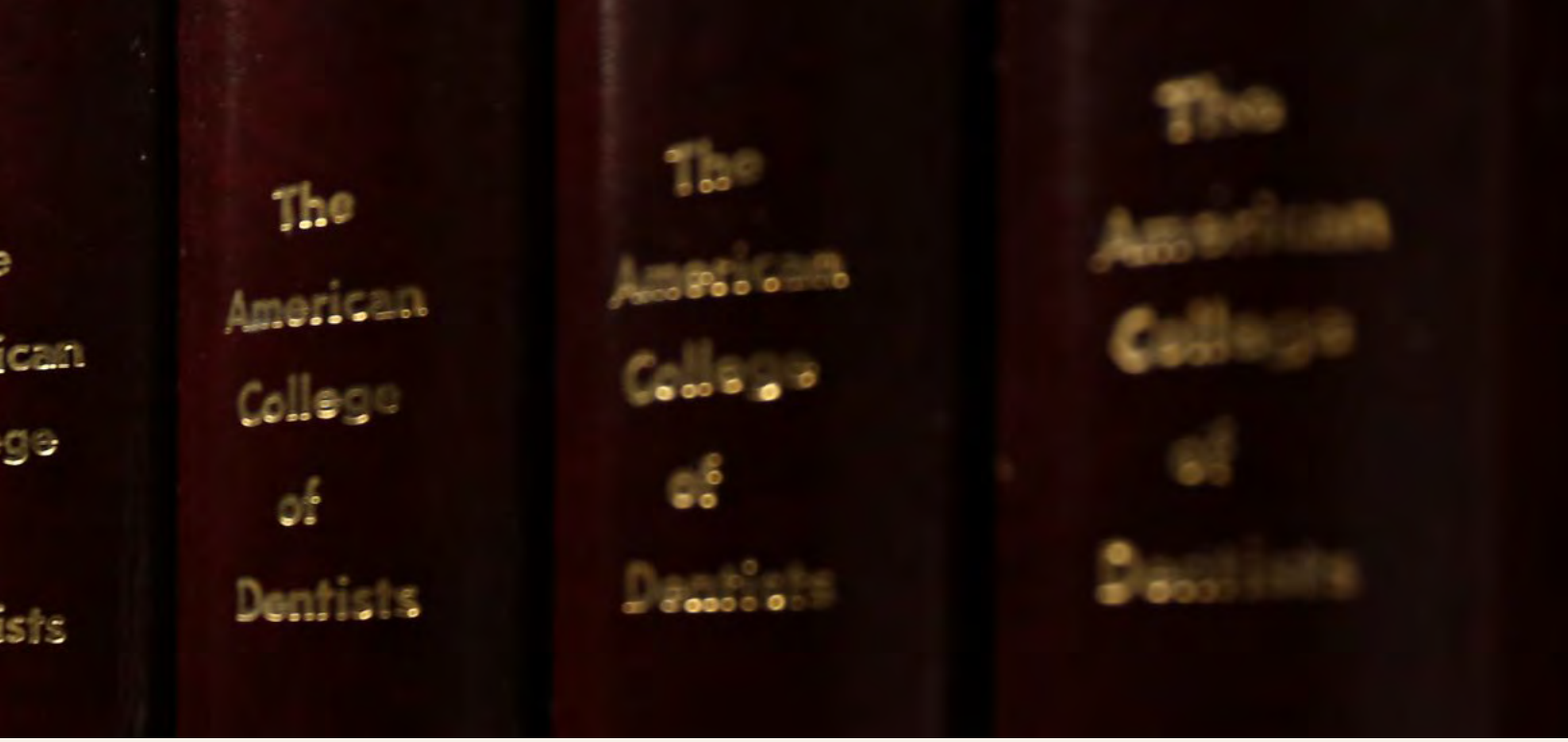
Strategy 7

Explore new approaches to management and operations, to reduce cost and improve efficiency, and to include cooperative agreements with other organizations, and outsourcing services.

Ensuring financial sustainability is critical to our future plans. Moreover, being a good steward of the College's resources is central to our ethical values, and indeed our identity. We will not waver from this commitment, and we will conscientiously seek out ways to deliver our value in the most cost-effective manner possible.

Over the next five years the ACD will:

- Continue to identify and implement cost management measures.
- More fully implement contemporary operational and strategic tools that reduce or eliminate traditional costs.



Strategy 8

Optimize environmental sustainability efforts at its national office and in planning events.

Our world has limited resources, and our part in preserving these resources, while modest, is integral to our ethical mandate. We continue to take this seriously.

Over the next five years the ACD will:

- Identify and implement management practices that rely on renewable energy whenever feasible.
- Reduce the College's environmental footprint through sustainability measures at our National Office and our meetings.

Strategic Planning for the Future of Oral Healthcare: Complexities, Uncertainties, Promises, and Opportunities

The future of healthcare lies at the nexus of powerful and uncertain forces for change – demographic, social, technological, economic, political, environmental, corporate, and cultural. How these forces play out in the future and influence the practice of dentistry and the work of the American College of Dentists is impossible to predict. But they are critical to consider, both as background to more immediate decisions facing the ACD as well as for insights into future challenges and opportunities facing the College.

For this reason, the ACD Board of Regents embraced an innovative approach to strategy development called scenario-based planning. Whereas traditional strategic planning relies on probabilistic assumptions about the future, scenario planning makes no bet on a single, "most likely" future state. Instead, planners consider a set of alternative future operating environments – scenarios – that cover the range of uncertainty they are facing. Planners then forge sustainable, robust strategies that promise to deliver meaningful, achievable results no matter how the future turns out.

The Board retained the services of a strategy advisory firm called Futures Strategy Group (FSG) to lead it through the process.

The ACD had not embarked on a strategic planning process in more than 25 years, so there was both a sense of urgency and enthusiasm across the organization for this effort.

The ACD strategic planning process formally launched in September 2022. Several months of intense project work followed, involving the ACD Board of Regents an eight-person project "Core Team," and FSG consultants. The primary project tasks included:

- A total of 30 confidential interviews with a highly diverse (age, gender, race, and ethnicity) set of individuals representing ACD staff, Regents, Fellows, and other stakeholders, to inform the Board's strategic agenda. Among the interviewees were representatives of private and corporate practices, dental faculties, military and public health services, and student organizations.

- A two-day strategy retreat was held in April 2023 in which ACD Board members, Fellows, and Senior Staff explored a set of scenarios describing future conditions in health care and medicine. This step yielded an initial set of 44 draft strategies for ACD consideration.

- A workshop "stress-test" in which draft strategies were quantitatively evaluated across alternative scenario contexts.

- Reconsideration of the Board's mission and vision statements considering future challenges and opportunities in the ACD operating space.

- Post-workshop, a series of meetings in which the highest scoring, robust strategies were carefully blended and refined.

- Voting on strategy prioritization according to their importance and the relative ease of implementation. This narrowed the set of strategies under consideration from 18 to 8.

- ACD committee work detailing tactics and implementation considerations for each of the approved strategies.

Final approval of the ACD strategic plan in October 2023 represents 13 months of intense and highly focused project work. From start to finish, it has been an expansive, rigorous, and uniquely collaborative undertaking. The Board is confident that the product of this strategic planning effort will provide direction and insights to the ACD on how to best continue to fulfill its mission – of advancing excellence, ethics, professionalism and leadership in oral healthcare – to the end of this decade and beyond.

[1] The Board wishes to acknowledge the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education for allowing use of its proprietary health care scenarios for purposes of the ACD strategic plan.

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Erik Klintmalm
SPEA Liaison

Joshua Bussard
Regent Intern

In addition to the Board of Regents and the 30 Fellows and Friends of the College who sat for lengthy, in-depth interviews, the following Fellows and Staff members invested time and energy into the creation of the plan.

Phyllis Beemsterboer
Steven Chan
Peter DuBois
Nanette Elster
Paula Friedman
Larry Garetto
Kevin Lauwers
Hanna Lindskog
Rebecca Long
Suzan Pitman
Toni Roucka
Matthew Sheriff
Carlos Smith

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