



**S.O.A.R. Analysis: Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results**  
January 2022

Lipscomb Academy's current strengths, future opportunities, and shared aspirations underpin the new strategic planning process – Lipscomb Impact 360 – and provide a backdrop for where we are and where we can go. Our strengths are a foundation on which we can build, and the opportunities identified below are how we can leverage those strengths. Our aspirations show the scope of our ambitions, and our results share what we seek to achieve through our work together.

**Strengths**

Lipscomb Academy enjoys a wealth of strengths that serve as a foundation for future achievements. Our university connection and future-focused intentions around social-emotional spiritual learning (SESL) and individualized learning are chief among these, along with our welcoming and engaging community and the student-centered way we operate. Our Nashville location is also a great source of strength.

**University Connection**

One of the key distinctives that sets Lipscomb Academy apart from other private schools is the access to the Lipscomb University campus. We enhance the formal learning experience at all levels through intentional collaborations with the university. The connections made with Lipscomb University provides continued opportunities to support students in achieving the outcomes they seek.

**Faith-based/Social-Emotional *Spiritual* Learning (SESL)**

At Lipscomb Academy, we share a deep commitment to our Christian faith, and our mission reflects this shared identity. This faith orientation infuses our campus culture, our individual and collective purpose, and our commitment to service. Many schools do focus on the social-emotional wellbeing of students; however, Lipscomb Academy goes beyond by focusing on the social-emotional *spiritual* wellbeing of students. This SESL holistic approach provides opportunities for social-emotional skills to be modeled and practiced and creates community within the classroom where students discover the nature of God, how they fit within his story, and live in relationship to others.

**Our Community**

Our Lipscomb Academy community of faculty, staff, students, and parents establish and maintain close connections. Our school attracts and retains high quality faculty and staff who care deeply about student success. Our faculty and staff are approachable, caring, and student-centered. This relational focus is a hallmark of the Lipscomb Academy experience. These

intentional relationships make Lipscomb what it is: a place where students are known, families are partners, and a community that values all its members.

### **Future-Focused**

Lipscomb Academy offers a diverse range of high-quality academic programs and extra-curricular activities. A crucial aspect of our reputation for excellence is our ability to deliver on what we say we will do. Lipscomb Academy’s offerings have also shifted to meet the changing and growing needs of our students and families, and we pride ourselves on this agility as we purposefully prepare for the future.

### **Student-Centered**

The student experience is at the heart of what we do. Our faculty/student ratio allows us to focus on small classes and to genuinely know our students. We value every student in a deep way, and this dedication to their development extends beyond the classroom to other aspects of their experiences at Lipscomb Academy.

#### Strengths:

- University connection
- Faith-based
- Social-emotional spiritual learning (SESL)
- Our community
- Future-focused
- Student-centered
- Individualized learning

### **Individualized Learning**

By utilizing our future-focused, student-centered mindset, Lipscomb Academy offers individualized learning plans to meet the needs of students. From the seed school through graduation, Lipscomb Academy focuses on personalized academic opportunities to help students meet their goals.

### **Nashville Location**

Our location in Nashville plays a key role in the life of Lipscomb Academy. Nashville is our home, and we consider our location one of our greatest strengths. The dynamism of Nashville, its people, and its culture uplift us as a community.

## **Opportunities**

Our strengths foster opportunities for growth, continual improvement, and success. The changing needs of our students and our communities create opportunities for us to adapt what we teach, how we teach, who we teach, and where this occurs. We can also expand the range of people we serve and include in the life of Lipscomb Academy. To do so, we need to increase experiences with needed supports—and we need to clearly convey priorities we hope to deepen. The opportunities before us are particularly attainable if we enhance customized learning experiences, expand our connections, and fully leverage our potential as a community.

### **Leverage Supports for Student Experiences**

Lipscomb Academy students are provided with a variety of opportunities in academics, athletics, the arts, and other extracurriculars. In order to increase the experiences for students and to make these opportunities the hallmark of Lipscomb Academy, supports for these endeavors

need to be in place to ensure that the activities are high achieving and high level. Identifying the numerous opportunities available and building in needed supports will be key for meeting the needs of our students and families. The identified experiences should align with Lipscomb Academy's strategic vision, include both personnel and financial supports, and connect to all areas of the school.

**Opportunities:**

- Continue to leverage needed supports for student experiences
- Further enhance customized learning experiences
- Expand internal and external connections and partnerships
- Deepen our culture of SESL and service learning
- Utilize our autonomy to build cohesion across schools and departments

**Enhance Customized Learning Experiences**

Our range of academic offerings, and the infrastructure that support them, afford us numerous opportunities for growth and increasing flexibility. For Lipscomb Academy to fully realize our potential to make a positive impact on all of our learners, we need to align with current and expected student needs and interests by enhancing the customized learning experiences we offer.

Other key opportunities for us lie in increasing the flexibility we extend to students as we deliver a Lipscomb Academy education. We should leverage the integration of technology throughout the learning process. Effective technology integration training should be provided for faculty; Christian digital leaders and citizenship training should be provided for both students and parents. Lipscomb students and families want great flexibility in how, when, and where learning occurs through different modalities of learning, such as online or hybrid. Similarly, our students need exposure to skills to prepare them for the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace—and we should explore how best to integrate technology and innovation to provide these experiences.

**Expand Connections**

To fully realize our opportunities, we must build strong partnerships and maintain those connections with effective communication. Lipscomb Academy should continue to build partnerships with parents for the student's educational journey in order to offer guidance and direction. Effective partnerships will be vital going forward. Lipscomb Academy should deepen their connection with Lipscomb University through intentional opportunities for students of all ages. Utilizing the strength of our location in Nashville, Lipscomb Academy should take advantage of where we are to build partnerships with local businesses by bringing them to our campus and by sending students to visit or intern with them. Expanding partnerships and connections will benefit everyone in the Lipscomb Academy community.

**Deepen Culture of SESL and Service Learning**

Lipscomb Academy has developed a social-emotional spiritual learning (SESL) framework that can be expanded. Utilizing our faith-focused foundation, we can develop a lens for faculty, staff, administration, students, and parents through opportunities like advisory. These connections provide structure, model social-emotional skills, and build positive, meaningful relationships with peers and adults in a community where students feel known, valued, and part of God's bigger story. Lipscomb Academy can continue to explore how we are going out into our community or acting when there is a need through service learning opportunities.

## **Build Cohesion**

Utilizing the autonomy we have to dream big also provides an opportunity to build cohesion across campuses, departments, and the larger community. Lipscomb Academy can optimize our systems and processes for the benefit of everyone in the Lipscomb community. Even though the lower school and upper school have a different physical location, we can identify collaborative opportunities to strengthen our community to make it one cohesive campus. We can also build a strategic communication plan that provides insight for all stakeholders.

## **Aspirations**

Our analysis of Lipscomb Academy's strengths and opportunities inspired our group. The aspirations below convey the possible futures we envision. We can achieve new levels of leadership amongst private Christian schools and establish a reputation for innovation and solutions. In doing so we aspire to be a Christ-centered, learner-focused community whose students are purposely prepared for the future.

### **Premier Private Christian School**

We aspire to be the premier private Christian school in the south. For us, being a leading academic Christian institution would be built on our real-world application of our Christian convictions. To accomplish this, we need to provide Christian thought leadership and work together to achieve recognition for our mission-focus and academic excellence.

#### Aspirations:

- Become the premier private Christian school in the south
- Advance the Christ-centered, learner-focused mission of our community
- Make Lipscomb Academy a thriving, innovative learning community
- Establish a reputation for being the "solutions center" in Christian education
- Prepare our students for a life of purpose

### **Christ-centered, Learning-Focused Community**

Lipscomb must continue to advance its Christ-centered mission that has served students well for 130 years while deepening its relevance and reach. Our Christian identity tells why we believe what we believe and shows up in all areas of our community. A sense of belonging and purpose should characterize all our endeavors. This clarity of story and identity should be central to our messaging. Learning at Lipscomb should meet the needs of a wide range of students by utilizing our existing capacity, leveraging our strengths, and meeting our opportunities.

### **Innovative Learning Community**

We aspire to meet student demand at Lipscomb Academy with academic programs that engage, challenge, and nurture each learner. We aspire to be nimble, to innovate, and to do so without compromising our high academic standards. Accomplishing this will require significant collaboration amongst the faculty and staff, between departments, and across the Lipscomb Academy campus. Building off of the strong traditional framework already established will allow the development of unique paths of learning customized to the needs of students and families.

## **“Solutions Center”**

Lipscomb Academy aspires to be the “solutions center” for Christian education. We aspire to be the community other communities are looking to because of what we are doing and how we are doing it. To accomplish this, we need to provide Christian leadership and innovation through our future-focused, Christ-centered mindset. With all of these, we seek to make an impact on the community and serve as a resource and support for other schools and organizations.

## **Student Impact**

All of these aspirations support our primary goal of purposely preparing our students for the future. Ultimately, we will be known for the impact our graduates have on the world as they are Christ like, academically prepared, empathetic, effective communicators, and critical thinkers.

## **Results**

If we leverage our strengths, utilize our opportunities, and fulfill our aspirations, our achievements will ensure that Lipscomb Academy:

- Becomes the premier private Christian school in the south;
- Thrives as a collaborative community of passionate faculty and staff, inspired students, invested parents, and successful alumni;
- Welcomes people to a Christ-centered, learner-focused experience that is innovative;
- Produces students who understand the Biblical narrative and their identity within it and the social-emotional skills to engage with their communities;
- Provides increased access to customized learning experiences for students and families in order to meet their needs;
- Enjoys broad and deep partnerships and connections with organizations and individuals near and far;
- Becomes a host for national Christian conferences;
- Achieves recognition as a solutions center;
- Experiences financial vitality;
- Recruits and retains excellent faculty and staff who see Lipscomb Academy as the best possible place to work;
- Spreads joy amongst the people and communities we serve; and
- Strengthens perceptions of the Christian faith and community through the quality and impact of our work;

To establish our course toward these results Lipscomb Academy begins a strategic planning process – Lipscomb Impact 360 – that will continue through the winter and spring of 2022. Join us in considering these possible futures, and add your faithful voice to these vital discussions of our shared future success.