



Gratz College Strategic Plan 2025-2028

Approved by the Board of Governors June 30, 2025

Strategic Planning Process

This Strategic Plan outlines Gratz College's strategic direction for the next three years. It is the product of research and deliberation by more than 40 individuals from throughout the Gratz community who thoughtfully provided the questions for inquiry and worked together to find the answers.

We appreciate everyone's dedication to Gratz College's mission and its future.

Mission Statement

Gratz College advances both education and applied Jewish wisdom for the benefit of a diverse student population, the Jewish community, and all people. The College achieves this mission through accredited degree programs, scholarship, and public engagement.

Background

The Board of Governors approved the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan when Gratz College was poised for growth, but it also faced uncertainty about continuing operations from the building on the Mandell Campus. Strategic goals focused on evaluation of academic programs; expanding non-credit learning opportunities; strengthening development, fundraising, and technological capacity; and evaluation of its Library collections. The Plan called for staying in the current building, while simultaneously formulating a plan in case of the need to move to a new location.

All the strategic recommendations of the 2022 Plan were addressed and completed. For example:

- Academic programs were evaluated, and new degree programs launched. Currently, Gratz is a world leader in the number of students pursuing advanced degrees in Holocaust and Genocide studies. The first cohort of the Master of Arts degree in Antisemitism Studies in the United States launched and immediately filled. A PhD program in Antisemitism Studies is prepared to launch in September 2025. Gratz received approval from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to offer a Master's degree in Special Education that certifies Pennsylvania teachers as well as an Integrative STEM Education program. Institutional partnerships continue to grow.
- In addition to assessing the books in the Library, a new digital archives collection, Grayzel, (named after long-time Gratz professor, Solomon Grayzel), was curated and



funded. The unique collection includes the digital archives of Elie Wiesel as well as prominent figures in American Jewish history.

- The approach to fundraising fully migrated from an event-based model to a diversified approach. By 2024, development revenue from an annual campaign, grants, and EITC tax credits increased non-tuition revenue. The 2024 annual budget closed with a surplus.

The most impactful accomplishment from the 2022-24 Plan was that in June 2024, the Board of Governors voted to purchase a property in Bala Cynwyd, PA, that would serve as a new “home” for Gratz College. With a vision of expanding opportunities for in-person learning and community engagement in the western suburbs of Philadelphia, a plan for construction, financing, and moving was developed that will build a foundation for the next three years of our strategic direction.

Going Forward

Gratz College now has three pathways of entry into our learning community. Our academic degree programs and many non-credit classes live online. Individuals looking for resources for research and scholarship enter the digital world to access our growing collection of archival materials. Adult education and community engagement programs that meet in-person inhabit the “third space” in the Gratz College ecosystem.

Student satisfaction is critical to the integrity of our academic programs, and Gratz must continually improve its ability to assess student satisfaction, outcomes, and market potential for new areas. When new degree programs are planned, human resources and support need to be assessed and aligned. This includes assuring that Gratz can recruit and retain high quality faculty.

Key questions that are addressed by this Plan include:

- What kinds of systemic support are needed to ensure continued student satisfaction?
- How will we assess the market for new degree programs?
- How can we improve our process for assessing the impacts of partnerships?
- How will we ensure that our human resources are aligned with our programmatic needs?

Gratz entered the online learning space 20 years ago, and its new frontier is in the digital environment. The Grayzel project, fully funded, is preparing to launch, making our digital archival collections available to the world.

Key questions that are addressed by this Plan include:

- How will we ensure that we maximize access to our archives?



- What is an appropriate balance between acquisition of new materials and sustainability of our archival collections?

The new Bala campus gives Gratz the opportunity to create more than a learning environment, but also a “third space” of gathering for all people. The ample open areas and social space on the new campus, (our “Common Space”), will provide opportunities for individuals to meet in a coffee shop atmosphere, and for local synagogues or other organizations to host classes, meetings and conferences. They can attend events and programs that enhance their understanding of Jewish teachings and culture.

Key questions that are addressed by this Plan include:

- How will we plan learning opportunities that engage the local community?
- What personnel and staffing will be required to fulfill goals for growth in this area?
- How can we ensure that the branding of our new space is integrated with the entirety of Gratz College?

How we continue to monitor the capacity of the College to achieve the goals of this Plan should continue into the second and third year of the Plan. How we measure and allocate financial resources, particularly after we move into the new Bala site, will be important.

Key questions that are addressed by this Plan include:

- What core elements of business operations need strengthening?
- What priorities might need more financial resources in the first year or in subsequent years?
- What is our financial capability to maintain a physical campus presence in addition to the new Bala site?
- What core competencies need to be addressed to improve governance?

The Strategic Plan

Strategic Goal 1: Collect, share and review information systemically to make data-informed decisions.

Recommendations:

- A. Strengthen institutional research.
 - Create a manual that codifies assessment protocols and policies.
 - Identify and regularly review measurable key performance indicators in all areas of the College.
 - Appoint a review committee responsible for assessment oversight.
 - Conduct external market analyses.
- B. Review and assess the impacts of partnerships.
 - Assign the evaluation of undergraduate and dual enrollment projects to the Academic Affairs Committee.



- C. Strengthen institutional data collection and management.
 - Build up the capacity of staff to manage data for departmental decision-making.
 - Annually review financial metrics as they relate to resource allocation in years two and three of this strategic plan.
- D. Assess the College's strategic campus presence.
 - Conduct an analysis of maintaining any campus presence outside of the Bala site.
- E. Improve internal communications.
 - Provide systemic access to information about board meetings and actions.
 - Provide access to operational information across departments.

Strategic Goal 2: Increase visibility.

Recommendations:

- A. Increase the marketing budget.
 - Develop a visibility plan that includes an integrated branding message for the College.
- B. Increase digital engagement.
 - Increase organic search traffic through targeted content and technical improvements.
 - Establish Gratz's authority in AI-driven searches related to Holocaust studies, Antisemitism Studies, Jewish learning, and educator training.
 - Strengthen Gratz's LinkedIn and other social media presence through student-driven blogs.
 - Boost digital community engagement with evergreen content.
- C. Build the footprint of Gratz's digital scholarship.
 - Develop a plan for the meaningful usage of digital resources.
 - Finalize branding and website details of Grayzel Digital Archive.
 - Digitize and release Elie Wiesel full archives by the end of 2026.
 - Develop a plan for the launch of other archives.
- D. Expand In-Person Community Building
 - Conduct a local programmatic landscape assessment for the Bala campus by December 2025.
 - Recruit and convene local volunteer leaders to envision goals for Gratz Commonsplace.
 - Develop a public calendar of community learning and engagement opportunities.

Strategic Goal 3: Align human resources to support growth and continuous improvement of the College and student success.

Recommendations:

- A. Assess the personnel needs that will be required to support new projects.
- B. Align adjunct faculty compensation with peer institutions and budget.

Strategic Goal 4: Expand opportunities for supporting the College.

Recommendations:

- A. Strengthen alumni communications and engagement.
- B. Explore new models of financial sponsorship, such as a patron model for Commonsplace.



Strategic Goal 5: Strengthen the governance system.

Recommendations:

- A. Strengthen the committee structure.
 - Institute a Human Resources Committee.
 - Review the committee structure and update committee charges to match the program and operations going forward.
 - Recruit volunteers for committees whose skills provide expertise relevant to the committee charge.
- B. Implement an annual board self-assessment survey.

The Strategic Planning Team

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