



DUKE GARDENS

Strategic Plan

2018-2023

With hundreds of thousands of visitors annually and national acclaim for its horticultural design and collections, Duke Gardens has grown over its 80 years to be one of the top university gardens in the world.

Successful growth requires continuous careful planning. This 5-year strategic plan is the result of a months-long process of creative brainstorming and collaboration among Duke Gardens staff and board of advisors members, along with thought leaders from across Duke University and the Durham community.

The plan is ambitious, but it is also critical. As Duke and Durham continue to grow, Duke Gardens must thoughtfully reassess and improve its own growth plans so that the Gardens always provides the high level of inspiring beauty, joyful discovery, educational engagement, restorative healing and boundless opportunity that make Duke University and Duke Health world-class institutions.

We welcome you to join us as we bring Duke Gardens to a new level of excellence.

vision

Sarah P. Duke Gardens is widely recognized as a premier public garden, providing extraordinary visitor experiences, horticultural artistry, leadership in conservation and innovative programs. It plays a vital role in the life and values of Duke University and is a respite from the ordinary in a welcoming and beautiful setting.





Enrich the Duke student and wider Duke community experience and improve connectivity to the Duke campus.

- *Create a supportive environment for academic pursuits*
- *Become known as a place of respite and wellness*
- *Improve the physical connections between Duke Gardens, Duke campus and Duke Health*
- *Create opportunities for students and their families to strengthen ties with the Gardens*
- *Strengthen worldwide alumni engagement*
- *Create opportunities for Duke faculty and staff and their families to strengthen ties with the Gardens*
- *Be a resource for Duke Health and provide respite for patients and families*

connect



Strengthen ties with the Durham community and cultivate a welcoming environment for all visitors.

- *Better understand Gardens visitors and their needs*
- *Contribute to a positive campus experience for all Duke visitors*
- *Enhance visitor appreciation and understanding of the role of plants in our lives*
- *Foster a safe, accessible and inclusive Gardens experience*

welcome





*Enhance our reputation as a premier
public and university garden.*

- *Develop plans for garden spaces and amenities consistent with Duke's reputation for excellence*
- *Embrace and leverage our unique attributes*
- *Foster an understanding of our leadership in horticulture and conservation*

excel



Develop and manage resources for long-term financial strength.

- *Maintain strong university partnerships*
- *Strengthen fundraising with alumni and parents*
- *Maximize fundraising opportunities with the broader community*
- *Increase earned income*

grow



Model environmental sustainability.

- *Join Duke's quest to be a leader in conservation and environmental sustainability*
- *Reduce our environmental footprint*
- *Communicate our sustainability and conservation efforts*

lead



Photo credits: Cathi Bodine, Clarence Burke, J Caldwell, Rick Fisher, Estlin Haiss T'16 (drone photo), Sue Lannon, Lindsey Luks, Michael McCann (watercolor), Nick Schwab, Lori Sullivan, Orla Swift G'o6, Brian Wells, Erika Zambello F'15.

gardens.duke.edu | Box 90341 | Durham, North Carolina | 27708-0341



SARAH P.
DUKE
GARDENS

connect, welcome, excel, grow, lead

Duke
UNIVERSITY

Steps to Success

Duke Gardens *Strategic Plan* | 2018-2023





Steps to Success

Join us for a deeper look at the strategies we have developed to help us achieve the goals and objectives of our 5-year strategic plan.

We are grateful for the thoughtful advice and ideas brought forth during our planning process by Duke Gardens' staff and board of advisors members, as well as thought leaders from across Duke University and the Durham community.

We look forward to sharing our progress as we embrace new opportunities for growth and excellence over the next five years and beyond.

OBJECTIVE I:

Enrich the Duke student and wider Duke community experience and improve connectivity to the Duke campus

OBJECTIVE II:

Strengthen ties with the Durham community and cultivate a welcoming environment for all visitors

OBJECTIVE III:

Enhance our reputation as a premier public and university garden

OBJECTIVE IV:

Develop and manage resources for long-term financial strength

OBJECTIVE V:

Model environmental sustainability



OBJECTIVE I:

Enrich the Duke student and wider Duke community experience and improve connectivity to the Duke campus.

Goal A: Create a supportive environment for academic pursuits

Strategies

1. *Be an active collaborator in university-wide strategies for the arts at Duke.*
2. *Increase the use of the Gardens environment for “serendipitous interactions and communal engagements” as envisioned by Duke University’s academic strategic plan.*
3. *Evaluate opportunities to support and facilitate academic research within the Gardens.*

Goal B: Become known as a place of respite and wellness

Strategies

1. *Strengthen our reputation as a place for relaxation and peace of mind.*
2. *Coordinate with other health and wellness initiatives in this plan and on campus.*

Goal C: Improve the physical connections between Duke Gardens, Duke campus and Duke Health

Strategies

1. *Focus on making key access points more welcoming.*
2. *Be an active leader/participant in revisions to Central Campus planning.*

Goal D: Create opportunities for students and their families to strengthen ties with the Gardens

Strategies

1. *Identify ways the Gardens can play a vital role in the life of Duke undergraduate, graduate and professional students, starting at orientation and through graduation.*
2. *Partner with Duke Admissions to showcase the Gardens as part of the decision process for prospective students and families.*
3. *Create and promote new informal spaces throughout the Gardens that will encourage students to appreciate the Gardens as an inspiring place to study, meet and work.*

connect



Goal E: Strengthen worldwide alumni engagement

Strategies

1. *Create opportunities to attract and engage alumni.*
2. *Develop targeted outreach to engage local and regional alumni.*
3. *Communicate with all alumni to share information about news and events.*

Goal F: Create opportunities for Duke faculty and staff and their families to strengthen ties with the Gardens

Strategies

1. *Identify ways to add value to the relationship between Duke's faculty and staff and their campus home.*
2. *Encourage membership support from faculty and staff and program engagement by them and their families.*
3. *Create opportunities to reach out to faculty and staff who work off campus or in satellite locations and encourage Gardens visitation.*

Goal G: Be a resource for Duke Health and provide respite for patients and families

Strategies

1. *Work with Duke Health communications office to build awareness of the Gardens.*
2. *Identify barriers to visitation and improve ways to experience the Gardens.*



OBJECTIVE II:

Strengthen ties with the Durham community and cultivate a welcoming environment for all visitors.

Goal A: Better understand Gardens visitors and their needs

Strategies

1. Identify visitation patterns and demographics and incorporate into planning, outreach and fundraising efforts.
2. Create plans to understand and manage visitor expectations and broaden their experiences.
3. Evaluate who is not visiting the Gardens and why, to determine any necessary steps.

Goal B: Contribute to a positive campus experience for all Duke visitors

Strategies

1. Be a proactive participant in collaborative planning with other high-visitation areas at the university to address common wayfinding, transportation, safety and communications issues.
2. Expand the Gardens visitor services capacity to fully greet, engage, inform and assist.

Goal C: Enhance visitor appreciation and understanding of the role of plants in our lives

Strategies

1. Provide engaging interpretation and programming.
2. Reach out to welcome area residents and encourage them to become members, and to explore and enjoy the Gardens.
3. Provide opportunities for student and community interaction in the Gardens through youth and school programming.
4. Provide experiences that educate adult visitors about the unique qualities of the Gardens.

welcome



Goal D: Foster a safe, accessible and inclusive Gardens experience

Strategies

1. Enhance the Gardens' mission-focused amenities.
2. Develop policies and procedures for safety and security of staff, volunteers and visitors.
3. Incorporate accessibility best practices into planning and implementation of buildings and infrastructure.
4. Ensure an inclusive visitor experience.











OBJECTIVE III:

Enhance our reputation as a premier public and university garden.

Goal A: Develop plans for garden spaces and amenities consistent with Duke's reputation for excellence

Strategies

1. Complete design, fund and construct the Garden Gateway capital project.
2. Prepare appropriate plan and funding for the new Central Campus parcel of land to be added to the Gardens.
3. Create and implement 3- to 5-year plans, including interpretive plans, for each section of the Gardens.

Goal B: Embrace and leverage our unique attributes

Strategies

1. Define and build upon the attributes that qualify us for recognition as a top public and university garden.
2. Continue targeted marketing efforts and pursue new ones that promote our current strong reputation.

Goal C: Foster an understanding of our leadership in horticulture and conservation

Strategies

1. Encourage and facilitate interactions among Gardens staff, volunteers and visitors to enrich their knowledge of and appreciation for the Gardens.
2. Provide for the security and integrity of the plant collections.
3. Sustain professionalism among staff members.

excel





OBJECTIVE IV:

Develop and manage resources for long-term financial strength.

Goal A: Maintain strong university partnerships

Strategies

1. *Monitor the progress of the university's strategic plan and maintain alignment with the priorities.*
2. *Continue to work with senior leadership to be sure all administrators are aware of and value the historic role and present relevance of Duke Gardens.*
3. *Determine and plan for future institutional needs of the Gardens, including personnel, succession planning, space, materials and equipment.*

Goal B: Strengthen fundraising with alumni and parents

Strategies

1. *Solidify and expand internal partnerships with Duke Development, Alumni Affairs and the Parents Program.*
2. *Attract financial support from Duke alumni worldwide.*

Goal C: Maximize fundraising opportunities with the broader community

Strategies

1. *Work to build membership support beyond alumni and parents.*
2. *Fully fund the Garden Gateway and campus connectivity capital projects.*
3. *Build staff understanding of development needs.*

Goal D: Increase earned income

Strategies

1. *Establish growth metrics for existing revenue sources.*
2. *Plan now for expanded earned income opportunities following Garden Gateway completion, including additional classes and events.*

grow





OBJECTIVE V:

Model environmental sustainability.

Goal A: Join Duke's quest to be a leader in conservation and environmental sustainability

Strategies

1. *Take a leadership role in setting a standard for sustainability.*
2. *Better integrate the Gardens' sustainability and conservation efforts within the Duke community.*
3. *Expand the Gardens' efforts in plant conservation and research.*

Goal B: Reduce our environmental footprint

Strategies

1. *Develop 5-year goals for key sustainability and conservation priorities and track progress.*
2. *Develop master plan for future use of the 6.6 acres of Central Campus property.*
3. *Lead by example to inspire sustainability and conservation practices by others.*

Goal C: Communicate our sustainability and conservation efforts

Strategies

1. *Incorporate sustainability and conservation best practices into all planning and implementation of future buildings, garden infrastructure and equipment.*
2. *Promote inspiring stories for use on and off campus that highlight the Gardens' sustainability and conservation efforts.*
3. *Become a training resource for sustainability and conservation.*
4. *Showcase sustainability and conservation messages through signage and marketing.*

lead



Sarah P. Duke Gardens creates and nurtures an environment in the heart of Duke University for learning, inspiration and enjoyment through excellence in horticulture and community engagement.

gardens.duke.edu | Duke University | Box 90341 | Durham, NC | 27708-0341