

Western Carolina University
Strategic Plan
2008-2013

Characteristics and Purpose

The strategic plan establishes specific long-term directions for WCU based upon its core values, vision and mission in relation to the institution's perceived strengths, weaknesses, external opportunities and threats. The plan is a management tool that assists decision-makers in evaluating initiatives and allocating resources to reach institutional goals. The strategic plan includes parameters that help decision-makers:

- establish priorities among competing initiatives;
- determine whether new initiatives should be pursued; and
- evaluate programs and services.

Since a strategic plan is designed to have a life span of five or more years, the goals outlined in the plan must be robust and flexible. A strategic plan must be specific enough to provide direction, yet flexible enough to allow mid-course corrections in response to unforeseen conditions. The ultimate purpose of any strategic plan is to keep the institution working toward pre-established strategic goals/outcomes that decision-makers have identified as important to the institution's future.

Relationship to Budget

As part of the Strategic Plan, WCU is identifying how budgeting will be linked to planning as well as the role of the University's Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) in facilitating this work. In general, WCU's approach to funding strategic planning priorities includes:

- allocating new and redirecting current resources to achieve strategic planning goals;
- improving services without increasing costs;
- realignment of current resources to achieve goals; and
- validating connections between use of current resources and institutional goals.

Budgeting and Planning Cycle.

Prior to the beginning of the budgeting process, the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) conducts an internal and external scan to determine major institutional budget needs and priorities related to the Strategic Plan. The SPC presents its findings as suggested planning and budgeting priorities to Executive Council. After reviewing the SPC recommendations, the Executive Council recommends institutional priorities to the Chancellor who sets the final institutional strategic priorities and budget parameters for the planning cycle. The Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance begins the budget process mandating that all budget requests relate to the Chancellor's strategic priorities and budget parameters. The Chancellor, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance hold budget hearings with each Vice Chancellor or division head to evaluate budget needs against the strategic priorities and budget parameters established by the Chancellor. Once the Chancellor makes allocations, a report is distributed to both the Executive Council and SPC.

Description:

Western Carolina University is a premier regional university with nationally and internationally recognized teacher-scholars dedicated to student learning. A constituent member of the University of North Carolina, the university offers courses in the arts, sciences, technologies, humanities, and professions through degree programs at the bachelor's, master's, education specialist and doctoral levels. Western offers the advantages of a large university while maintaining its small college atmosphere.

Promise:

Western Carolina University helps those who aspire to make a difference in their world.

Mission: A statement of the University's primary purpose(s).

Western Carolina University creates engaged learning opportunities for students and faculty to reach their maximum potential and to make a difference in their communities and their world by focusing its resources to generate and disseminate knowledge to meet individual and regional needs.

Vision: A statement of what the University aspires to be.

Western Carolina University will be a national model for student learning and engagement that embraces its responsibilities as a regionally engaged university.

Core Values: Statements outlining the core beliefs, traits or qualities that reflect the University's deeply held driving principles.

Western Carolina University:

- demonstrates institutional integrity through transparent and accountable practices, policies, and procedures;
- encourages and protects the free and open interchange of ideas within the communities of which it is a part;
- fosters the development of respect among all its members and toward the larger communities which it serves;
- advocates and practices organizational and environmental sustainability; and
- values and supports cultural diversity and equal opportunity.

WCU Strategic Goals/Directions/Initiatives:

WCU's Strategic Plan is based upon three subordinating constructs. Each construct plays a specific role in the Strategic Plan and the strategic planning process: They are:

- Strategic directions – general statements of planned action consistent with the core values, vision and mission.
- Strategic goals – moderately specific statements of action derived from the strategic directions that establish expected outcomes.
- Strategic initiatives – specific action plans that are designed to reach the outcome(s) established by the strategic goals and have specific costs associated with them.

Strategic directions are the heart of the Strategic Plan. They provide organizational structure and

institutional focus and define the major long-term emphases or themes of the institution. Strategic directions are typically set only every five to six years but are reviewed annually. While new strategic directions may arise during this time, they are generally not expected to change significantly over the life cycle of the plan.

Strategic goals give specificity to strategic directions and establish expectations of success. They, too, are key features of the written Strategic Plan. Strategic goals set the parameters for the institution in terms of how the approved strategic directions will be realized.

Strategic initiatives, by definition, are those initiatives that 1) have institutional impact and 2) are directly linked to specific institutional strategic goals. All strategic initiatives will include an action plan that outlines the unit(s) responsible for implementation, a timeline, resources needed, and performance targets.

Strategic Direction 1: Prepare students to meet 21st century needs and demands

Goal: WCU will continue to realign its academic programs and services consistent with its unique and nationally significant philosophy of integrative education.

Initiative 1.1: Implement model of integrative, intentional learning (QEP)

Initiative 1.2: Expand engaged scholarly activities relevant to Western North Carolina's global competitiveness

Initiative 1.3: Enhance the study of languages and culture through curricular and co-curricular partnerships and in collaboration with other UNC campuses and institutional partners

Strategic Direction 2: Serve the educational needs of Western North Carolina

Goal: To address the projected demand for higher education among North Carolinians, WCU will utilize an educational extension model to provide programming and services to non-traditional, underserved, and place-bound students; and increase the main campus capacity.

Initiative 2.1: Establish a satellite campus in Henderson County

Initiative 2.2: Work with the System to solve core conceptual and funding problems with distance education and summer semester

Initiative 2.3: Continue to expand partnerships with community colleges within the Western region

Initiative 2.4: Seek authority to waive application fees for in-state students

Initiative 2.5: Expand recruitment and retention activities with historically underrepresented populations in higher education, with special emphasis on the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) and the emerging Hispanic population

Initiative 2.6: Expand support for the Academic Success Program (ASP)

Strategic Direction 3: Improve public education

Goal: Through its partnerships with the region's schools and its applied research, WCU will influence public policy and practice with regard to teacher preparation and retention, administrative quality, and school performance.

Initiative 3.1: Seek funding for a new College of Education and Allied Professions Building to provide adequate space and facilities to improve B-20 education in the Western region

Initiative 3.2: Implement the Teacher Education Recruitment Plan

Initiative 3.3: Expand the type and nature of WCU's professional development activities, ensuring best practices and basing them on 21st Century Standards adopted by the NC State Board of Education

Initiative 3.4: Expand the role of WCU's Educational Leadership doctoral program to improve public policy as it relates to an effective state system of public education

Initiative 3.5: The Dean of the College of Education and Allied Professions will work with the Center for Service Learning and other experiential education programs to develop mentoring programs involving WCU students with regional schools

Strategic Direction 4: Enhance economic and community development in Western North Carolina

Goal: WCU will apply the Stewards of Place model to effect regional economic transformation.

Initiative 4.1: Implement the Millennial Initiative

Initiative 4.2: Increase WCU's emphasis on innovation, entrepreneurship, applied research and development

Initiative 4.3: Continue to develop national class capacities in key disciplines and programs that support New Economy economic development in the Western region

Initiative 4.4: Respond to the AdvantageWest Vision Plan's call for development of a "think tank" to analyze regional development needs

Initiative 4.5: Better integrate academic programming with regional visual and performing arts and crafts to enhance the livability of the community

Initiative 4.6: Expand programming in the Kimmel School of Technology and Construction Management to include a BS in Engineering

Strategic Direction 5: Improve health and wellness in Western North Carolina

Goal: WCU will expand its role as the major provider of allied health and nursing education, applied research, and service in the Western North Carolina region.

Initiative 5.1: Improve health and wellness in Western North Carolina with particular emphasis on issues related to aging and rural health care

Initiative 5.2: Implement Doctor of Physical Therapy Program (DPT) to address rapidly increasing need in the region for well-educated health professionals

Initiative 5.3: Develop and implement those curricula, research and service programs that have been identified as meeting current (health informatics and gerontology) and future critical allied health needs in the region

Initiative 5.4: Increase the number of Nurse Educator Master's students and improve the performance of undergraduate nursing students to address the critical shortage of nurses in the region and state

Strategic Direction 6: Model environmental sustainability

Goal: WCU will expand its focus on education and research tied to environmental sustainability with particular emphasis on biodiversity and land use.

Initiative 6.1: WCU will implement the STARS (Sustainability, Tracking and Rating System) accountability system to monitor its goal to become an environmentally conscious campus

Initiative 6.2: WCU will create a Master's degree in Environmental Science focused on applied research to better address environmental issues in the Western region and to take advantage of key institutional resources, including Highlands Biological Station and the Southern Appalachian Biodiversity and Ecology Center

Initiative 6.3: Leverage institutional resources to address critical land use issues, including environmental reclamation, land use planning, and sustainable development

Initiative 6.4: As part of its revision of general education, WCU will examine how to increase sustainability education for all students

Initiative 6.5: Increase regional knowledge of sustainability through community outreach

Strategic Direction 7: Promote outreach and engagement within the region

Goal: WCU will use the Boyer Model of Scholarship and the SACS-approved integrative, intentional learning model to encourage the application of research to regional issues.

Initiative 7.1: Implement the Boyer Model of Scholarship campus wide

Initiative 7.2: Utilize integrated learning (see 4.1.1.1) to focus student engagement on regional needs

Initiative 7.3: Address critical policy issues to facilitate applied research and development (R&D) that affects the region and the State of North Carolina

Initiative 7.4: Create and implement a variety of communication strategies to inform WCU's regional audience about University resources

Strategic Direction 8: Demonstrate institutional integrity

Goal 1: WCU will align its internal policies and processes to achieve its stated objectives.

Initiative 8.1.1: Establish an Administrative Program Review process

Initiative 8.1.2: Implement the Ernst & Young recommendations regarding effectiveness of institutional systems

Initiative 8.1.3: Revise institutional policies and make recommendations regarding System policies to facilitate collaborative research and educational programs

Initiative 8.1.4: Establish and publicize key performance data on institutional quality

Goal 2: WCU will practice fiscal integrity and responsibility.

Initiative 8.2.1: Implement P.A.C.E.

Initiative 8.2.2: Continue to develop public/private partnerships between WCU, local government, and private entities