Western Carolina UNIVERSITY

HONORING OUR PROMISE

Annual Report

2021-22

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FROM THE CHANCELLOR

This report highlights achievements and progress made towards goals and initiatives of the Honoring Our Promise strategic plan. The plan, approved by the WCU Board of Trustees in June of 2021, builds on a rich, successful history of growth and commitment by guiding us into the future as we continue to honor our promise to the people of Western North Carolina, the state, and beyond.

I am grateful for our dedicated faculty and staff who continue to work hard to achieve our goals and make a positive difference in our community and region. Some of this year's highlights include:

- New programs under development include an online BSBA in marketing, a BS in economic analysis, a MS in engineering, and an innovative MS in nursing with a rural health focus.
- *Faculty Forward*, a support program for new faculty providing best practice resources, mentoring and formative feedback.
- More than 26,000 hours of community-based service involving 4,839 students.
- *Thrive*, a new peer leaders program providing students training in leadership, team building, and conflict management.
- *Golden Ambassadors*, a new effort involving student-workers who help prospective students through the application and decision-making process, with an emphasis on diversity recruitment.
- The Blue-Ribbon Task Force developed an Inclusive Excellence Action Plan to guide WCU's DEI efforts for the next 3-5 years.
- Over three hundred arts and culture programs offered on campus this year engaged a total of 46,800 persons.
- The University allocated $1.7M to address critical salary compression, equity, and labor market concerns.
- An updated master plan was completed and adopted by Board of Trustees in March 2022.
- A weekend long celebration was held for the 2020 graduating class to make up for the cancelled May 2020 commencement.

Despite the many challenges we have faced the past year, we have accomplished much, and I firmly believe we are on the cusp of greatness. We will continue to honor our promise to our faculty, staff, students, and the region for which we serve.

Sincerely,

Kelli R. Brown
Chancellor

Strategic Direction 1: Academic Excellence

Accomplishment Highlights

- **Accredited programs** – The Parks and Recreation Management program earned initial accreditation from COAPRT; and the Master of Project Management program was accredited the Global Accreditation Center of PMEP.

- **New programs** –Two new program options were approved this year. The first is the addition of a distance/ online delivery of the existing BSBA Marketing program which will begin Fall 2022. The second is a new degree program - BS in Economic Analysis programs under development include an innovative Master's entry program in Nursing with a focus on rural health and an MS in Engineering degree to further support workforce development.

- **Increase in international student enrollment** – Fall 2021 -104 international students 30% increase from Fall 2020.

- **Support program for new faculty** – *Faculty Forward* is a new institute that provides conversation and support to new faculty through their first year at WCU. 2021-22 was the pilot year. The program is designed to support best practice pedagogy for faculty through peer mentoring and observation, formative feedback, and networking.

- **Service-learning engagement** – 4,839 students engaged in community-based service over the past year, with more than 26,000 hours contributed. 2,531 students enrolled in a Service-Learning Designated course

- **Oral research competitions** – WCU held the 8th annual Three-Minute Thesis competition that highlights the best oral research presentations by graduate students. Emily Deem from the Department of Biology won our WCU competition and went on to win the State of NC Tarheel competition in May 2022 over ten other North Carolina campus winners. In Spring 2022, we held our first ever Faculty Three Minute Research oral competition and Dr. Brian Gastle from the Department of English won the event.

- **New summer mentorship program** – Educational Outreach has worked to coordinate the first interdisciplinary summer mentorship program with the North Carolina School of Science and Math, Morganton campus, for the Summer of 2023.

- **Summer research assistantship growth** – Participation in graduate summer research assistantships has increased since 2020 (n=36) with 44 participants in summer 2021 and 55 in summer 2022.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1: Academic Excellence

We commit to providing our students with a 21st century rigorous curriculum that is composed of the intellectual, creative, cultural, and personal outcomes necessary to advance and excel.

GOAL 1.1: High-Quality Educational Programs

Deliver high-quality educational programs that enhance students' intellectual, creative, personal, and social development and prepare them for career fields as well as to advance and excel as 21st century citizens

Strategic Initiatives	Key Stakeholders	Summary of results to date
1.1.1: Ensure and promote relevant, high-quality undergraduate and graduate degree programs by implementing ongoing reviews and instituting curricular and program improvements based on WCU's standards for academic programs. Academic programs include on-campus, off-campus, online, and international degree programs.	University Curriculum Committee Vice Provost	Our academic programs engage in comprehensive quality evaluation either through external professional accreditation or WCU's institutional program review. In both forms of these reviews, faculty members conduct a self-evaluation of their program related to quality standards; author a self-study report; and host an external review team to evaluate their program. Over 80% of our academic programs meet or exceed the quality standards of twenty external professional accreditation organizations. This year, thirty-three teacher education programs were reaffirmed by CAEP; the Parks and Recreation Management program earned initial accreditation from COAPRT; and the Master of Project Management program was accredited the Global Accreditation Center of PMEP. Another way academic programs review quality of the education is through program-level annual assessments of student learning outcomes (SLOs). While program-level SLO assessment represents a small fraction of the educational improvements made by faculty, from last year's reports alone, there were over one-hundred actions to improve student learning, which is a testament to the culture of continuous quality improvement at WCU.
1.1.2: Identify, pursue, and promote opportunities for new and revised academic programs of quality, relevance, and sustainable demand with the capacity, resources, and ability to grow enrollment	University Curriculum Committee Curriculog Administrator	Two new program options were approved this year. The first is the addition of a distance/ online delivery of the existing BSBA Marketing program which will begin Fall 2022. The second is a new degree program - BS in Economic Analysis. The Economics program also begins in Fall 2022 and represents the culmination of several years of program development that was interrupted by a pause on new programs at the UNC System due to the pandemic. The degree will open many career paths not currently available to WCU graduates. Graduates will leave with greater economic literacy, a deeper understanding of markets, and an enhanced opportunity for high earning employment options. Additional programs under development include an innovative Masters entry program in Nursing with a focus on rural health and an MS in Engineering degree to further support workforce development in these high demand areas.
1.1.3: Incentivize and support programs and courses that include cross-curricular, interdisciplinary, and experiential learning.	Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning Center for Career and Professional Development	From the Undergraduate Catalog, we have developed preliminary matrix for tracking those programs identified as having a cross-curricular, interdisciplinary, or experiential components. The cross-curricular, interdisciplinary, or experiential designation of the programs was vetted through the associate deans. We will capture new programs through the curriculum approval and catalog publication processes and update the list annually.

1.1.4: Expand experiences that enhance a global awareness and cultural understanding among WCU students and promote integration of international components into existing and new curricula.	Office of Global Engagement Office of Multicultural Affairs DegreePlus Program Associate Provost	International Enrollment. WCU has remained engaged globally and welcomed international students who contribute broadly to the university's intercultural competence and diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies. Curricular/co-curricular interactions with international students provide all WCU students a global education. <u>Fall 2021</u> -104 international students 30% increase from Fall 2020 Top 5 countries: Germany, Saudi Arabia, Canada, Netherlands, UK <u>Spring 2022</u> -24 new students This was a 140% increase from Spring 2021 <u>Education abroad</u>: 11 students abroad in fall, 12 in spring, 6 in summer <u>Faculty-led programs</u>: 10 programs with 96 students Going Global! LLC. Initiative from WCU Global and Brinson Honors College with collaboration with ICA and Degree+. Global curriculum, cultural experiences, and community service. <u>Curricular Enhancement</u>: Building on Global Civic Literacy Project, implement Council on Foreign Relations World101 curriculum, UN Sustainable Development Goals and virtual exchanges with global partners allows WCU Global and Coulter Faculty Commons to provide increased curricular support for faculty and enhance global student outcomes.
1.1.5: Expand educational programming around academic integrity and truth seeking to promote a culture of (student) academic honesty.	Dean of Students College Deans	The College of Engineering and Technology Associate Dean visits all freshman courses in the CET to discuss academic integrity in the context of professional practice and ethics. Students retain Academic Integrity Pledge cards after the session. The College of Business covers academic integrity with all new faculty as part of new faculty orientation and continues to reinforce a culture of academic integrity starting with the orientation sessions for new graduate students The Brinson Honors College, in a student led effort, added a statement on academic integrity to the 2021-22 honors student handbook, and worked with the Student Success and Dean of Students Office in 2021-22 to outline a process to hold honors student accountable in situations where academic integrity has been violated. The Dean of Students (Student Affairs) and the Vice Chancellor of Student Success (Academic Affairs) plan and conduct hearing board trainings throughout the year as needed. Student Affairs retains data when students are found responsible for violations of the AI policy (which resides in Academic Affairs).
1.1.6: Coordinate, integrate, and highlight WCU's learning goals and co-curricular outcomes into	Office of Institutional Assessment	Our institutional learning goals reflect the eight themes of our Liberal Studies program - inquiry, information literacy, critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and awareness of self, cultural diversity, and impact. Not only do we assess these outcomes

curricular and co-curricular experiences.		through the steps of Liberal Studies assessment, many of our academic programs also assess these topics in their annual continuous improvement of learning. As a first step to estimate the degree to which our institutional learning goals are integrated into academic programs and to determine the most common themes assessed by our support/administrative services areas, the Office of Assessment analyzed ~600 outcomes from 100 academic programs, 35 support services, and 10 admin units. The most common institutional themes among academic program SLOs were communication, research/inquiry, problem solving, and cultural diversity. Beyond our institutional learning goals, academic programs also assessed professional preparation, ethics, leadership, and teamwork. The most common themes among support services/admin units were operational effectiveness, program participation, efficiency, new services, satisfaction, and diversity.
Goal 1.2 - Teaching Excellence Promote teaching excellence as the successful engagement of our students in learning, experimenting, creating, and achieving their full potential.		
Strategic Initiatives	**Key Stakeholders**	**Summary of results to date**
1.2.1: Enhance faculty professional development opportunities with a focus on a pedagogical approach and curriculum design that engage students through high-impact learning and evidence-based practices.	Coulter Faculty Commons	The CFC facilitates the Online Course Design Institute every summer in a fully asynchronous online format with weekly Zoom sessions with participating faculty. Summer 22 is the 4th offering. Faculty learn how to design an online or hybrid course to create an integrated, engaging online course using evidence-based best practices. The inaugural August Teaching & Learning Day hosted Dr. Kevin M Gannon, author of Radical Hope: A Teaching Manifesto, on Inclusive Pedagogy and Teaching. Faculty Forward is a new institute that provides conversation and support to new faculty through their first year at WCU. 2021-22 was the pilot year. In addition to monthly lunch and learn sessions, the faculty were provided a Canvas course with the reading material and learning activities. The CFC partnered with the Chief Diversity Office, Associate Provost, and Associate Dean of Libraries to form the DEI Community of Practice which includes faculty and staff. The return of the Summer Institute for Teaching and Learning hosted keynote speaker Dr Sudhir Kaul, who received the UNC System Board of Governors Teaching Award.
1.2.2: Update departmental collegial review documents to align with university policies on engaging students, innovative teaching, advising, scholarship of teaching and learning, and support of our community and region	Associate Provost	In the last year, changes to Department Collegial Review Documents (DCRD) were implemented for all academic departments and schools to incorporate the new non-tenure track promotion (NTTP) process and pathways. The NTTP process provides a new avenue for professional advancement for fixed term faculty. In the first year, 57 fixed-term faculty were reviewed according to criteria in the DCRDs and promoted. Action by the WCU Faculty Senate in April 2022 supported adoption of a new Student Course Survey (SCS) to replace the Student Assessment of Instruction (SAI) student course evaluation tool. The new SCS will prompt future updates to DCRDs as the institution learns how to best use results from the new survey instrument.

		A new professional development program called "Faculty Forward" developed by the Coulter Faculty Commons was launched for new faculty in Fall 2021. The program is designed to support best practice pedagogy for faculty through peer mentoring and observation, formative feedback, and networking. The program will continue for its second year for faculty entering in Fall 2022.
1.2.3: Recognize, promote, and celebrate outstanding programs, faculty, staff, and students that contribute to 1) teaching, research, and service; 2) the promotion of diversity, equity, and inclusion; 3) leadership roles; 4) service to the regional community; 5) advising/mentoring; 6) demonstration of ethical decision-making; or 7) innovative idea or program implementation.	Provost Vice Provost College Deans Dean, Graduate School & Research Office of Student Retention Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning Center for Career & Professional Development Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity Programs	Recognitions include: UNC BOG Award for Excellence in Teaching; Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award; Star Staff Award; Bright Idea Staff Award; Judy H. Dowell Outstanding Support Staff Award; Paul A. Reid Distinguished Service Award; University Scholar Award ; Excellence in Teaching Liberal Studies Award; Innovative Scholarship Award ; Excellence in Community Engagement Award ; Student Nominated Faculty of the Year Award; Program of Excellence Award - Academic Program & Administrative Program-Irene Welch Program; Scholarly Development Assignment Program; CAS BOG Teaching Award; COB BOG Creative & Innovative Teaching Award; CEAP BOG Award for Superior Teaching Award ; CET BOG Distinguished Teaching Award; BCFPA BOG Teaching Award CHHS BOG Innovative Teaching Award; Provost's Scholarship Development Award Hunter Library-Hunter Scholar Award; Graduate School & Research-Million Dollar Circle Award; 2 faculty members: Fulbright Scholar awards in FY22; 1 Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities; Inclusive Excellence Award for Faculty, Staff, & Students; The Senior Leadership Program 3 attended UNC Executive Leadership Institute: Cohort 1 (2020); 2 (2021); and 3 (2022) WCU was awarded 67 grants: $7,624,595

Goal 1.3 Cultural, Environmental, Economic, And Regional Development		
Promote and enhance cultural, environmental, economic, and regional development through educational programs, scholarship/creative activity, and service.		
Strategic Initiatives	**Key Stakeholders**	**Summary of results to date**
1.3.1: Provide learning opportunities for students to engage in the natural landscape and cultural heritage of the Southern Appalachian region	Natural Resources program faculty History program faculty Cherokee Studies program faculty Cherokee Center Mountain Heritage Center	The Mountain Heritage Center worked with History and Biology classes plus individual students in a variety of majors to create exhibits and videos on southern Appalachian cultural traditions and natural history topics for multiple on and off-campus venues. These projects were displayed in 7 western NC counties and seen by over 400,000 people. The Cherokee Center's work with Digali'i Native American Student Organization resulted in a series of events and campaigns designed to create community among WCU's Native American students and raise cultural awareness of all students. Multiple academic programs (Anthropology, Biology, Cherokee Studies, Geosciences & Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation Management-PRM) provided opportunities for experiential learning in the region, including summer BIOL 493/593 courses at the Highlands Biological Station, ongoing research at the on-campus hydrology station, summer field schools resulting in important new archaeological findings, and PRM's partnership with Landmark Learning to provide nationally recognized certifications to WCU students for course credit.
1.3.2: Continue building a campus culture of service; one that focuses	Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning	WCU continues to make great strides in this initiative. Our data show that 4,839 students engaged in community-based service over the past year, with more than 26,000 hours

on community engagement, is broadly available, and maintains high rates of student participation that is inclusive, thus positioning WCU as a leader in the state, region, and nationally.	Center for Career and Professional Development	contributed. 2,531 students enrolled in a Service-Learning Designated course. We currently don't disaggregate data by student population but with the new diversity dashboard being unveiled by IT, that is a future possibility.
1.3.3: Enhance, incentivize, and highlight scholarship, research, teaching, creative inquiry, and cultural activity that contribute to regional/community development that positively impact North Carolina or the Western North Carolina region.	Office of Research Administration University Research Council	Western Carolina University works to recognize our students, staff, and faculty who excel in scholarship, research, and creative inquiry to celebrate their success. The Research and Scholarship Conference (RASC) that integrates both the Graduate Research Symposium and the Undergraduate Expo will now incorporate the Faculty and Scholarship Conference into the RASC in Spring 2023. This will create a more public-facing event that will help to attract outside individuals and business that wish to support and stimulate faculty, staff, and student research and scholarly endeavors at WCU. In Fall 2021, we held our 8th annual Three-Minute Thesis competition that highlights our best oral research presentations by graduate students. Emily Deem from the Department of Biology won our WCU competition and went on to win the State of NC Tarheel competition in May 2022 over ten other North Carolina campus winners. In Spring 2022, we held our first ever Faculty Three Minute Research oral competition and Dr. Brian Gastle from the Department of English won the event.
1.3.4: Encourage interdisciplinary initiatives in academic programs, research, and/or academic centers that connect business, sciences, engineering, technology, entrepreneurship, as well as the arts, education, recreation, and health professionals	Office of Economic Development and Regional Partnerships Small Business and Technology Development Center WCU Programs in Asheville	We have identified specific opportunities for collaboration between Hospitality & Tourism, Parks and Recreation, Engineering, and Entrepreneurial Programs to support the WNC Growing Outdoors initiative. In addition, the Office has worked to coordinate the first interdisciplinary summer mentorship program with the North Carolina School of Science and Math, Morganton campus, for the Summer of 2023. Community-specific cohorts in nursing and health sciences are being considered. One of our primary legislative requests for the foreseeable future is funding to increase engineering outreach and to expand on-campus facilities.
1.3.5: Encourage external collaboration of faculty, staff, and students with industry, start-ups, research institutes, non-profits, and government agencies.	Office of Economic Development and Regional Partnerships Small Business and Technology Development Center RAPID Center	WCU has connected faculty and students to work-study, research, and career opportunities with the Pratt & Whitney Asheville project, as well as Kubota Mfg. of Gainesville, Ga, multiple Hospitality (High Hampton, Old Edwards Hospitality, Harrah's Cherokee) and Healthcare systems (DLP, EBCI, MAHEC, UNC Health Pardee, HCA) as a few examples. These ongoing efforts require coordination between multiple units and colleges from the campus community, to provide seamless and well-informed interactions with our external partners. We continue to identify these opportunities regularly.
Goal 1.4 - Scholarship, Research, Creative / Cultural Activity Promote excellence in scholarship, research, creative inquiry, and cultural activity		
Strategic Initiatives	**Key Stakeholders**	**Summary of results to date**
1.4.1: Value, promote, and provide opportunities for faculty-student	Associate Deans Office of Undergraduate Research	Goal 1.4.1 has advanced during Academic Year (AY) 2021 - 2022. This initiative spans diverse units, yet data demonstrates WCU efforts in this goal continued to be bolstered

scholarly collaborations with undergraduate and graduate populations.		despite short-term impacts due to Covid-19. Across colleges, common efforts emerge in prioritization of mentorship and grant funding of faculty-student scholarly pursuits, engaging students in scholarly publications and dissemination events, and through curricular experiences that engage undergraduates and graduates in research, scholarship, and creative inquiry capstones/theses. Several departments now require scholarly work as part of their graduation requirements. The Graduate School supported scholarly collaborations with a $2,324,365 graduate assistantship budget in AY 2021 - 2022. Participation in graduate summer research assistantships has increased since 2020 (n=36) with 44 participants in summer 2021 and 55 in summer 2022. The Brinson Honors College (BHC), in collaboration with faculty and instructors has also supported this initiative. In AY 2021 - 2022 BHC honors contracts numbered 1,466 of which 898 (61%) had deliverables or outcomes associated with research and scholarly contributions.
1.4.2: Improve internal and external promotion of scholarship, research, creative, and cultural activity	Office of Research Administration	Western Carolina University works to recognize our students, staff, and faculty who excel in scholarship, research, and creative inquiry to celebrate their success. In Fall 2021, we held our 8th annual Three-Minute Thesis competition that highlights our best oral research presentations by graduate students. Emily Deem from the Department of Biology won our WCU competition and went on to win the State of NC Tarheel competition in May 2022 over ten other North Carolina campus winners. In Spring 2022, we held our first ever Faculty Three Minute Research oral competition and Dr. Brian Gastle from the Department of English won the event. To better teach, train, and promote our WCU faculty and staff who initiate and develop proposals submitted by our Office of Research Administration, we reinitiated the Summer Proposal Development Workshop in May 2022. Twelve of our WCU faculty participated in the 2.5-day event that included an external research consultant that guided the group through individual and small group presentations, discussions, writing sessions, and proposal reviews. All participants were expected to develop, further revise, and submit a research proposal to a funding agency.
1.4.3: Promote interdisciplinary learning, research, engagement, and idea exchange.	Office of Research Administration Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning	While WCU does not officially track this initiative, there are several examples of practice we can share. Under the auspices of the Endowed Professors and specifically Lisa Bloom, in the College of Education and Allied Professions, three Unconferences were hosted for faculty to gather informally and discuss interdisciplinary ideas and research. The cost associated with each event held off-campus were sponsored personally by the Vice Provost, Associate Provost, and Provost. The Honors College hosts an annual CURE (Conference on Undergraduate Research and Engagement) for over 400 students in September to promote undergraduate research, service learning, and interdisciplinary learning. Finally, the Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning sponsored the Faculty Institute for Community Engagement with 14 faculty members participating in idea exploration related to community engagement and community-based research.
1.4.4: Increase the number offered and the amount of support provided for research	Office of Research Administration	During the 2022 fiscal year (01 July 2021 to 30 June 2022), there were 28 graduate students supported on assistantships during the Fall 2021, Spring 2022, and Summer 2022 terms from non - State of NC funding. These assistantships totaled $110,310 and were

assistantships, tuition waivers, and student stipends through external funding and internal support.		supported from external grants and contracts that resulted from submitted proposals through the WCU Office of Research Administration.
		During the Fall 2021, Spring 2022, and Summer 2022 semesters, 99.99% of the State of NC funding allocated for graduate assistantships and waivers was invested in our graduate students. The Graduate School and Research has submitted budget requests for several years to increase the overall assistantship budget, but no increase has occurred. We did have success with establishing assistantships for one new graduate program in 2019, the Doctorate of Psychology (Psy.D.).
		Proposal writers in our Office of Research Administration have been reminded to insert and increase the number and amount of funded request for graduate assistantships. The Graduate Council has been tasked in Fall 2022 with updating the graduate assistantship allocation plan to better support, attract, and enroll graduate students.

Goal 1.5 – Capacity to Serve Students and Eliminate Barriers
Expand and support WCU's capacity to serve students and eliminate barriers to program and resource access.

Strategic Initiatives	Key Stakeholders	Summary of results to date
1.5.1: Expand and enhance networks of regional advisory committees to strengthen communication and collaboration among K-12, community college, and WCU in the areas of 1) curriculum goals and transferability; 2) the importance and value of higher education and the best strategies for marketing and recruiting; and 3) admissions and financial aid.	Undergraduate Admissions Advising Center Office of Financial Aid	The Advising Center provides a dedicated Transfer Advisor to work with transfer counselors at feeder institutions and prospective transfer students, maintains a transfer website and email account, and assists with transfer course evaluations. Advisors collaborate with WCU Admissions to conduct a transfer drive-in for CC counselors and visit top-feeder institutions to provide information about WCU's academic programs and services. For 2021/2022, WCU Financial Aid partnered with Talent Search, Smoky Mountain High School, SCC, and WCU Admissions to provide 13 FAFSA and 4 Transfer Day events. Within Teacher Education, the Suite 201 Student Success team sponsored events such as FAFSA workshops, career days, and college recruitment and access days, served on the Southwestern Community College Transfer Advisory Committee, and held a community college partnership meeting. A new initiative, STEP with WCU, focuses on growing the teacher pipeline from high school to universities. Every year admissions markets and recruits the university in many ways to our partners in K-12 and the community college system. CACRAO (Carolinas Association of Collegiate Registrar and Admission Officers) plans high school and community college fairs in an organized fashion. WCU participates in all fairs, at high schools throughout NC and SC, as well as the Transfer fairs in NC. Undergrad Admission was able to bring back our pre-COVID format of Western on Tour in the fall as well as the Spring Blitz. Western on Tour took a two-week trip to a total of six cities in North Carolina and our Spring Blitz program was one week in March to four cities.
1.5.2: Determine institutional capacity for resident and distance summer session offerings for a wide variety of learners: undergraduate, K-12, and	Educational Outreach Office of the Registrar Associate Provost Residential Living Auxiliary Services	Currently, we are benchmarking and timelining as key variables are in transition. Guidance, data and directions are informed by several key inputs. Enrollment Strategies Committee formed subgroup to suggest recommendation on institutional capacity for various groups. Analysis of data, examinations of current policies and institutional planning tools are helping to forecast and gauge trends. The greatest factor in summer

graduate students; adult and life-long learners.		session will be performance funding and the NC Promise funding for summer. We are in the midst of determining modeling of its impact on institutional capacity.
1.5.3: Increase communication and marketing of summer opportunities in academic programs, short-term programming, research opportunities, internships, and other practical experiences for both students and others who reside in WNC.	Educational Outreach Advising Center University Communications & Marketing	Summer Session 2021 planning began with a renewed multimedia marketing plan coordinated with UCM designers and included digital & traditional billboards, campus signage, NPR radio spots, social media advertising, and pre-roll ads for online music and videos. Short-term programming, research opportunities, internships and other practical experiences enjoy a wide array of marketing through coordinated plans and targeted messaging.
1.5.4: Assure affordability of summer school offerings for both WCU degree-seeking students and those seeking credits for other institutions by adopting financial supports such as summer employment opportunities, NC Promise funding for summer sessions, and other financial aid opportunities.	Office of Financial Aid Center for Career & Professional Development Associate Provost	For Summer Session 2021, Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF) were made available as part of the state & federal pandemic response plan. These HEERF dollars were applied to eliminate tuition for all undergraduate students during the 2021 Summer Sessions. Summer 2021 by the numbers: -Unduplicated Headcount: 4,250 -Undergraduate SCH: 12,866 -Graduate SCH: 4,110 -Count of Faculty Instructors: 330 Two key factors, NC Promise funding and performance funding, will impact affordability and WCU ability to operate Summer Session in its current format.

Goal 1.6 – Enrollment and Retention
Continue to coordinate WCU's student enrollment and retention strategies to ensure strengthened balance of access, diversity and student success, institutional mission, and sustainable revenue sources.

Strategic Initiatives	Key Stakeholders	Summary of results to date
1.6.1: Refine and adapt the strategic enrollment plan to meet student enrollment targets while maintaining academic rigor in our educational programs.	Enrollment planning committee	In Fall 2021, WCU mirrored UNC System enrollment patterns. Both were down in UG enrollment (WCU: 10,517 to 10,145) and up in GR enrollment (WCU: 1,726 to 1,732). First-year student yield rates (% of admitted students who enroll) dropped. Performance of first-year students who enrolled fall 2020 dipped. WCU took steps to mitigate continuing COVID side effects and to counter a lean cohort of NC high school seniors for Fall 2022. Admissions and the Graduate School transitioned to a new Customer Relation Management system to enhance recruitment, communication, and reporting. WCU recalibrated the Enrollment Planning Committee into the Enrollment Strategies Committee to govern a data committee and five task teams to address enrollment initiatives. WCU waived application fees at all levels for all 2022 terms. Admissions modified application priority dates and implemented preliminary self-reported record review and test-optional policies to expedite application decisions, honors college selection, and financial aid leveraging. New undergraduate enrollment seems poised for a rebound for fall 2022 though total enrollment will still feel the COVID effect.

1.6.2: Increase and track student diversity, ensuring that support services are in place to enroll and meet the needs of a diverse student body that reflects state, national, and international demographic trends.	Institutional Planning & Effectiveness Office of Student Success Student Affairs	Western Carolina University took several actions to increase and track student diversity. Among these were the waiving of the application fee for all levels (UG and GR) for all 2022 entry terms thus removing the financial barrier to applying. Reconfigured scholarship and aid communication, awarding, packaging in order to positively impact enrollment and diversity. Added a new undergraduate application avenue (Coalition for College) for the 2022-23 cycle to reduce barriers and enhance DEI. Recalibrated the Enrollment Planning Committee (EPC) to the Enrollment Strategies Committee that incorporates an Enrollment Data and Projections Committee and an EDI Task Team. Collaborated to build new undergraduate admission reports that will launch in 2022-23 and will provide more point-in-time, comparative data. Engaged with the Blue-Ribbon Task Force to inform admissions, enrollment, and strategic planning. Participated in the African American Alumni Association panel discussion and restructured undergraduate admission staffing and strategies to better address and support Honoring Our Promise Strategies and Initiatives.
1.6.3: Continue to develop innovative data-driven methods of monitoring and enhancing student success at the individual level.	Office of Student Success Institutional Planning & Effectiveness	*Navigate* Issue Alerts, notes, and summaries provide faculty and staff information to support and engage students who need academic assistance. *Navigate's* Enrollment Campaigns provided just-in-time communication to unenrolled students through email, text, and phone calls. Student Success utilized two predictive analytic tools: Catamount Institutional Research Adjustment Model to predict first-semester GPA and *EAB's* Student Success Predictive Model with an updated persistence prediction through Navigate. Both models improve targeted interventions by identifying students who are at the highest risk. CATalytics, OIPE, and Student Success improved dashboards to identify trends in student performance to the following dashboards: Student Success Factors, Course Grades, and Student Achievement. Student Retention increased responses to the Change of Academic Plans survey, reported results/trends, and made plans for additional exit data through focus groups. A second *HEERF* funding opportunity provided financial relief to students enrolled in Summer 2022. Progress of this initiative is ongoing based on available data and the implementation of innovative ways to support our student population.
1.6.4: Meet or exceed UNC System designated institutional goals in support of the WCU mission: 1) Prioritize low-income and rural enrollment and completion, as well as critical workforce credentials. 2) Improve five-year graduation rates and efficiency in undergraduate degrees and undergraduate achievement gaps. 3) Increase research productivity.	Undergraduate Admissions Office of Student Success Office of Research Administration	Of the nine metrics, WCU exceeded UNC System designated goals for three of them and did not meet the goals for six of the metrics. WCU exceeded goals for critical workforce degrees awarded (1,342 vs. goal of 1,312), 5-year graduation rate (64.4% vs. goal of 63.5%) and achievement gaps in undergraduate degree efficiency among male students (25.2 vs. goal of 24.8). WCU did not meet designated goals for low-income enrollments (3,345 vs. goal of 3,602), rural enrollments (4,590 vs. goal of 4,975), low-income completions (970 vs. goal of 1,078), rural completions (1,191 vs. goal of 1,222), undergraduate degree efficiency (25.5 vs. goal of 25.9), and research productivity ($6,075,384 vs. goal of $6,369,161).

Strategic Direction 2: Student Experience

Accomplishment Highlights

- **New international education initiative** – In Fall 2021, "Going Global!" launched as a joint initiative between WCU Global and the Brinson Honors College, in collaboration with Residential Living. Students benefit in this internationally focused environment through a combination of global engagement programming, interactive cultural experiences, and community service.

- **Catamount Legacy event** – Legacy Pinning Ceremony-In conjunction with Family Weekend over 300 parents and freshman celebrated their Catamount legacy connection with a pinning ceremony.

- **Student activity programs** – In AY 2021-22 the Department of Campus Activities through the student-lead programing team, *Last Minute Productions* hosted four programs supporting diversity and inclusion, including a Holocaust Remembrance exhibit with multiple speakers, a Lunar New Year food and crafts event, a Take-and-Make Coming Out event, and a Drag Show.

- **Increased undergraduate research participation** – Student participation in undergraduate research monitored by involvement in Academic Projects and Grants (APGs), Research and Scholarly Creativity (RASC), increased from 19 to 34 and 43 to 100, respectively, over 2020-2021 to 2021-2022.

- **New wellness programs** – New wellness program offerings included *Walk with Us* to inform about the elements of wellness, and *RecFest*, to help students be aware of Campus Recreation and Wellness (CRW) programming. CRW offered *Pomodoro Wellness Breaks* guided videos on YouTube and collaborated with Counseling and Psychological Services to offer Trauma Informed Yoga.

- **Service-learning courses** – The Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning supported 167 service-learning course-designated sections, with 2,531 students contributing 15,576 hours of community service.

- **New peer leaders program** – The Department of Campus Activities created THRIVE Peer Leaders program with over 50 students training in leadership, team building, and conflict management.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2: Student Experience

We will enrich the student experience through creating intentional cocurricular and curricular programs, which will prepare students to successfully engage in a vibrant, complex, and culturally diverse world.

Goal 2.1 – Perspectives of Others
Create opportunities for students to explore points of view on different issues and to understand the perspectives of others through civil and informed discourse and debate.

Strategic Initiatives	Key Stakeholders	Summary of results to date
2.1.1: Create opportunities for students to explore points of view on different issues and to understand the perspectives of others through civil and informed discourse and debate utilizing campus partners.	Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity Programs	Although other offices and units offer events related to this strategic direction, DegreePlus has 5 learning outcomes that are associated with Cultural Responsiveness which is similar to fostering student exploration of different views, i.e., -Key historical and current issues surrounding race, ethnicity, gender, social class, religion, sexual identity, ability, national origin, or other identities -Ways to understand one's own beliefs, traditions, norms, biases, and the differences/commonalities in relation to others' -Cultural sensitivity and respect when interacting with others -Unfamiliar cultural experiences and spaces, including exposure to the creative arts -Resources and appropriate forms of advocacy to promote social justice and equity Student attendance collectively for Spring 2022, Fall 2021, and Summer 2021 at events/activities that represent the first three learning outcomes were: 1,335, 1,321, and 7, respectively, at 313 tagged events.
2.1.2: Create and track opportunities for student membership and leadership on institutional decision-making committees and organizations.	Office of Campus Activities	Students at Western Carolina University are provided with many opportunities where their voices can be heard directly by campus administrators and staff. Approximately two dozen standing committees exist with a total of 156 student members. These committees operate at all levels, including campus (e.g., Strategic Planning or Tuition and Fees, which is co-chaired by a student), division (e.g., University Athletics or Student-Athlete Advisory committees), college (e.g., dean's advisory, diversity, or professional education committees), department (e.g., University Police or Intercultural Affairs advisory boards), and program (e.g., One Book selection or Alcohol and Other Drugs committees). Student voice is also directly represented by the Student Government Association through legislative action by the Student Senate, direct advocacy by elected officials and their cabinet, and through appeals made to the Judicial branch regarding parking citations. Students are also members of a variety of ad hoc committees, such as the recent committees associated with the planning and design of the Apodaca Science Building or the Blue-Ribbon Task Force on Inclusive Excellence.
2.1.3: Implement diversity and inclusion initiatives to enhance	Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity Programs College Deans	In Fall 2021, "Going Global!" launched as a joint initiative between WCU Global and the Brinson Honors College, in collaboration with Residential Living. Students benefit in this internationally focused environment through a combination of global engagement

Strategic Initiatives	Key Stakeholders	Summary of results to date
students' understanding of other ethnicities and cultures.		programming, interactive cultural experiences, and community service. Community members live in Blue Ridge Residence Hall - an ideal environment for study abroad students, international students, honors college students, and world-conscious students alike. A total of 29 students participated in education abroad during the fall, spring and summer semesters. Ongoing programming: In AY 2021-22 DCA (through LMP) hosted four relevant programs, including a Holocaust Remembrance exhibit and multiple speakers, a Lunar New Year food and crafts event, a Take-and-Make Coming Out event, and Drag Show. Ongoing surveys: Each year we DCA surveys the entire student body at least twice to gauge interests and needs for programming. These include questions around events centered on ethnicities and cultures. We typically receive 200-350 responses, and our best response to a survey last year was 500 students.
2.1.4: Leverage intercollegiate athletics to instill pride among students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of the University.	Division of Athletics Office of Alumni Engagement Advancement Services Orientation Programs University Communications & Marketing	Catamount Athletics serves as a significant engagement tool for WCU by helping to instill pride in students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community friends. Through collaboration with students on events like the Freshman Run, home tailgating and regional social events with alumni, community events around football games such as EBCI Day, and the utilization of the Southern Conference's ESPN+ contract to highlight our university's academic profile, Catamount Athletics provides unique opportunities that bring the Catamount Family together. Part of leveraging athletics to instill pride is investing more resources into the department to produce more prideful outcomes. Athletics continues to plan for a significant upgrade to many of its aging facilities. Getting the increase in the student athletic fee passed was an involved process where students, faculty, staff, and friends of the university all came together to support the vision for athletics. Significant fundraising continues to be a priority to complete this plan.

Goal 2.2 – Institutional Pride		
Instill institutional pride through more visible recognition and celebration of university achievements and traditions.		
Strategic Initiatives	**Key Stakeholders**	**Summary of results to date**
2.2.1: Create experiences that strengthen students' connection to their university and emphasize engagement with alumni and friends of the University as students prepare for a professional career.	Catamount Club Alumni Engagement Orientation Programs University Communications & Marketing Advancement Services Center for Career and Professional Development	1. Legacy Pinning Ceremony-In conjunction with Family Weekend over 300 parents and freshman celebrated their Catamount legacy connection with a pinning ceremony 2. Freshman Student Sendoffs- Alumni leaders assisted in hosting freshman sendoffs to welcome over 400 students & parents to the Catamount family 3. P.A.W.S.(Professional Alumni Working with Students) Mentoring Program- program was expanded to all academic colleges matching successful alumni with current students for mentoring 4. 1889 Club- For a gift of $18.89 students are recognized and made aware of the importance of giving back to their alma mater

2.2.2: Build and sustain educational programs that recognize, respect, and celebrate Western North Carolina culture, including Cherokee history and traditions.	Provost's Office Academic Deans Mountain Heritage Center Cherokee Center Library Bardo Arts Center Intercultural Affairs Campus Activities Residential Living	There are multiple examples of our implementation of this strategic initiative. However, data collection is not centralized. The Mountain Heritage Center, Cherokee Center, and many of our academic and co-curricular offerings increasingly emphasize our WNC culture, heritage, and traditions. This year, we implemented the Land Acknowledgement statement that is read at the beginning of events to recognize and our Cherokee relationship and honor their heritage.

Goal 2.3 – Career Exploration and Skills
Create opportunities for skill development and career exploration through involvement in experiential activities.

Strategic Initiatives	Key Stakeholders	Summary of results to date
2.3.1: Expand the utilization of the DegreePlus and other programs that promote transferable skill development for students.	Center for Career and Professional Development Campus Activities Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning	DegreePlus has established good partnerships with over 121 academic and nonacademic departments and student organizations through the last five years of the DP program that have hosted 235 Level 1 events this past year. The Brinson Honors College provides a model for incorporating DegreePlus within an existing program. The Honors College promotes DegreePlus to first-year students and incentivizes participation by awarding Honors hours to complete a DegreePlus skill. To expand DegreePlus, faculty will be encouraged to incorporate DegreePlus involvement as part of professional development for students in their majors. USI courses can require DegreePlus participation as a springboard for first-year student engagement, and nonacademic departments can make DegreePlus participation part of the student worker training and promotion.
2.3.2: Promote student engagement in high-impact practices connected to professional development such as undergraduate research, service-learning, internships, and study abroad.	Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning Center for Career and Professional Development Office of Global Engagement Office of Undergraduate Research Honors College Office of Student Success	Student participation in undergraduate research monitored by involvement in Academic Projects and Grants (APGs), Research and Scholarly Creativity (RASC), increased from 19 to 34 and 43 to 100, respectively, over 2020-2021 to 2021-2022. Student presentation at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) remained flat at 30 to 31, over the same period. Student study abroad participants for the past four semesters including summers, fall, and spring, from 2021 until 2022 total 32. Over the same period, there were 10 faculty-led international travel programs with 96 students enrolled. There were 104 international students enrolled, 45 of whom were new and 54 continuing, and 5 in Optional Practical Training; this reflected a 30% increase from fall 2020. The enrollment for internships managed by CCPD for summer 2021, fall 2021, and spring 2022 were 148 students (512 student credit hours), 53 students (83 student credit hours), and 73 students (135 student credit hours), respectively.
2.3.3: Develop co-curricular experiences that enhance classroom learning and professional development.	Campus Activities Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning	CCESL supported 167 SLC-designated sections, with 2,531 students contributing 15,576 hours of community service. CCESL also supported 400 first-year Honors students at the CURE Conference and the 327 students who made progress toward earning the Lily Community Engagement Award.

	Center for Career and Professional Development Writing & Learning Commons	The WALC incorporated NACE career competencies into the student employment program and surveyed employees to determine which skills improved most and which would be most beneficial. Employees rated professionalism and communication as the most improved and valuable skills for their future.
		DCA created THRIVE Peer Leaders program with over 50 students training in leadership, team building, and conflict management. DCA hosted a 2-week Holocaust Exhibit and an evening of speakers. Each fall semester, a DCA staff member teaches a skills development course.
		The CCPD presented in 83 classes and 63 workshops, met with 1,418 students and supported 389 students with internships. Over 400 students used the Canvas Career Collection, a self-paced professional development course. DegreePlus tagged 137 events offering skill development in professionalism, leadership, teamwork, and cultural responsiveness.
2.3.4: Identify and promote existing opportunities at WCU, the WNC region, and North Carolina, where DegreePlus students can engage in reflection and articulation.	Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning Center for Career and Professional Development Intercultural Affairs Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity Programs	The DegreePlus (DP) program has three levels: Level 1 - Experience and Exposure, in which students attend 5 events of their choice related to a DP transferable skill. Level 2 - Integration & Application - in which students talk about their chosen skill and plan an experience in which they can apply the learning outcomes for their skill (DP3 Experience). Level 3 - Reflection & Articulation - in which students complete their DP3 Experience and reflect on the application of their skill through interactive poster presentations. For students pursuing the Cultural Responsiveness Skill (CR), each level of DegreePlus provides an opportunity to explore inclusivity, but the immersive nature of the DP3 Experiences provides a meaningful "lab" in which students can explore inclusivity by applying the learning outcomes for the CR skill. In 2021-22, WCU programs such as the interdisciplinary Design for Health Initiative, the University Participant Program, and the Residential Living program provided DP3 Experience sites to explore diversity and inclusion. Also, In the surrounding community, Guardian Ad Litem and New Haven Residential Treatment Center offered these same opportunities to students.

Goal 2.4 – Wellbeing and Full Potential
Create avenues to empower students to achieve their best possible wellbeing and cultivate a campus environment in which students can reach their full potential in all facets of their lives, both in and out of the classroom.

Strategic Initiatives	Key Stakeholders	Summary of results to date
2.4.1: Create and implement programs that embrace the elements of wellness to build and sustain a collaborative, comprehensive framework approach, with innovative strategies for engagement to help students be healthy and well.	Student Affairs, Health & Wellness Campus Activities Academic Affairs, Provost's Office	Several annual student wellness programs were offered face to face this year. The Health & Wellness Fair, health and wellness presentations for Residence Life and USI Transition courses, National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week, Love Your Body Week, Safe Spring Fair, Out of the Darkness Suicide Awareness campus walk, Catamount Climb 5k/1/2 Marathon, and the Tuck River Clean Up. New program offerings were Walk with Us to inform about the elements of wellness, RecFest was created to help students be aware of Campus Recreation and Wellness (CRW) programming, CRW offered Pomodoro Wellness Breaks guided videos on YouTube, and collaborated with CAPS to offer Trauma Informed

		Yoga. CAPS continued to offer therapy groups as student need presented, and through a system grant created a Case Manager position dedicated to helping student connect with services and resources in the community. Collaboration between Campus Activities, Greek Student Engagement, and Health & Wellness Education offered a Tailgate 101 program for students reserving a tailgate spot to ensure health, wellness and safety were part of their experience. Student EMS offered Stop the Bleed and Hands Only CPR on campus.
2.4.2: Utilizing the elements of wellness (environmental, social, intellectual, spiritual, occupational, physical, and emotional) as a comprehensive framework approach to increase cross-campus awareness of current programs, services, and resources that support and assist students in engaging in a holistic, total college experience.	Student Affairs, Health & Wellness Campus Activities Academic Affairs, Provost's Office Cherokee Center Counseling & Psychological Services Intercultural Affairs Office of Student Success Center of Career & Professional Development	The Student Affairs Health & Wellness Unit resumed in person appointments, programs, and services. Telehealth continues to be an option for both health and counseling services, but demand slowed as students preferred face-to-face encounters. Health Services continued COVID precautions, led Get VAX or Get Tested, and moved vaccinations and Q& I to Madison Hall. The department of student community ethics and health & wellness education invested in the Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students (BASICS) program to train cross campus employees as facilitators in a harm reduction approach to work with students struggling with substance use and/or abuse. Students surveyed about their knowledge of H&W resources on campus showed a higher awareness of intellectual and physical wellness, and less knowledge about emotional and spiritual wellness resources. Res Life offered Mental Health First Aid to their student resident assistants. NCSO financially supported employees being trained as Mental Health First Aid Instructors and free course participation. Mental Health & Wellness selected as the campus theme for next Academic year.

Goal 2.5 – Sense of Belonging
Create opportunities that increase a student's ability to find their sense of belonging

Strategic Initiatives	Key Stakeholders	Summary of results to date
2.5.1: Provide programs and initiatives, both formally and informally, for students living off-campus and on campus in residence halls designed to create a sense of belonging among incoming and continuing students.	Residential Living Greek Life Campus Activities Intercultural Affairs Dean of Students Counseling & Psychological Services Office of Student Success Center of Career & Professional Development	Departments across campus contributed to events and programs related to this initiative during 2021-2022. There were more than 33 large-scale events/programs that were specifically meant to build students' connection to WCU. There were more than 500 programs offered throughout campus that were meant to build connections among students and the institution. One-on-one conversations with students continued to be a focus. Attempts to contact and talk with all incoming students were made early in their first semester to discuss their experience, including their sense of belonging. Residential students had 2,341 one-on-one conversations with their resident assistants during the year. Groups were facilitated that were meant to provide support and a sense of belonging for students, including support groups and student organizations. In addition to these co-curricular offerings, 1,285 students participated in first year transition courses and 128 students took part in academic learning communities. New initiatives are currently being developed and implemented for 2022-2023, including the RISE sophomore experience for students living in the residence halls.

| 2.5.2: Create a plan to gather data on sense of belonging from graduating students. | Graduate School & Research
Student Affairs, Health & Wellness
Office of Student Success | Quantitative data for undergraduates will be collected through the Student Experience Survey that features seven questions on sense of belonging. 2021 survey results show that students' sense of belonging is highest for "being their authentic self" and lowest for "WCU has my best interests in mind with planning and decision-making." For qualitative data, sense of belonging focus groups will be conducted with graduating students during the 2022-2023 academic year with a goal of including 40 participants.

Graduate School surveyed graduate students in their semester of completion since 2010. Response rates have been traditionally high. The Survey contains two questions that hint at sense of belonging: "How would you rate the quality of your student life experiences" and "There were opportunities outside the classroom for interaction between students and faculty." Responses suggest that students feel connected to WCU and faculty, and online students responded "not applicable" more often than residential. For 2022, Graduate School is revising the survey to address graduate students' sense of belonging to their programs and university. Once data are analyzed, we may consider focus groups. |

Strategic Direction 3: Inclusive Excellence

Accomplishment Highlights

- **Blue-Ribbon Task Force** – In 2021 WCU empaneled the Blue-Ribbon Task Force. Its charge was to review existing initiatives and developed an Inclusive Excellence Action Plan. The charge was to provide a roadmap for the next 3-5 years at Western Carolina University. In partnership with Dr. Ricardo Nazario-Colón, WCU's Chief Diversity Officer, and Emeritus Consulting Group, LLC. The Task Force created and delivered in May 2022 a bold, innovative, and action-filled recommendations to enhance Western's welcoming environment for all. The next step for this initiative will be the implementation strategy which will cover the life of the plan, three to five (3-5) years.

- **Faculty Diversity Officer Program** – The Faculty Diversity Officer (FDO) program was launched in Fall 2021. The program is designed to develop faculty to serve as peer search committee members with a particular focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and attention to implicit bias that may occur in faculty searches. FDOs are assigned to searches outside of their home colleges to bring outside perspectives to the search process. The pilot program is a collaboration between the Provost, Human Resources and the Chief Diversity Officer.

- **Golden Ambassadors** – Golden Ambassadors was initiated in 2021.   These student-workers focus on helping students through the application and decision-making process, with an emphasis on diversity recruitment. They answer emails from students and provide general information about the university and answer questions the prospective students might have about life as a student.

- **Inclusive Pedagogy Fellows** – Associate Dean of Hunter Library, Ms. Shamella Cromartie, supported by the Office of the Provost, and the Coulter Faculty Commons, established the Inclusive Pedagogy Fellows, which paired four WCU faculty with two faculty mentors with expertise in inclusive pedagogy for a year-long program of course redesign with a focus on inclusive teaching best practices.

Strategic Direction 3: Inclusive Excellence

We commit to creating a campus reflective of our core values and we offer curricular and co-curricular educational programs that prepare our students for the diverse world in which they live.

Goal 3.1 – University Community
Foster an inclusive University community

Strategic Initiatives	Key Stakeholders	Summary of results to date
3.1.1: Administer a campus climate survey every three years and develop a university plan to address the results.	Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity Programs Institutional Planning & Effectiveness Vice Chancellors	WCU has administered a campus climate survey to faculty, staff and student populations. The results of the survey informed the Blue-Ribbon Task Force and their Inclusive Excellence Strategic Action Plan. The items capture by the Task Force will be tracked to determine the progress.
3.1.2: Develop and implement a robust university diversity and inclusion plan informed by SACSCOC standards and position statements.	Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity Programs Office of Assessment Institutional Planning & Effectiveness Blue Ribbon Task Force	In 2021 WCU empaneled the Blue-Ribbon Task Force. Its charge was to review existing initiatives and developed an Inclusive Excellence Action Plan. The charge was to provide a roadmap for the next 3-5 years at Western Carolina University. In partnership with Dr. Ricardo Nazario-Colón, WCU's Chief Diversity Officer, and Emeritus Consulting Group, LLC. The Task Force created and delivered in May 2022 a bold, innovative, and action-filled report with recommendations to enhance Western's welcoming environment for all. The next step for this initiative will be the implementation strategy which will cover the life of the plan, three to five (3-5) years.

Goal 3.2 – Recruit, Retain, and Develop
Broaden our commitment to diversity and inclusion by recruiting, retaining, and developing a diverse community of faculty, staff, and students.

Strategic Initiatives	Key Stakeholders	Summary of results to date
3.2.1: Build a more diverse and inclusive student, faculty and staff community to provide an environment in which all can be successful academically and professionally.	Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity Programs Enrollment Planning Committee Office of Student Success Student Affairs Human Resources Black Faculty & Staff Assembly	Some of the initiatives designed to build a more diverse and inclusive community involved the launch of a new UG admissions student group (Golden Ambassadors) that focuses on diversity recruitment. The resuming of full-scale open house events that feature diversity collaboration and promotion. The piloting of the Faculty Diversity Officer (FDO) program to develop faculty to serve as peer search committee members with a particular focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and attention to implicit bias that may occur in faculty searches. Also, the Office of the Provost, CFC, Associate Dean of Hunter Library, and Chief Diversity Officer collaborated to establish a DEI Community of Practice to advance inclusive excellence across the university. Lastly, the Associate Dean of Hunter Library, Ms. Shamella Cromartie, supported by the Office of the Provost, and CFC, established the Inclusive Pedagogy Fellows, which paired four WCU faculty with two faculty mentors with expertise in inclusive pedagogy for a year-long program of course redesign with a focus on inclusive teaching best practices.
3.2.2: Establish an accountability model in which all units create goals and metrics around	Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity Programs Human Resources	To promote compliance, the University has standardized communication processes in place (examples include: New Faculty and Staff Orientation Policy 10, 53, Title IX); Annual Policy Communication to Campus Community (Policy 10, 53); Search Committee training

university policy on equity, non-discrimination, compliance, and equal employment opportunities that reflect our commitment to diversity and inclusion.	Provost's Office Student Affairs	to include compliance/EEO and diversity obligations. Additionally, to ensure accountability in this area, divisions incorporate diversity goals into respective annual goals. Examples include: Academic Affairs: Equity Diversity, and Inclusion prioritized as a top division goal; Administration & Finance: Requirement for each work unit to include diversity and inclusion goals/initiatives in annual goal setting process; Information Technology: During FY22 reviewed and refined the Division diversity and inclusion plan with the plan to identify and implement a more specific set of desired actions in FY23; General Counsel: Continue to review, modify as appropriate, and develop policies, guidance, training, and information associated with University policies related to equity, non-discrimination, compliance, and equal employment opportunity.
Goal 3.3 – Scholarship and Teaching Support innovative and inclusive scholarship and teaching.		
Strategic Initiatives	**Key Stakeholders**	**Summary of results to date**
3.3.1: Ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion are foundational aspects of educational offerings.	Provost Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity Programs College Deans	Continued enrollments in the US LatinX and the Global Black Studies minors. Continued individual courses in HIST, ENGL, MUS, THEA, PAR, PSC, EDCI, another departments and programs. Liberal Studies Committee continued work on a broad-based diversity, equity, and inclusion breadth requirement using existing LS courses.
3.3.2: Provide ongoing, appropriate professional development on innovative and inclusive practices for faculty and staff.	Human Resources Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity Programs Coulter Faculty Commons	Teaching & Learning Days Collaboration between Coulter Faculty Commons (CFC), the Provost, and Chief Diversity Officer (CDO). The first Teaching & Learning Day was held in January 2021, themed around Inclusive Pedagogy with external keynote speaker and afternoon workshops for faculty professional development. Inclusive Pedagogy Faculty Fellows: Initiative led by the Shamella Cromartie, Associate Dean of Hunter Library, the program paired 4 WCU faculty with 2 faculty mentors with expertise in inclusive pedagogy for a year-long program of course redesign with a focus on inclusive teaching best practices. Faculty Diversity Officer program (FDO): The program is designed to develop faculty to serve as peer search committee members with a particular focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and attention to implicit bias that may occur in faculty searches. FDOs will be assigned to searches outside of their home colleges to bring outside perspectives to the search process. The pilot program is a collaboration between the Provost, HR, and the CDO and launched in Fall 2021. DEI Community of Practice: Partnership initiated in Fall 2021 to lay the groundwork for the establishment of a DEI Community of Practice to advance inclusive excellence.

Strategic Direction 4: Regional Development and Engagement

Accomplishment Highlights

- **Programs in Asheville** – With some 750 students enrolled and 14,900 credit hours generated, WCU Programs in Asheville hosted one of its largest student enrollments as it continued to meet the graduate and professional education needs of the area.

- **Finish Line Program** –The Finish Line Program is designed to assist students in finishing their first Bachelor's degree. It is catered toward both former students and new transfers that may qualify. During the 2021-2022 Academic Year, 22 students graduated through the Finish Line Program (8 students in December and 14 students in May). This year's graduate has pushed the total number of graduates to 147 since Finish Line began in Fall 2015.

- **Native Plants Conference** – The Cullowhee Native Plants Conference involved 394 participants, the highest number in 22+ years. In addition, popular and sought-after programming and learning has been extended. For example, to extend Native Plants education, Educational Outreach is offering workshops throughout the year to sustain the need for learning on the topic and attract new learners to the next conference.

- **CREATE Bridges Initiative** – Virtual business centers are being developed via the Walmart Foundation funded CREATE Bridges initiative, that will primarily focus on the retail, entertainment, accommodations, and tourism sectors in the 7 Southwestern NC Counties.

- **Pro bono health services** – The Mountain Area Pro Bono Health Services (MAP Health) in Cullowhee and Biltmore Park offers physical therapy, social work, nutrition, and speech therapy services to the under-served and under-insured populations of WNC. The pro bono clinic is self-supported through student fund raising. 294 patient visits, 3,042 student hours, and 517 clinician hours in this reporting cycle.

- **Arts and culture programs** – WCU hosted a total of 309 arts and culture programs and engaged a total of 46,800 adults and youth (k-12) on campus. All activities at WCU were open to the public and included virtual and in-person events at Bardo Arts Center in the Performance Hall and WCU Fine Art Museum exhibitions and receptions, performances at Coulter Recital Hall, Niggli Studio Theatre, University Auditorium, and programming at Biltmore Park and Mountain Heritage Center. WCU hosted 46 off-campus arts and culture programs that engaged a total of roughly 400,000 individuals.

Strategic Direction 4: Regional Development and Engagement

Through regional and community partnerships, we will be a force for the progress and growth of Western North Carolina. A state-wide institution dedicated to the overall development of North Carolina, WCU serves all of the state with particular focus on the communities, towns, and cities of the 17 western-most counties of North Carolina as well as the Qualla Boundary of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

Goal 4.1 – Workforce Growth and Development
Be the higher education leader in workforce growth and development in Western North Carolina.

Strategic Initiatives	Key Stakeholders	Summary of results to date
4.1.1: Increase the number of graduates in regionally identified growth sectors, such as Health & Human Services, Engineering, IT, Hospitality & Tourism, Business, and other fields as annually identified in collaboration with regional partners.	Provost's Office Academic Colleges Office of Economic & Regional Development WCU Programs in Asheville Center for Career & Professional Development Educational Outreach	2021-22 will be used as the benchmark for this strategic initiative moving forward. New data tools were obtained late in the year which will be used in 2022-23 to identify these growth sectors.
4.1.2: Expand the regional service footprint of WCU beyond main campus though its instructional site in Asheville as well as other current and future sites in the region.	Graduate Programs Educational Outreach Office of Economic & Regional Development	WCU continued its great work in metro Asheville at its instructional site at Biltmore Park Town Square. With some 750 students enrolled and 14,900 credit hours generated, WCU Programs in Asheville hosted one of its largest student enrollments as it continued to meet the graduate and professional education needs of the area. WCU also continued its work to grow its regional footprint through on-site instruction at several area community colleges. This year will also serve as a new benchmark moving forward as the University continues to grow its presence beyond main campus.
4.1.3: Expand the number of undergraduate and graduate degrees offered as distance programs, whether entirely online or a combination of face-to-face and hybrid on main campus, the Asheville instructional site, and any other instructional sites.	Educational Outreach Graduate School & Research Associate Provost Provost's Office Undergraduate Admissions Coulter Faculty Commons WCU Programs in Asheville Distance Learning Advisory Council	A BSBA in Finance was introduced in the fall for 2021-2022 and several are under development for 2022-23.
4.1.4: Develop a program of recruitment and support for part-way home and Finish Line students, who need to return to higher education to complete a degree or other credential and link	Office of Student Success Office of Student Advising Undergraduate Admissions Educational Outreach WCU Programs in Asheville	The Finish Line Program is WCU's version of the UNC System Office's Partway Home Initiative. It is designed to assist students in finishing their first Bachelor's degree. It is catered toward both former students and new transfers that may qualify. During the 2021-2022 Academic Year, 22 students graduated through the Finish Line Program (8 students in December and 14 students in May). This year's graduate has pushed the total number of graduates to 147 since Finish Line began in Fall 2015. The Finish Line program

these programs with the myFutureNC program.		at WCU continues to support the System Office's initiative through collaboration and promotion from the Advising Center, Educational Outreach, and Admissions.
4.1.5: Establish WCU as the leading UNC system school of choice for students transferring from the North Carolina Community College system as well as other 4-year universities and colleges.	Community Colleges Undergraduate Admissions Office of Student Advising Financial Aid Office Educational Outreach	WCU resumed outreach and visitation programs that COVID curtailed. In fall 2021, WCU realized gains in the number of transfer students from the NCCC System (709 vs 650), the UNC System (56 vs 55) and out-of-state institutions (227 vs 171). Only students transferring from NC private colleges experienced a decrease (40 vs 48). As a result, total transfer enrollment rebounded (1,032 vs 924). WCU was the overwhelming UNC system school of choice for students from the eight westernmost NC community colleges (WCU: 265; UNCA: 96; ASU: 67; UNCW: 56; UNCC: 54). Given lingering effects of COVID on enrollment and retention coupled with a lean year for NC high school graduates, WCU increased its transfer target and waived the application fee for the 2022 cycle. The Provost Council targeted transfer students in planning meetings, and recalibration of the Enrollment Planning Committee tasked the new Enrollment Strategies Committee (ESC) with transfer-related initiatives. WCU expanded undergraduate distance program offerings for transfer students and NC Promise marketing. Preliminary comparative numbers point to another increase in transfer student enrollment for fall 2022.
4.1.6: Develop a next-level continuing education and professional development program that utilizes traditional and alternative credentials, as well as stackable credentialing that integrates tightly with undergraduate and graduate degree programs.	Provost Coulter Faculty Commons Office of Economic & Regional Development WCU Programs in Asheville Graduate School & Research	Educational Outreach conducted a needs assessment of Asheville and surrounding area to realign and guide next-level continuing education and professional development. Lack of staffing prevented some program implementation of workforce professional development. Planning for Fall includes certificates, workshops, forums with companies and organizations, and partnerships. Continuing Education and Enrichment recovered from the pandemic shutdown and is at the same level of program and enrollment as pre-pandemic or surpassed previous numbers. For example, the Cullowhee Native Plants Conference engaged with 394 participants over the four-day conference. This number has not reached in 22+ years. In addition, popular and sought-after programming and learning has been extended. For example, to extend Native Plants education, Educational Outreach is offering workshops throughout the year to sustain the need for learning on the topic and attract new learners to the next conference.
4.1.7: Develop a system of research and reporting for real-time awareness of regional workforce and other development needs.	Office of Economic & Regional Development Center for the Study of Free Enterprise	Utilization of monthly LEAD reports from NC Commerce and Regional Councils of Government to provide timely and accurate analysis of the region's current workforce challenges, and the dynamics of workforce demand. Focus in 2023 will be a fully developed and integrated web presence that will demonstrate engagement and opportunities for impact.
4.1.8: In partnership with regional entities, leverage WCUs alumni network to bring graduates back to the region for relocation.	Office of Economic & Regional Development Office of Alumni Engagement Center of Career and Professional Development	After discussion with the Division of Advancement leadership team, it is felt that this initiative would be better aligned with another office or department possibly economic development & regional partnerships.
Goal 4.2 – Issues Facing Western North Carolina Serve as lead convenor on major issues facing Western North Carolina at both the regional and local levels.		

Strategic Initiatives	Key Stakeholders	Summary of results to date
4.2.1: Convene annual think-tanks on key regional issues such as, but not limited to, Community Health, Childcare, Workforce Housing, Transportation, Broadband, and Homelessness.	Office of Economic & Regional Development	Various units from across campus have coordinated local and regional meetings to discuss housing, childcare, along with broadband and cellular communications within the past 14 months. As Covid-19 mitigation continues and opportunities for in-person collaborations return to some normalcy, WCU will continue to take a leading role in the development of strategies to address these issues.
4.2.2: Convene business and non-profit subsectors on a regular basis to develop and cultivate "big ideas" for regional transformation.	Office of Economic & Regional Development	We maintain strong partnerships with regional Economic Development Organizations (EDO's), Councils of Government (COG's), Chambers of Commerce, and government and non-profit agencies with regular dialogue on business recruitment, retention and expansion, workforce development collaboratives, and leadership capacity building. WCU's presence in this realm solidifies our position as the primary regional leader in higher education support for regional growth, transformation, and sustainability.
4.2.3: Convene regional partners for collaborative leadership, research, and planning	Office of Economic & Regional Development	We remain actively involved in numerous planning and leadership initiatives, to include the Asheville P-20 Council, the Mountain Area and Southwestern Workforce Development Boards, The Mountain West and Carolina West Economic Partnerships, various Chambers of Commerce, NC Department of Commerce, Economic Development Partnership of NC, NC Rural Center, The Federal Reserve, Economic Development Administration, Appalachian Regional Commission, Dogwood and Nantahala Health Trusts, Golden LEAF and others.
4.2.4: Encourage active and multi-lateral community and campus participation in relevant local strategic planning initiatives for communities, municipalities, and the region.	Office of Economic & Regional Development	WCU continues to leverage university leadership to engage with local and regional comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS) planning initiatives. We have participated in several community planning efforts, to include Cullowhee, Cashiers, Jackson County, Mountain West Partnership, and Carolina West Partnership.
4.2.5: Publish and distribute widely, an annual report of WCUs regional and community development and engagement.	Office of Economic & Regional Development	Economic Development activities and impact are currently published in the Chancellor's Division Annual Report. New web and marketing collaboratives in FY 22-23 will result in a more thorough snapshot of economic engagement activities, with real-time reporting open to both internal and external clients. This information will be paired with economic analysis from the NC Department of Commerce LEAD division.

Goal 4.3 - Business Retention and Expansion
Become a key regional partner in business retention and expansion.

Strategic Initiatives	Key Stakeholders	Summary of results to date
4.3.1: Develop two business development centers, one in Jackson County to serve southwest NC and one in Buncombe County to serve metro Asheville, that physically bring together WCU's	Office of Economic & Regional Development Small Business and Technology Development Center College of Business WCU Programs in Asheville	Virtual business centers are being developed via the CREATE Bridges initiative, that will primarily focus on the retail, entertainment, accommodations, and tourism sectors in the 7 Southwestern NC Counties. Will continue to evaluate the feasibility of brick-and-mortar structures to house these business development resources. We have solidified a productive resource network to include the region's community college small business centers, the SBTDC, Mountain Bizworks, and others.

and other entities' business development units.		
4.3.2: Lead regional efforts to foster small-business and entrepreneurial endeavors via entrepreneurship curricula, Corporation for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Small Business & Technology Development Center, the RAPID Center, and the region's Community College Small Business Centers, Community Development Financial Institutions, and non-profit resources.	Office of Economic & Regional Development Small Business and Technology Development Center College of Business	The CREATE Bridges initiative, funded by the Walmart Foundation and co-chaired by the WCU Exec Director for Economic Development and Regional Partnerships, is in the midst of a 3-year research and strategic planning effort to bolster the retail, entertainment, accommodations, and tourism sectors. That work will continue into the Spring of 2023. Outcomes from the project will utilize the SBTDC, regional Small Business Centers, Mountain Bizworks, and the Mountain West Partnership to deliver ongoing support. The SBTDC at WCU serves the 14 western counties in NC. In the past five years the SBTDC assisted 1,500 businesses with over 30 hours of counseling time, resulting in the impact of almost 100 million dollars in capital to help them start or grow, created 418 jobs and retained 2,721, 157 new businesses have been launched, and clients have seen an overall increase of almost $33 million in sales. Partnerships working together on events, trainings, student engagement referrals, one on one coaching and projects to produce impacts of business starts, capital, jobs supported, and education. The measurement of these activities is ongoing through outreach and surveys to clients served.

Goal 4.4 Regional and Community Engagement
 Be a state model for regional and community engagement.

Strategic Initiatives	Key Stakeholders	Summary of results to date
4.4.1: Convene, lead, and invest in the development of Cullowhee as a community.	Office of the Chief of Staff Office of Economic & Regional Development Division of Administration & Finance	Community Service and Leadership- M. Byers and R. Price serve as board members on Cullowhee Revitalization Inc (CuRev).; M. Byers serves as WCU's designated member on the Cullowhee Planning Council. C. Burton also serves on this Council as a community member. -Working with Tuckaseigee Water and Sewer Authority and with American Rivers, WCU studied options regarding the WCU-owned Cullowhee Dam to determine that the dam would be repaired and that demolition of it would not be further considered until water treatment plant renovation/replacement was needed. -Worked with CuRev and Jackson County to develop plans for a riverpark in Cullowhee, memorialized by a letter of intent dated January 28, 2022. -Participated in meetings with a developer interested in mixed use development in old Cullowhee. -Assisted in advocacy efforts with the Cullowhee VFD to request funding for fire truck equipment. -WCU continues hosting Mountain Heritage Day, as an investment in the region. -WCU health clinics are investments in our community (pro bono PT and social work clinic, the hearing and speech clinic, the McKee Clinic, etc.)
4.4.2: Develop interdisciplinary clinics(s), fixed or mobile, to serve	Coulter Faculty Commons College of Business	The Mountain Area Pro Bono Health Services (MAP Health) in Cullowhee and Biltmore Park offers physical therapy, social work, nutrition, and speech therapy services to the

the region and provide clinical placements for our students.	College of Education College of Health & Human Services	under-served and under-insured populations of WNC. The pro bono clinic is self-supported through student fund raising. 294 patient visits, 3,042 student hours, and 517 clinician hours in this reporting cycle. The McKee Assessment and Psychological Services Clinic on the main campus is a not-for-profit training clinic for students in WCU's Psychology graduate programs, serving children and adults in the community. A total of 20 graduate students and 4 clinical faculty provided services to a total of 90 individuals, including 25 WCU students. The Catamount Laboratory School located at Smoky Mountain High School serves 57 students from Jackson County in grades 6-8. This past year, there were 115 clinical placements at the school which included students from undergraduate programs in Middle Grades, Health and PE, Inclusive Ed, Art Ed, Math Ed, Nursing, and graduate programs in School Psychology and Counseling.
4.4.3: Develop a university-specific Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), guided by the University's Strategic Plan, and to include intensive participation from the various communities and counties encompassed in our region to create alignment with dynamic needs.	Office of Economic & Regional Development College of Business	The Office of Economic Development and Regional Partnerships will formalize an advisory council during the FY22-23 academic year, which will serve as the initial steering committee for CEDS development. We will seek additional participation from external regional partners to establish to develop an actionable and impactful strategy road map.
4.4.4: Develop a tool by which external partners can identify and connect with institutional departments, program and units for regional and community partnerships.	Office of the Chief of Staff Office of Economic & Regional Development	External facing web content and navigational tools will be developed and deployed in FY22-23 in conjunction with University Communications and Marketing and their brand awareness campaign launch.
4.4.5: Leverage the fine and performing arts to advance WCU's commitment to regional and community engagement on the main campus, instructional sites, and across the Western North Carolina region.	Bardo Fine & Performing Arts Center Belcher College of Fine & Performing Arts Mountain Heritage Center WCU Programs in Asheville	From performances and festivals to exhibitions and public art, WCU serves as a regional hub for arts and culture through a range of experiences, offered through the Belcher College and Mountain Heritage Center. In July 2022 the WCU Fine Art Museum was awarded accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums, the national museum industry's mark of excellence. WCU hosted a total of 309 arts and culture programs and engaged a total of 46,800 adults and youth (k-12) on campus. All activities at WCU were open to the public and included virtual and in-person events at Bardo Arts Center in the Performance Hall and WCU Fine Art Museum exhibitions and receptions, performances at Coulter Recital Hall, Niggli Studio Theatre, University Auditorium, and programming at Biltmore Park and Mountain

		Heritage Center. WCU hosted 46 off-campus arts and culture programs that engaged a total of roughly 400,000 individuals.
4.4.6: Be a regional and community hub for thought leadership at main campus, the Asheville instructional site, and any other instructional sites/facilities.	Educational Outreach Academic Colleges	WCU continues to convene and be present for critically important gatherings of leadership from an array of community and regional partners across Western North Carolina, the State, and the Southeast. Examples would include representatives from the offices of Federal and State Legislators, officials from Healthcare, Advanced Manufacturing, and BioPhrama/Life Sciences, as well as professional discussions on the housing and childcare crisis'.
4.4.7: Encourage and support individual regional and community engagement by students, faculty and staff	Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning Human Resources Faculty Senate Staff Senate	For FY22, 258 University employees utilized 3052 hours of community service leave (CSL) (+30 employees from FY21). Staff Senate facilitated 473 hours of CSL. The Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning (CCESL) supported 167 Service-Learning Course (SLC) designated sections across 24 academic disciplines. 2351 enrolled students contributed 15,576 hours of service to the community. These students receive a designation on their transcript after completing a SLC-designated course. Scott Eldredge and Lori Oxford received the university award for Excellence in Community Engagement. Holly Miller was recognized with an NC Campus Compact Community Impact Award, and as a Campus Compact Newman Civic Fellow. At the CCEL awards: 5 faculty-oriented, 4 staff-oriented and 7 student-oriented awards associated community service and engagement were presented. 327 students made progress toward earning the Lily Community Engagement award, and 12 students completed the award.
4.4.8: Identify and annually place students, faculty, and staff on key regional and community leadership boards.	Office of the Chief of Staff Office of the Provost Dean of Students College Deans Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning	The offices of the Chancellor and the Provost continually scan the landscape for strategic opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to serve on or be involved with state, regional, or community industry, non-profit, governmental, or leadership boards. Below is a curated list of strategic boards on which WCU has representation. NC Campus Compact Harris Regional Hospital Board of Directors Jackson County Business and Industry Board EDPNC Economic Advisory Council Cullowhee Revitalization Endeavor (CuRvE) Board Southwestern Workforce Development Board of Directors - Executive Committee Mountain West Partnership Board of Directors Governor's Advisory Council on Hispanic/Latino Affairs Mountain Area Health Education Consortium (MAHEC) Board of Directors Blue Ridge Public Radio Board of Directors Tuckaseigee Water and Sewer Authority Board of Directors Cullowhee Planning Council Jackson County Comprehensive Plan Advisory Council NCDOT Statewide Multimodal Freight Plan Council Center for Domestic Peace Board of Directors Vecinos Board of Directors Harris Regional Hospital Business/Community Roundtable

Goal 4.5 – Leverage Expertise Leverage WCUs expertise in key areas to help other institutions, large employers, and government entities.		
Strategic Initiatives	**Key Stakeholders**	**Summary of results to date**
4.5.1: Bring in other regional partners to develop their own diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts as the University improves upon its own	Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity Programs Intercultural Affairs Educational Outreach Human Resources Administration & Finance	The Chief Diversity Officer worked with the Haywood Arts Council to develop their own diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts. Educational Outreach in partnership with CEAP provided and Equity Certificate program taught by WCU faculty to regional K12 leaders. Additionally, Educational Outreach held an Equity Summit in partnership with CEAP to regional K12 and higher education leaders/educators and community partners.
4.5.2: Guide other regional partners to leadership in environmentalism and sustainability.	Office of Economic & Regional Development Office of Sustainability & Energy Management	The Office of Economic Development and Regional Partnerships and The Office of Sustainability continues to engage with regional partners and leaders to foster the three pillars of sustainability of continued economic growth, ecologic health and social wellbeing. This includes but not limited to: -Participation with Pratt & Whitney's new LEED Certified 1M sq. ft. manufacturing facility in Asheville, which will employ over 700 persons (including WCU grads) and result in more than $650M in capital investment -Continue to work closely with regional Councils of Government, Economic Development Orgs., and Tourism Authorities to ensure that sustainability remains a priority when developing Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies(CEDS) -Providing leadership and support for various organizations and initiatives including Jackson Co. Solid Waste Board, Haywood Waterways Association, Empowering Mountain Food Systems, Appalachian Energy Summit, HIGHTS, Habitat for Humanity, Made By Mountains Partnership (formerly Outdoor Economy), Black Folks Camp Too, etc. -Creating internships and connecting student learning to solve real-world challenges as it relates to sustainability in the region
4.5.3: Leverage WCU's expertise in public/private partnerships for housing development to grow workforce housing in the region.	Office of Economic & Regional Development Administration & Finance	We continue to foster discussions for local and regional partnerships (e.g. Jackson County Schools, Harris Regional Hospital, Jackson County Management, etc) to further the development of multi-income housing for the benefit of WCU and employers in the local area/region. We are actively seeking to contract for short-term/temporary housing for WCU staff and faculty with local apartment providers.

Strategic Direction 5: Employee Excellence

Accomplishment Highlights

- **Critical salary actions** – For FY22 the University again identified faculty and staff salaries as a top institutional priority. In Spring 2022, the University allocated $1.7M to address critical salary compression, equity, and labor market concerns and implement recommendations put forth by the Standing Committee on Faculty Salaries and the SHRA & EHRA NF Salary Committee. In total, the University allocated $2.1M for university salary actions (excluding promotions).

- **Staff professional development investment** – The University has provided $12,000 in recurring funding to the Staff Senate Professional Development fund which is designed to provide funding for external professional development opportunities for staff. For FY22, this fund was fully exhausted by March 2021 with 23 staff receiving funding (out of 26 requests). Additionally, in FY22, the university allocated $788,545 for external professional development/training programming (excludes travel).

- **Employee assistance program** – The FamilySource© work-life solutions through our employee assistance program provider (EAP) ComPysch was one of the highest utilized EAP resources by WCU Faculty and Staff during the past fiscal year. This program offers employees customized solutions that help address a wide range of issues such as child or elder care services, and housing solutions.

- **Flexible work guidelines** – In partnership with the UNC System Office, WCU implemented formal Flexible Work Arrangement guidelines in Summer 2021. For FY22, 111 formal Flexible Work Arrangement agreements were approved and implemented.

- **Non-tenure track promotion program** – 2021-2022 was the first year of the new promotion process for non-tenure track faculty. The non-tenure track promotion (NTTP) program is the first time that WCU has had a pathway to promotion for fixed term faculty. The program fulfills a recommendation made by the Non-tenure Track Faculty (NTTF) Task Force to the WCU Faculty Senate in spring 2017.

Strategic Direction 5: Employee Excellence

We will continue to attract, retain, and promote outstanding faculty and staff while providing valuable scholarship, leadership, and professional development opportunities

Goal 5.1 – Salaries and Compensation		
Ensure salary and compensation benefits package remains an institutional priority to attract, reward, and retain the highest quality employees.		
Strategic Initiatives	**Key Stakeholders**	**Summary of results to date**
5.1.1: Advocate with governing bodies for financial resources and structural framework necessary to offer competitive, attractive, and cost-effective total compensation (salary and benefits) packages.	Human Resources Administration & Finance Office of External Relations Chancellor's Office	The top institutional legislative priority was salaries for current faculty and staff. To extend this message, University leadership continues to advocate for faculty and staff compensation to key external constituents to the greatest extent possible. Additionally, the University identified faculty and staff salaries as a top institutional priority during the annual budget process. The statewide FY22 and FY23 budgets provided for a 6% across the board increase (over two years) for faculty and staff salaries. Additionally, the FY22 budget included one-time bonuses of $1,000 for all employees with an additional $500 provided for employees making $75,000 or less. To address market competitiveness and retention issues, the FY23 state budget includes a 1% labor market adjustment fund that will be available to UNC System institutions. The UNC System continues to explore benefit options and in FY22 rolled out a new group life offering that is more competitive than the previous offering (on average will be 1/3 less for the same amount of coverage).
5.1.2: Develop, implement, or strengthen institutional efforts to address salary shortfalls, making this a top institutional priority, in addition to, or in the absence of, salary maintenance as a state funding priority.	Human Resources Administration & Finance Office of External Relations Chancellor's Office	For FY22 the University again identified faculty and staff salaries as a top institutional priority. In Spring 2022, the University allocated $1.7M to address critical salary compression, equity, and labor market concerns and implement recommendations put forth by the Standing Committee on Faculty Salaries and the SHRA & EHRA NF Salary Committee. In total, the University allocated $2.1M for university salary actions (excluding promotions). Additionally, for FY23, the University has increased faculty rank promotion amounts by $1,000 (from $4,000 to $5,000 for Asst. to Assoc. and from $6,000 to $7,000 for Assoc. to Full) and implemented a faculty non-tenure track rank/promotion process. The University salary committees continue to meet on a regular basis to identify strategies and present recommendations to University Leadership. Additionally, the University continues to conduct an annual salary review process designed to assess potential market, equity, compression, and inversion issues. The data from this review is shared with university leadership and the respective salary committees to help provide for an informed decision-making process when allocating salary adjustments.

Goal 5.2 – Professional Development and Long-term Promotion Opportunities Ensure all employees have access to valuable professional development and training opportunities, to support increased capacity and productivity as well as long-term career promotion opportunities.		
Strategic Initiatives	**Key Stakeholders**	**Summary of results to date**
5.2.1: Support professional development for all employees as a managerial priority, by devoting the appropriate time and funding to the effort.	Human Resources Budget Office Division/Department Heads	The University has provided $12,000 in recurring funding to the Staff Senate Professional Development fund which is designed to provide funding for external professional development opportunities for staff. For FY22, this fund was fully exhausted by March 2021 with 23 staff receiving funding (out of 26 requests). Additionally, in FY22, the university allocated $788,545 for external professional development/training programming (excludes travel). The University also continued to place an emphasis on ensuring adequate resources and availability for internally sponsored programming. In FY22, for example, 1,542 individuals participated in formal WCU HR sponsored professional development offerings.
5.2.2: Develop a process to report and document the level and engagement of faculty and staff in professional development, both internally and externally.	Human Resources Coulter Faculty Commons Information Technology Division/Department Heads	With the transition from Blackboard to Canvas completed, HR has continued its partnership with CFC and IT to complete the integration of the Catalog application with Canvas that was launched in Fall 2021. The launch has successfully implemented key areas of functionality that include a registration tool for on-line and in-person training events; tracking of grades, completions, certifications; and an employee self-service and access to transcripts. Initial projections for reporting capabilities that allow for mixing variables (supervisor, department, job category, etc.); and interface with Banner for the updating of employee profiles in Canvas/Catalog; ability to group training offerings into categories, groups, and tracks remains an ongoing project. Assigning curriculum, based on an employee group, employee role or hire-date can be done manually at this time. Solutions to maximize canvas/catalog functionality is ongoing.
5.2.3: Develop a campus-wide mechanism that provides training and documentation for the most frequently utilized WCU systems and processes.	Human Resources Coulter Faculty Commons Information Technology Staff Senate	The Training Hub project was launched in Fall 2021. The initial committee's goal was to research solutions for a campus wide knowledge base. Comaround, a platform currently used as the Information Technology knowledge base was selected and the basic shell of the platform available for initial content creation. Human Resources took the lead on this project in Spring 2022. The platform has since been named My Resources, and content is currently being uploaded for a launch of the knowledge base in September 2022. The knowledge base will include articles, videos and or links to content for the most frequently used WCU systems and processes. The knowledge base is expected to go live in September 2022, and accessed via https://myresources.wcu.edu
5.2.4: Develop mapping of position-based skills, competencies, and access needed for staff positions, as a mechanism for quality assurance in the workforce, continuity in departmental operations, and	Human Resources Department Heads Information Technology Staff Senate	Initial project assessment performed in FY22. The overall scope of this project will make it challenging to implement within existing resources. A review of current staffing hiring patterns has shown that current promotional opportunities for staff are not only available but critical to overall institutional operations (in FY22, 34% of all staff hires were via internal promotion).

advancing the potential for career growth and long-term promotional opportunity.		

Goal 5.3 – Professional Development for Research		
Support scholarship and creative activities to foster our mission as a regional comprehensive university.		
Strategic Initiatives	**Key Stakeholders**	**Summary of results to date**
5.3.1: Strengthen the organizational structure to better integrate research and the Graduate School at our University	Graduate School & Research	WCU has made progress on two items to better integrate research and the Graduate School at our university: 1) Research Council (led by Co-Chairs Brandon Schwab and Brian Kloeppel) and Graduate Council (led by Brian Kloeppel) include faculty representation from all six academic colleges and from numerous other teams across the university including the Honors College, Library, Undergraduate Research, Coulter Faculty Commons, etc. 2) The Research and Scholarship Conference (RASC) integrates both the Graduate Research Symposium and the Undergraduate Expo. Planning is already underway to incorporate the Faculty and Scholarship Conference into the RASC in Spring 2023. Both of these actions above seek input from and create information pathways to academic teams across Western Carolina University. In addition, the expanded Research and Scholarship Conference works to provide a campus-wide forum to celebrate research and scholarship and the faculty-staff-student relationships that were strengthened while conducting this research.
5.3.2: Build individual faculty, staff, and graduate student capacity through support of development activities aimed at increasing research and grant proposal writing, publications, creative work, and other scholarly endeavors.	Office of Research Administration Office of the Provost Academic Colleges	During the 2022 fiscal year (01 July 2021 to 30 June 2022), there were 28 graduate students supported on assistantships from non-state of North Carolina funding during the Fall 2021, Spring 2022, and Summer 2022 terms. These assistantships totaled $110,310 and were supported from external grants and contracts from submitted proposals through the WCU Office of Research Administration. To date, there has been one graduate student scholarship funded by an endowment to enable an international student to pursue graduate education at WCU. Continued success to build momentum from development activities to support research and grant activities have been minimal since there is no part-time or full-time staff support for development activities for the Graduate School and Research. The Research and Scholarship Conference (RASC) that integrates both the Graduate Research Symposium and the Undergraduate Expo will now incorporate the Faculty and Scholarship Conference into the RASC in Spring 2023. This will create a more public-facing event that will help to attract outside individuals and business that wish to support and stimulate faculty, staff, and student research and scholarly endeavors.

Goal 5.4 – Faculty as Teacher / Scholar		
Create an environment in which the primary role of faculty as teacher scholar is recognized and valued.		
Strategic Initiatives	**Key Stakeholders**	**Summary of results to date**
5.4.1: Assess and support the needs of non-tenure track faculty.	Provost's Office Faculty Senate	2021-2022 was the first year of the new promotion process for non-tenure track faculty. The non-tenure track promotion (NTTP) program is the first time that WCU has had a pathway to promotion for fixed term faculty. The program fulfills a recommendation made by the Non-tenure Track Faculty (NTTF) Task Force to the WCU Faculty Senate in spring 2017. Implementation over several years involved creation of policies and processes that established new titles and promotion pathways, updates to the Faculty Handbook that were approved by the WCU Board of Trustees, revision of all Department Collegial Review Documents (DCRDs) to incorporate the appropriate pathways, modification of college collegial review procedures, and changes to human resources systems. In the first year of implementation, 57 fixed-term faculty were reviewed according to criteria in the DCRDs and promoted.
5.4.2: Encourage department heads and deans to utilize flexibility within the parameters of fiscal realities in developing and implementing integrated faculty workload expectations, which allow for teaching, scholarship, and service expectations tailored to local need, skill, and specialization.	Academic Colleges Provost's Office	Department heads and deans retain some level of flexibility in developing and integrating workload expectations. However, there are real constraints based on the teaching workload expectations of the UNC System, fiscal realities, human resource limitations, commitment to students, and equity and fairness issues at the unit and college levels. To aid in making strategic decisions on workload, access to actionable data within Catalytics continues to advance. Periodic revisions to Departmental Collegial Review Documents (DCRDs) expand the definitions and recognition of what is considered disciplinary work within WCU's mission. The creation of the non-tenure track promotion pathway has created new categories of fixed term faculty and expanded potential focus areas and expectations for NTT faculty. These recent changes have enhanced WCU's availability to be creative and flexible in implementing integrative workload expectations. Further defining and quantifying faculty workload across teaching, scholarship, and service are areas of continuous improvement, and necessary to provide actionable data for deans and department heads for strategic decision making.
Goal 5.5 – Healthy Lifestyle		
Create a campus environment that facilitates a healthy lifestyle for employees.		
Strategic Initiatives	**Key Stakeholders**	**Summary of results to date**
5.5.1: Promote employee mental health through programming and services, addressing issues such as destigmatizing mental health, and improving work-life balance, stress management, and employee resilience.	Office of Health & Wellness Human Resources Academic Colleges Department Heads	2020 UNC Employee Engagement Survey resulted 58% employees being "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with current wellness programs-61% in 2018. In partnership/ComPsych Employee Assistance Program, we provide a range of services; traditional EAP counseling, financial, health, wellness, legal resource/referral services. Utilization for FY 2021 -32% with a total of 478 provided services. Primary EAP issues presented: Stress; Psychological; Partner/Relationship. Top online topics and searches: Personal Growth; Emotional Well-being; Fitness/Nutrition; Child/Eldercare Providers. Top OnDemand Training Sessions: Learning to Relax; Communicate without Conflict/Your Significant Other. Interested employees received a complimentary subscription to "Calm" app as a university-wide

			resiliency program focused on overall employee well-being. To date, @450 employees registered-utilization rate over 85%. Employee Wellness Team introduced WCU Wellness Ambassador program. Information shared through TEAMS. NCSO financially supported employees being trained as Mental Health First Aid Instructors and free course participation. Mental Health & Wellness selected as the campus theme for next academic year.
	5.5.2: Encourage physical health of employees by promoting physical fitness, healthy eating, activity, and movement.	Office of Health & Wellness Human Resources Academic Colleges Department Heads	The Employee Wellness Team offered employees access to all campus recreation virtual fitness/wellness programs, regardless of membership. WHEEforlife.wcu.edu promotes both campus and community wellness opportunities. WCU Wellness Ambassadors receive wellness programs and information on TEAMS to promote to colleagues.

	Goal 5.6 – Environmental Challenges (Recruit and Retain) Contribute to employee recruitment and retention by addressing environmental challenges for employees and their families		
	Strategic Initiatives	**Key Stakeholders**	**Summary of results to date**
	5.6.1: Implement a flex-work policy, aligned with the policy provided by the System Office, as a tool which can be strategically employed to improve productivity, employee satisfaction, and maintain our position as a competitive employer.	Human Resources	In partnership with the UNC System Office, WCU implemented formal Flexible Work Arrangement guidelines in Summer 2021. These guidelines are designed to facilitate flexible work arrangements where practicable while ensuring all operational needs of the University are met. These guidelines are reviewed on a regular basis and an annual report on usage is provided to Executive Council. For FY22, 111 formal Flexible Work Arrangement agreements were approved and implemented.
	5.6.2: Provide support for dual career households through programs such as regional employment networks, and access to a variety of resources such as institutional job posting boards and career fairs.	Human Resources	The University maintained its partnership with the "WNC Trailing Partners" network comprised of multiple WNC employers (to include Mission Health and Asheville Chamber of Commerce) The network is designed facilitate the job search experience for trailing partners and is housed on the LinkedIn platform with a current membership is 87. In addition to providing the link to all new hires during the hiring and/or orientation process, it is also provided to search committees engaged in national searches. The University remains an active member of HERC (Higher Education Resource Consortium) of the Carolinas. Through this partnership the WCU community has access to a "dual-career" search engine designed to identify career opportunities within a defined geographical location. The FamilySource© work-life solutions through our employee assistance program provider (EAP) ComPysch was one of the highest utilized EAP resources by WCU Faculty and Staff during the past fiscal year. This program offers employees customized solutions that help address a wide range of issues such as child or elder care services, and housing solutions.

Strategic Direction 6: Responsible Stewardship

Accomplishment Highlights

- **Updated campus master plan** – University carry-forward funds were identified and used to perform an update of the previous 2014 Campus Master Plan. WCU engaged Hanbury Evans Wright Vlattas and Company (HEWV) to guide this update. HEWV is the same design firm that guided WCU to the 2014 Plan. This update, adopted by the Board of Trustees during its meeting of March 3, 2022, is now complete and will serve as the guiding document in the coming years. A new Campus Master Plan, or update, will need to be performed in the next five to seven years.

- **New electronic payment process** – The Purchasing and Accounts Payable Department implemented v-payables. V-payables is an electronic payment method that allows vendors to receive payment by ACH instead of a paper check. The process saves paper and the labor associated with paper.

- **Building emergency action plans** – During FY 2021-22, Emergency Services partnered with Internal Audit to review and approve forty-seven Building Emergency Action Plans (BEAP) for each building on campus.

- **Ransomware preparedness** – Two ransomware tabletop exercises were held in the last year. A ransomware-specific incident response plan was developed and tested in the second exercise.

- **Updated emergency operations plan** – The Department of Emergency Services began the process of updating the WCU All-Hazards Emergency Operations Plan in June 2022. This initiative is expected to be completed by December 2022.

Strategic Direction 6: Responsible Stewardship

We will focus our priorities on facilities, technology, core resources, and business policies and practices

Goal 6.1 – Funding Models
Implement sustainable funding models to ensure fiscal stability.

Strategic Initiatives	Key Stakeholders	Summary of results to date
6.1.1: Reduce operational dependence on one-time funding for core functions and services	Administration & Finance	With the implementation of the all funds budget required by the System Office and the stabilization of NC Promise Funding, the University is slowly covering more recurring costs that have historically been funded by non-recurring funding. However, there remains a significant portion of recurring costs covered by non-recurring funding. The University was fortunate in FY 2022 to have significant non-recurring funding to cover these costs.
6.1.2: Engage the budgetary process to steward resource allocation, enhance sound investment, and address strategic critical need.	Administration & Finance Division Heads	Our budgetary process has become well-known for being transparent, efficient, and highly visible. Units across campus engage in the process each year to submit prioritized one-time and recurring requests for additional funding from their respective divisions. During the current year, to address strategic critical need and enhance sound investment, resources were allocated to address wage compression, maintain employee retention, and provide labor market adjustments to positions across campus.

Goal 6.2 – Master Plan
Maintain the Campus Master Plan.

Strategic Initiatives	Key Stakeholders	Summary of results to date
6.2.1: Ensure sustainability and fiscal resources necessary to update and maintain the Campus Master Plan.	Facilities Management Chancellor's Office Provost's Office Division leadership Administration & Finance	University carry-forward funds were identified and used to perform an update of the previous 2014 Campus Master Plan. WCU engaged Hanbury Evans Wright Vlattas and Company (HEWV) to guide this update. HEWV is the same design firm that guided WCU to the 2014 Plan. This update, adopted by the Board of Trustees during its meeting of March 3, 2022, is now complete and will serve as the guiding document in the coming years. A new Campus Master Plan, or update, will need to be performed in the next five to seven years.
6.2.2: Use the Campus Master Plan to guide and inform decisions	Facilities Management Chancellor's Office Provost's Office Division leadership Administration & Finance	The previous 2014 Campus Master Plan, in conjunction with the new 2022 Campus Master Plan Update, continues to provide guidance in the physical development of the campus. Projects including Apodaca Science Building, North Baseball Parking Deck, Energy Production Facility (Steam Plant), and new Lower Campus Residence Halls have been completed or are in progress as prescribed by the 2014 Master Plan. Other projects, such as the renovation of Moore Building, a partial renovation of Breese Gymnasium, and planning for Athletic Facilities are currently in progress as outlined in the 2022 Master Plan Update.

Goal 6.3 – Business Processes Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of campus business processes, including technology enablement.		
Strategic Initiatives	**Key Stakeholders**	**Summary of results to date**
6.3.1: Review campus business processes and identify those requiring revision.	Internal Audit Division leadership Office of Institutional Assessment Office of the Registrar	During the 2022 fiscal year, Administration and Finance took strides toward process improvement and workflow. The Purchasing and Accounts Payable Department implemented v-payables. V-payables is an electronic payment method that allows vendors to receive payment by ACH instead of a paper check. The process saves paper and the labor associated with paper. Secondly, AP Director was implemented to allow vendors to provide information that is used to set-up the vendor in the payment system. This process saves WCU labor by putting the onus on the vendor to provide tax identification numbers and other information to comply with state purchasing regulations. Purchasing is in the process of implementing contract manager, which is an electronic workflow to manage independent contractor agreements.
6.3.2: Ensure delivery of excellent service experiences through ongoing assessment and periodic administrative reviews where possible.	Division leadership Office of Institutional Assessment	Our administrative and support services units engage in quality evaluation through annual continuous improvement assessments and periodic operational and/or process reviews. The most common topics assessed among our administrative and support services units are operational effectiveness, process efficiency, program participation, new services/programs, satisfaction, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. The support services units in the division of Academic Affairs engage in comprehensive quality evaluation through WCU's institutional review process. In this review, administrators and staff conduct a self-evaluation of their department; author a self-study report; and host an external review team to evaluate their operational functions and services. The self-study includes the history of the department, alignment with our institutional mission, demand for their services, quality and cost effectiveness of operations, and ends with an opportunity analysis. This year the Graduate School and Office of Research Administration participated in reviews.
Goal 6.4 – Information Technology Maintain currency and enable strategic information technology capabilities.		
Strategic Initiatives	**Key Stakeholders**	**Summary of results to date**
6.4.1: Establish and systematize a sustainable funding model for information technology that accommodates operational support, replacement and upgrades, University growth, cybersecurity, and strategic initiatives	Division of Information Technologies Administration & Finance	Learning Spaces: The State of North Carolina appropriated recurring funding for the additional Apodaca learning space, satisfying the funding level deficit. Required mandates and contractual cost increases: No progress was made this year toward funding "internal mandates", a term used to describe initiatives that have arisen that must be implemented, but that have no permanent funding. WCU did not allocate a portion of enrollment growth funding due to a second year of declined enrollment. The same issue prevented further progress toward funding inflationary increases in supplies and services. Utilizing multi-year contract options has helped manage some of the incremental cost increases. Pawprint: Print volume has recovered but still not at breakeven stability.

| 6.4.2 Ensure accommodation of mandatory and anticipated information technology needs, including both human resources and technologies through annual capacity planning, strategic management, and process assessments. Incorporate a review of current technologies, evaluating any redundant, obsolete, or underused products into this planning process. | Division of Information Technologies Coulter Faculty Commons | Process assessments - completed review/update of IT service mgt. practices.

Annual capacity plan reviews - completed reviews for the data center, and networking. Worked with campus leadership on driving technology implementations to single campus-wide solutions (CRM, time and attendance, event ticket sales, etc.). Projects underway to consolidate tools/platforms (endpoint mgt, SharePoint) to fewer solutions and platforms. Completed annual review of workflow tools for redundancy.

Continued evaluation/implementation of cloud-based technologies - data backup, disaster recovery, test environments, application development, identity management.

As seen nationally and state-wide, IT human resources significantly impacted by a high rate of voluntary turnover and an exceedingly difficult hiring environment. Re-evaluated some hiring practices to take advantage of hybrid work from home approaches, select full-time remote workers, and approaches to move toward a more "internal growth" model to fill openings, including less reliance on finding exact experience / skills matches in a tight and highly competitive hiring market for IT professionals. |

Goal 6.5 - Safety, Reliability, and Security
Preserve the safety, reliability, and security of the campus community.

Strategic Initiatives	Key Stakeholders	Summary of results to date
6.5.1: Develop and maintain University all-hazards prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts through comprehensive emergency and disaster planning, training, and exercise programs.	Office of Emergency Services Safety & Risk Management Office University Police	This is an ongoing initiative. During FY 2021-22, Emergency Services partnered with Internal Audit to review and approve forty-seven Building Emergency Action Plans (BEAP) for each building on campus. Each Building Coordinator was also required to submit evidence of staff training on the BEAPs. Building Coordinators submitted evidence of forty-seven training sessions, some of which were facilitated by Emergency Services. The review process for the BEAPs and subsequent training was made more efficient by the use of a new SharePoint portal that was developed in partnership with IT. The Department of Emergency Services began the process of updating the WCU All-Hazards Emergency Operations Plan in June 2022. This initiative is expected to be completed by December 2022. Additionally, Emergency Services worked with a UNC System Office consultant to update WCU's portion of the UNC System's Western Campuses Hazard Mitigation Plan. Emergency Services and the Office of Safety and Risk Management continued the mandated meeting and maintenance of the WCU Health and Safety Committee. The Health and Safety Committee meets quarterly and involves staff, faculty, and student governance members.
6.5.2: Ensure fiscal stability through systematic maintenance, assessment, repair, and enhancement of all campus infrastructure and technologies.	Administration & Finance Facilities Management Division of Information Technologies Office of emergency Services	Strategic management of the university's physical plant infrastructure and technologies is continually addressed through a proactive preventative maintenance program, continued corrective and reactive maintenance activity, and strategic management of its deferred maintenance backlog (or total needs index). Facility condition assessments and inspections provide information that assist in annual budget development, carry-forward allocation, and six-year biennial capital planning of repair and renovation (R&R) priorities.

		Since baseline year of 2017-18, the university has reduced its total needs index, a measure of deferred maintenance and need, by 15.5%.
6.5.3: Engage in an enterprise risk management process to enhance communication and strengthen response capabilities.	Office of Legal Counsel Internal Audit	WCU completed an enterprise risk assessment in Spring 2021. Based on the risk assessment, Executive Counsel identified risk owners for the top ten risks and the risk owners developed risk management plans. Risk owners presented the plans to the Compliance and Enterprise Risk Management Committee and Executive Counsel for feedback and approval in Spring 2022. WCU will conduct the next risk assessment during the 2022-2023 academic year.
6.5.4: Maintain and improve technologies and processes related to cybersecurity and privacy to prevent, detect, and respond to incidents.	Division of Information Technologies Office of Legal Counsel	- A third-party maturity assessment was performed against our implementation of the ISO 27002 security framework. Our overall maturity score was very good with a few areas still needing more attention. - A privacy gap assessment was performed against the FERPA regulation and the ISO 27701 Privacy Framework. Work on the privacy framework will be a future effort. - The system for managing security logs is fully implemented, including a monitoring and detection response procedure, with progress being made on integrating threat intelligence into the system. - Two ransomware tabletop exercises were held in the last year. A ransomware-specific incident response plan was developed and tested in the second exercise. - IT also implemented a system to detect and stop a ransomware attack on our network file storage and Microsoft 365 cloud storage. - A new security tool was implemented to help IT prioritize vulnerability patching based on the risk of exposure. - Networking completed a project to bring wired network authentication to the same security level as the wireless network. - IT deployed an advanced malware detection and response tool to all servers and user endpoints.

Strategic Direction 7: Vision Advancement

Accomplishment Highlights

- **Class of 2020 Celebration** – A weekend long celebration was held for the 2020 graduating class to make up for the cancelled May 2020 commencement. The celebration included a pregame tailgate, recognition during game, and a commencement ceremony.

- **New legislative agenda** – A new legislative agenda was adopted in March 2022, featuring three key areas: Salary and Benefit enhancements to address inflationary and equity pressures, planning for growth needs of the College of Engineering and Technology and establishment of a prestigious merit scholarship program.

- **Increase in grant funding** – In FY 2022 faculty and staff submitted 74 grant proposals resulting in a total of $7,624,595 awarded, representing a 6% increase from the prior year. In addition, the Office of Research Administration funded seven Provost Scholarship Development Internal Grants for a total of $84,657, a 129% increase compared to the previous year.

- **Branding and market analysis** – An in-depth perception and competitive analysis study was completed in Fall of 2021. The study was comprised of over 480 distinct voices including administrators, alumni, faculty, staff and students, and involved over 1,500 external participants.

- **New branding campaign** – During 2022-2023, Western Carolina University is partnering with Ologie, a preeminent higher education branding partner to strengthen the university's overall visibility and positioning through a brand and reputation campaign, including the development of a messaging strategy, creative platform and an awareness campaign; and through a comprehensive capital campaign, including its unique but connected messaging strategy and creative expression.

Strategic Direction 7: Vision Advancement

We will create and promote a shared understanding of WCU's future around our areas of distinction, student support, and faculty and staff initiatives.

Goal 7.1 – Promote Quality and Excellence
Promote an institutional vision of quality and excellence in academic and administrative programs and activities.

Strategic Initiatives	Key Stakeholders	Summary of results to date
7.1.1: Regularly review and enhance messages for new faculty, staff, and students to ensure early introduction to and understanding of the University's strategic vision, history, and culture.	Communications & Marketing Undergraduate Admissions Graduate School & Research Human Resources Educational Outreach Dean of Students Orientation Programs WCU Programs in Asheville	During 2022-2023, Western Carolina University is partnering with Ologie, a preeminent higher education branding partner to strengthen the university's overall visibility and positioning through a brand and reputation campaign, including the development of a messaging strategy, creative platform and an awareness campaign; and through a comprehensive capital campaign, including its unique but connected messaging strategy and creative expression. Goals of the partnership that will allow us to develop deliverables to meet the goals of the strategic priority: - Develop and refine the Live Western brand strategy and creative platform - Build a brand awareness campaign and media strategy (handoff for creative execution and media placement) - Create a messaging strategy and creative expression for the capital campaign - Execute specific capital campaign collateral - Provide ongoing creative and strategic consultation
7.1.2: Ensure consistency among vision messages from all internal sources to include reinforcement of WCU's role as a regional institution through its involvement in the NC Promise tuition plan and emphasis of UNC-approved institutional areas of distinction.	Office of the Chief of Staff Communications & Marketing Undergraduate Admissions Financial Aid Office Educational Outreach Office of Economic & Regional Development Office of the Provost	The Provost and Chief of Staff led a campus task force in Spring 2022 to revise the University's mission/vision statement (last updated in 2014) to clarify and reinforce WCU's role as a regional university with a commitment to access and affordability. Those themes are now prominently featured in WCU's mission (https://www.wcu.edu/discover/about/mission-vision.aspx) that was endorsed by its trustees and approved by the UNC Board of Governors in July 2022. Additionally, University Communications and Marketing continues to feature NC Promise, as a marquis feature of the University's value proposition, in marketing and advertisements across the region and state, with particular prominence in Asheville, Charlotte, and other population centers. The Chancellor also continues to represent WCU as a thought leader on higher education affordability in various venues. For example, she will be a featured panelist on affordability in higher education at the ElevateNC Cohort convening in Asheville in August sponsored by the Hunt Institute.

Goal 7.2 – Vision and External Communities		
Facilitate a shared understanding of the institution's strategic vision among the University's external communities.		
Strategic Initiatives	**Key Stakeholders**	**Summary of results to date**
7.2.1: Create and grow a meaningful hybrid blend of virtual and face-to-face engagement opportunities that equip both alumni and leadership boards to better advocate, serve, and contribute to Western Carolina University.	Division of Advancement Communications & Marketing Alumni Board of Directors WCU Foundation Board of Directors Catamount Club Board Center for Career & Professional Development Academic Deans Division of Athletics	Face to Face Engagement 1. Class of 2020 Celebration- a weekend long celebration of 2020 class to make up for COVID cancelling 2020 commencement. Included pregame tailgate, recognition during game, Sunday Commencement Ceremony. 2. Homecoming- activities expanded to include affinity groups (African American, EBCI, Latinx, and Military/ Veteran alumni and young alumni. 3. Alumni/Clubs- Jackson County alumni club created & active & affinity alumni societies including African American, EBCI, & Veterans very active including pregame football tailgates. 4. Centenarian Celebrations- special recognition of those alumni 100 y/o and older. Included cake, flowers, and recognition on social media and website. 5. Alumni Board Orientation- onboarding for new alumni board members including purpose, goals, expectations. 6. Reunions- African American Alumni Reunion Weekend welcomed back over 100 alumni & Soccer Alumni Reunion welcomed almost 100 alumni back as well. Virtual Engagement 1. Western Wednesdays-monthly virtual program is growing in popularity and is now live streamed on Facebook & YouTube and offered as podcasts.
7.2.2: Regularly complete a competitive analysis and external perception research to develop a reputation strategy, and a current market analysis to tailor the university's messaging accordingly.	Communications & Marketing Institutional Planning & Effectiveness Office of the Chief of Staff	An in-depth perception and competitive analysis study was completed in Fall of 2021. The study was comprised of over 480 distinct voices including administrators, alumni, faculty, staff and students. We had over 1,500 external participants and measured against 10 competitors. Western Carolina University's reputation strategy project was commissioned to clearly define the institution's authentic personality and master positioning strategy. A precise understanding of the institutional identity and market opportunity allows WCU to deliver consistent, personified, and targeted messaging capable of building greater brand affinity and engagement. Through consistent personification, it allows WCU to break through a noisy marketplace to reach its audiences in more powerful ways. Engaging internal audiences, external perceptions, and competitive analyses has surfaced the broader understanding of WCU's personality.

Goal 7.3 – Mix of Financial Resources		
Maximize and target a balanced and diverse mix of financial resources that will enable achievement of the University's strategic vision.		
Strategic Initiatives	**Key Stakeholders**	**Summary of results to date**
7.3.1. Explore innovative revenue generation strategies to minimize the cost of higher education to students, as far as practicable.	Financial Planning & Analysis Division Heads Auxiliary Administration Educational Outreach Advancement Tuition and Fees Committee	Worked with the UNC System Office and BOG in spring/summer 2022 to study funding strategies for Athletics programs. Worked with Verizon to study the possibility of adding cell antenna on Harrill Hall, which would produce additional revenue and improve cell coverage on campus and in Cullowhee.
7.3.2: Implement a comprehensive plan to increase significantly the advocacy efforts among elected officials on behalf of University and system priorities, adjusting as necessary due to shifts in the external or political landscapes.	External Relations Office of Economic & Regional Development Communications and Marketing WCU Foundation Board of Directors Campaign Steering Committee	Worked with the UNC System Office and BOG in spring/summer 2022 to study funding strategies for Athletics programs. Worked with Verizon to study the possibility of adding cell antenna on Harrill Hall, which would produce additional revenue and improve cell coverage on campus and in Cullowhee.
7.3.3: Seek private support through philanthropic gifts and grants to increase support for academic excellence and the student experience, diversity, equity, and inclusion, regional engagement, athletic facilities, unrestricted annual support, and other philanthropic priorities to increase the baseline of philanthropic support	Division of Advancement Graduate School & Research Educational Outreach Division of Athletics Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity Programs Academic Deans Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning Communications and Marketing	A new legislative agenda was adopted in March 2022, featuring three key areas: Salary and Benefit enhancements to address inflationary and equity pressures, planning for growth needs of the College of Engineering and Technology and establishment of a prestigious merit scholarship program. The 2021-23 state legislative budgets provided across the board salary increases (6%), bonuses to specific categories of employees and a 1% salary adjustment fund targeted for retention and recruitment of critical positions. While helpful, these funds do not address all equity or inflationary pressures for WCU employees. Funding was also set aside at the UNC system level to assist with previously funded capital projects that may experience supply chain and materials inflationary cost escalation. Solid groundwork is in place to further conversation on the College of Engineering and Technology agenda item. Research is underway to develop the framework for Merit Scholarship item. 2022 midterm elections will bring significant change in WCU's federal and state legislative delegation, due to a unique number of open seats. Active relationship development will be key to additional progress.
7.3.4: Increase the number, value, and competitiveness of sponsored research proposals while increasing research support and productivity.	Office of Research Administration Provost's Office Faculty Committee on Research Academic Deans	In FY 22 faculty and staff submitted 74 grant proposals for a total of $20,749,614 which represents a 30% and 23% decrease from the prior year. In FY 22 faculty and staff received 67 awards for a total of $7,624,595 which represents a 1.5% decrease and 6% increase from the prior year. In FY 21 there was a record number of grant proposals and dollars submitted which contributed to the increase in grant award dollars for FY22. However, there was a significant decrease in proposals in FY22 compared to the previous year. In addition, the Office of Research Administration funded seven Provost Scholarship Development Internal Grants for a total of $84,657, a 129% increase compared to the previous year. The goal of these projects is to initiate research leading to future submission of externally funded proposals.