

# HIGHER VALUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION 2017-2027

Month, Day, 2022

## Preamble

*Western Illinois University was founded in 1899 as the Western Illinois State Normal School to address teacher preparation in the State's grammar schools. The faculty and students of Western were eager to*

HIGHER VALUES IN HIGHER

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## Executive Summary

### *Our Plan*

As updated in 2022, *Higher Values in Higher Education 2017-2027*

vision for the next five years. It is based on results from empirical environmental scanning completed by the Social Responsibility Task Force, which was comprised of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members during academic year 2017-2018, as well as from a year-long, university-wide discussion, evaluation, and revision and the Strategic Plan Revision Steering Committee in 2021-22.

**This plan is a call to action**



Action 7: Enhance and deliver innovative and accessible academic programming within and across disciplines.

Goal 2: Advance Educational Opportunity

Action 1: Focus on quality in every aspect of the institution, experience, classroom experience, and residential life experience.

campus

Action 2: Engage in educational outreach and recruitment activities.

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5. Community outreach and service activities.
6. Education abroad opportunities.
7. Co-curricular and leadership experiences.

*Action 2: Recruit, support, and retain high-potential, diverse students, faculty, and staff and deliver financial supports to high-achieving, high-potential students*

a) Advance Faculty

- a) education, undergraduate majors, and graduate programs to inform curricular revision and development. in general
- b) Support multidisciplinary course, program, institute, and center development and sustainability.
- c) Demonstrate institutional commitments to instruction by maintaining the highest percentage of institutional expenditures in support of instruction and the academic mission of the University.
- d) **Better integrate Western Online into the daily operation and delivery of academic curriculum.**

**Action 4: Provide strong commitments to research, scholarly, and creative activities**

We will continue to demonstrate strong commitments to research, scholarly, and creative activities.

The faculty and staff of Western Illinois University are highly accomplished in scholarship and creative activities. **In order to continue this success, we will:**

- a) Allocate institutional resources and assistance to support research, scholarly/creative activities, and grants of faculty and staff.
- b) Evaluate the effectiveness of programs, services and events designed to support scholarship and creative activities.
- c) Use available resources to support **student**, faculty, and staff travel to professional associations, conferences, and workshops, which is a necessary component of tenure and professional currency.
- d) Support faculty sabbaticals as a means for faculty members to advance their research and scholarly agendas.
- e)



University Television, WQPT-Quad Cities Public Television, and Tri-States Public Radio provide educational programming that supports life

## GOAL 2: ADVANCE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

We define educational opportunity as providing a service to high-potential, diverse students with high-quality academic programs and learning communities. We have a strong academic portfolio and we will continue to deliver excellent educational opportunities to our immediate region and the surrounding communities.

Action 1: Focus on quality in every aspect of the institution, including the student's campus experience, classroom experience, and residential life experience.

We will increase recruitment efforts by increasing market share enrollments; expanding recruitment partnerships; enhancing university commitments to diversity, the military, and place bound students; engaging in continuous improvements; and providing new educational opportunities.

- a) Increase year-round educational outreach activities that bring prospective applicants to Western Illinois University and engage faculty and staff who want to participate in these actions .
- b) Bring more applicants and students who have been accepted to campus prior to initial registration and enrollment.
- c) Implement specific strategies to capture a greater market share of enrollment from the immediate 16-county service region to prevent continued population loss in west central Illinois.
- d) attract more dual enrolled **students**, freshmen, transfers, and graduate students from Illinois and beyond.
- e) Increase recruitment partnerships.
  1. Document plans and outcomes from **the numerous HVHE supplemental plans** in helping with educational outreach, enrollment stabilization, and growth.
  2. Expand institutional partnerships with foundations and external organizations that support educational outreach and student recruitment.
  3. **Participate** in statewide and national associations and initiatives designed to increase student enrollment.
  4. Increase the number of partner schools and high school dual enrollment **students**.
  5. Develop new partnership agreements with community colleges, including pathway degree program partnerships for students. These pathway agreements should clearly delineate classes that transfer from community colleges and how students can go about submitting a class to be evaluated for credit.
- f) Expand institutional commitments to diversity, the military, and place-bound students.
  1. Develop, implement, and evaluate specific plans designed to increase the enrollments of minority students, female students, and individuals with disabilities in accordance with *Illinois Public Act 85-283* to increase the enrollments and decrease the **opportunity**

completion program for working professionals, many of whom are



programming and/or early admission programming.

- b) Publicize departmental protocol for the awarding of credit for prior learning and life experiences whereappropriate to the discipline.
- c) Participate in all facets of the Illinois Articulation Initiative to promote successful student transfer.
- d) Increase responsiveness to student needs by expanding delivery modalities that promote increased

## Goal 3: Support Personal Growth

We will continue to take a holistic approach in supporting the personal growth of students, faculty, and staff. With the understanding that optimal health and wellness supports optimal personal and professional growth, we provide comprehensive programs, services, and events in these areas. We also emphasize the sense of belonging and community. Engagement inside and outside the classroom is a proven correlate of goal attainment, student persistence and completion, and professional achievement.

Our support of personal growth extends to community-university engagement, and the social, economic, and cultural development and enrichment opportunities it provides. We value lifelong learning and participation in university events to these ends.

### *Action 1: Promote Mental and Physical Health and Wellness of Students, Faculty, and Staff*

We will continue to support physically and psychologically-healthy lifestyles and learning and working environments. **To cultivate mental and physical well-being in every aspect of university community, we will:**

- a) Increase health, wellness, and recreational programs, services, and activities provided by the University.
- b) Expand health, wellness, and recreational partnerships with local/regional providers to address needs and services for students, faculty, and staff.
- c) Evaluate the feasibility of establishing new sports clubs and other areas of campus recreation.

### *Action 2: Enhance Student and Community Engagement*

We will **insist that** students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members become more engaged with the University. Participation in these events supports analyzing ideas, experiences, and lines of reasoning and artistic display in depth; forming new ideas and understandings; encouraging contact among individuals from different backgrounds; and engaging in lifelong learning.

Participation and support of female and male intercollegiate athletic programs also has many benefits related to personal growth.

- a) Engage high-profile university speakers on both campuses to increase campus and community engagement
- b) Use artist/scholar/expert-in-residence programs to enable visiting professional(s) to be actively engaged with students, faculty staff, and community members on items of interdisciplinary interest (e.g., tax preparation, religious understanding) during their stay at the University
- c) Provide the university and surrounding communities with a diverse season of quality cultural entertainment opportunities
- d) Offer professional development opportunities in academic disciplines to members of our host and external communities
- e) Enhance opportunities for lifelong learning of senior citizens
- f) Support a broad-based National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I and Football Championship Series varsity intercollegiate athletics program. This includes funding commitments to

within our respective conferences and nationally

- g) Demonstrate strict adherence to NCAA operating principles related to governance and rules compliance, academic integrity, equity, and student-athlete welfare
- h) Host arts and selected athletic events in the Quad Cities to increase community engagement and support for the University



## Goal 4: Promote Social Responsibility

We will continue to uphold our social responsibilities. Students, their families, taxpayers, and donors invest in the *Mission* of Western Illinois University to prepare students, faculty, and staff to lead in dynamic and diverse communities. And we have a social responsibility to provide safe, accessible, responsive, and sustainable environments to support our academic mission.

In preparing students to lead in dynamic and diverse communities, we will advance civic engagement and economic development. We will work with business, industry, education, governmental agencies, municipalities, non-profit agencies, and other individuals from the public and private sectors to make Western Illinois University the partner of choice in advancing educational, organizational, cultural,



charged with finding innovative solutions for rural issues that can be implemented in Illinois and providing technical assistance to policy makers. These efforts have focused on economic development, value-added rural development, health care, transportation and infrastructure, public management, housing strategies, and information technology.

Institute (PEI). Members of the PEI are actively engaged in helping the University stabilize enrollment in addition to supporting community and economic development, and expanding external partnerships.

By valuing our role in university, community, and economic development, we will continue to work with members of the western Illinois region to recruit and retain talent, business, and industry, which in turn creates and expands jobs, and sustains a strong tax base. Likewise, we will use new and enhanced partnerships to leverage additional goals and priorities of the region and the University, with the latter including decreasing institutional tuition reliance

a) Enhance University partnerships.

1. Advocate for the restoration of fair and predictable funding to Illinois public higher education in general and Western Illinois University in particular
2. Cultivate new and existing donors.
3. Increase the value received from external giving.
4. Develop and launch the next comprehensive fundraising campaign for Western Illinois University.
5. Expand the percent of alumni giving to the University.
6. Increase the value received from grants and contracts.
7. Advocate for changes to statewide policy currently contributing to the statewide teacher shortage.
8. Develop a plan for the Alumni Association that links the goals and actions of this *Strategic Plan* to the work of the Association.
9. Consult with external advisory boards to help advance the academic mission and service operations of Western Illinois University, in addition to the goals and actions of this *Strategic Plan*.

b) Expand community and economic development partnerships by using the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs

5. Improve the quality of life for rural residents by partnering with public and private agencies on local development and enhancement efforts
6. Serve as a clearinghouse for information on rural issues, coordinate rural research, and work with state agencies on issues of importance to rural communities
7. Expand the use of credit and non-\_\_\_\_\_ sets of skills or knowledge. While not the traditional semester in length, these courses are intended for those who are already working and need to update their skills
8. Continue to support public-private partnerships to advance new and enhanced services to students, faculty, and staff in our host communities

***Action 4: Achieve the Goals of this Strategic Plan***

We will achieve the goals and priorities of this *Strategic Plan*. Every student, alumni, faculty, and staff member represents

- i. Monthly Strategic Plan Updates that summarize actions in progress and related accomplishments *[Vice President, Quad Cities and Planning]*.
  - ii. Annual Strategic Plan Updates that follow the format of Monthly Strategic Plan Updates, and use data from annual Planning and Accomplishments Reports as the primary source for documentation *[Vice President, Quad Cities and Planning]*.
  - iii. Annual Performance Reports to document institutional performance on *Strategic Plan* indicators compared to peer institutions *[Vice President, Quad Cities and Planning; Planning, Budget and Institutional Research]*.
- b) Ensure Western Illinois ongoing institutional quality and viability by maintaining the ongoing relationship with the Higher Learning Commission.
- 1. Submitting Financial and Non-Financial Indicator Reports annually *[Vice President for Quad Cities and Planning, Provost's Office, Financial Aid, Institutional Research and Planning]*.
  - 2. Host the review of the Quad Cities campus and off-campus locations in academic year 2019-2020, and the Macomb campus on-site visit in academic year 2020-2021 *[Vice President for Quad Cities and Planning, Faculty and Staff]*.
  - 3. Engage in the four-year assurance review in academic year 2024-2025 *[Vice President for Quad Cities and Planning, Social Responsibility Task Force]*.
  - 4. Continue to keep the Board of Trustees and other members of the University community informed of additional required Commission reporting *[Vice President for Quad Cities and Planning]*.

## Summary and Conclusion

As members of the Western Illinois University community, we share in the goals of recruiting, retaining, and graduating students in a transformative educational experience where students engage in the discovery, acquisition, and application of knowledge for personal enrichment and in preparation for future occupations and/or graduate and advanced studies. We do so in a manner that is **inclusive and engaging; it is educational**

2. Expand comprehensive substance abuse counseling, along with programs and services designed to prevent substance abuse *[Student Services]*.
3. Provide late night and alternative programming to promote healthy lifestyles *[Student Services, Quad Cities Student Services, Resident Assistants, Interhall Council, Student Government Associations and Registered Student Organizations on both campuses]*.
4. Increase student, faculty, and staff awareness of and programs and services related to students who have had their rights violated under Title IX, which includes, but is not limited to, protections for equity in athletics, sexual harassment and sexual violence, and transgender students *[Equal Opportunity and Access]*.
5. Implement strategies for addressing physical and program barriers for students and employees with disabilities *[University Diversity Council, Disability Resource Center, Equal Opportunity and Access, Facilities Management, Quad Cities Student Services, Quad Cities Facilities]*.