

Education. Innovation. Community.

Western Oregon University Strategic Plan 2024-2030

Introduction

Strategic Plans in higher education have traditionally been lengthy documents that did two things. 1) They attempted to describe in great detail every possible goal of a university, and 2) They did it in way that few could understand. This led to jokes about 400-page plans sitting on shelves gathering dust. I set out to do something different this time.

As you can see in universities that are making successful moves, and as many successful corporations have shown us, the benefit of a strategic plan is to provide the philosophical framework that empowers individuals and units to develop and achieve goals. It should be short, focused, defining, and memorable.

This new plan is the culmination of hard work by many people on campus. We established a Strategic Plan Committee who led campus conversations, gathered feedback with a survey, and consulted with faculty, students, and staff. The University Council and Senior Leadership also provided direct input. The planning began by evaluating the previous strategic plan, Forward Together, paying close attention to its merits and weaknesses. The goal then became to draft a new plan that builds on the philosophies in the old plan but moves Western Oregon University in new directions.

A strategic plan is both aspirational and inspirational. It sets a tone and provides a clear framework that the university can use to set objectives and make decisions. This plan explains who we are as an institution as well as who we plan to be. It points us clearly and directly into a future that is student-centered and built upon clear core values. And it explains to everyone that Western Oregon University is an institution built on **Education, Innovation, and Community**.

The next step will be for each main unit of the university to draft their own strategic plans that articulate the specific goals, objectives, and actions that we will use to meet the larger institutional goals. This process will demand that members of those units provide input and

develop key measures and benchmarks as those plans are crafted, implemented, and evaluated. They will also be expected to incorporate relevant elements of the Equity Action Plan into their strategic plans. And there will be clear metrics finalized for each outcome.

This will be a living document that can grow and evolve as we engage in our work. We will learn from the assessment and evaluation of our actions, making timely and needed adjustments to ensure successful implementation of the plan. And we will be guided by our Mission, Vision, and Core Values.

Strategic Plan Development Team

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- **Maddux Gillett**, Student Senate President 23-24
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Mission Statement

Western Oregon University provides a personalized learning community where individuals experience a deep sense of belonging and empowerment.

Vision Statement

Our vision is for Western Oregon University to be a model of intentional inclusion and accessibility. We strive to empower students to meaningfully impact our local community and beyond. Grounded in the principles of a public liberal arts education, we will enhance career and social mobility through a focus on critical thinking and communication skills that are essential for successfully navigating the complexities of life.

Core Values

Our core values are the fundamental beliefs and guiding principles that shape the identity, culture, and actions of Western Oregon University. They serve as a foundation for planning, implementing, and evaluating initiatives. Decisions, interactions, and priorities will reflect the deeply held convictions that contribute to the ethical framework and mission of the institution.

Centering Students

At Western Oregon University, we put students first in everything we do. We are dedicated to enhancing the student experience by continually developing and improving the ways we work. Our decision-making is guided by a commitment to meeting student needs through innovation, inspiration, and data. We actively seek student input, ensuring their voices are heard and considered.

Embracing Diversity

Western Oregon University values the unique qualities and differences that make our community strong. Diversity is a positive, transformational force, and we work to foster meaningful inclusion, empathy, open communication, and a willingness to understand and learn from each other.

Fostering Accessibility

At Western Oregon University, we work to ensure inclusivity and eliminate barriers in our physical, social, and learning environments. We are dedicated to continuous improvement so that every member of our community can engage, contribute, and succeed.

Valuing Community

Western Oregon University is dedicated to building strong communities within the university, as well as in the region, in the state, and beyond. We proactively cultivate relationships and partnerships to enhance the education of our students and serve the needs of the community. Our institution is committed to civic engagement, economic development, and cultural enrichment.

Goals, Metrics, and Outcomes

1) Institutional Sustainability

Institutional sustainability refers to the ability of an educational institution to operate in a manner that meets the needs of the present without compromising future success. It involves a commitment to environmental, social, and economic practices that contribute to long-term viability and resilience.

Goal: Enhance the financial stability and sustainability of the institution through strategic financial planning, responsible resource allocation, and innovative revenue-generation initiatives, ensuring long-term resilience and success.

Sample Metrics: Fund balance; net revenue; enrollment; employee retention; endowment; state funding allocation; system efficiency

Outcomes:

- Western adapts to changes in the higher education landscape and implements strategic responses to emerging trends.
- Streamlined and efficient processes enhance teaching methods, research capabilities, resource allocation, and administrative efficiency.

2) Student Success

Student success is a comprehensive and multifaceted concept that encompasses various aspects of a student's educational journey and overall development. It goes beyond traditional measures of academic achievement and includes personal growth, well-being, and readiness for future endeavors. Student success is a dynamic and evolving process that recognizes and celebrates the diverse pathways and aspirations of individuals within the educational community.

Goal: Enhance degree completion rates for undergraduate, graduate, and transfer students, through strategic initiatives focused on academic support, streamlined pathways, and the necessary services that ensure timely and successful attainment of their educational goals.

Sample Metrics: 4 and 6-year graduation rates of first-year cohorts and transfer; 2 and 4-year graduation rates for community college transfer; completion rates for graduate students; job placement rates; access to and use of student support services

Outcomes:

- Students are supported in a way that fosters satisfaction, belonging, engagement, and empowerment.
- Students complete their educational goals and develop a lifelong learning mindset, preparing them for continuous education and professional development throughout their careers.

3) Transformational Diversity

Rather than simply looking at numbers and data metrics as the defining measurements for a diverse environment, a belief in transformational diversity demands thoughtful and engaged actions that result in real and meaningful change. Transformational diversity focuses on developing and implementing diverse and inclusive philosophies and practices while evaluating and analyzing the effects on the institution.

Goal: Foster an inclusive educational, living, and work environment at Western Oregon University, ensuring that students and employees feel a profound sense of belonging and have abundant opportunities for growth and success.

Sample Metrics: Campus Climate Survey; employee retention and advancement/promotion data; student retention and persistence data; NSSE Engagement Indicators; Equity Action Plan outcomes; HSI designation

Outcomes:

- The overall quality and richness of the Western community is enhanced by diverse and talented students and employees.
- Western establishes positive, collaborative, and accessible learning and working environments that promote creativity, innovation, and effective teamwork.

4) Community Strength

A university is built around a variety of communities. Classrooms, departments, units, divisions, teams, interdepartmental work groups, etc. are made up of individuals who must navigate multiple voices and perspectives. Strengthening the ways that communities interact, paying close attention to accessibility, collaboration, and communication allows employees and students alike to grow in positive ways.

Goal: Cultivate and maintain a culture at Western Oregon University that embraces collaboration, connection, and communication as we build meaningful partnerships with internal and external communities, while enriching the educational experience of our students.

Sample Metrics: NSSE data on High Impact Practices, specifically service learning and internships or field work; Engagement Indicators, specifically campus environment; partnerships with local businesses, organizations, schools, and government entities

Outcomes:

- Students feel connected to a larger community and see the real-world relevance of their academic pursuits.
- The Western Oregon University community and community partners work with a sense of shared interest and mutual benefit, navigating external factors, such as economic shifts, policy changes, and global events, with a proactive and adaptive approach.