



Westfield State University
STRATEGIC PLAN
2018–2023

STRATEGIC PLANNING TOUCHPOINT II

SETTING THE ROADMAP WITH A FOCUS ON:



**THE STUDENT
EXPERIENCE**



ENROLLMENT



CULTURE



RESOURCES

DRAFT

Submitted to:
Strategic Planning Committee
Massachusetts Board of Higher Education
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Westfield State University

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Westfield State University strategic plan is built on sustained dialogue among stakeholders, data gathering on workforce needs and institutional benchmarking, and thoughtful consideration of priorities needed to reach our strategic goals. The plan outlines our institutional origins; steps in our strategic planning process; important markers of our campus context; mission, vision, values; strategic goals and priorities; and Westfield State's university-wide metrics designed to measure our success in meeting the **system-wide goals** established by the Department of Higher Education (DHE) for **college participation, college completion, and closing the achievement gap**.

The **strategic goals** of exceptional **student experience**, strategic **enrollment**, creation of a **culture** supporting our values, and expansion and stewardship of all types of **resources** will be actualized through priorities, initiatives, and strategies outlined in this document. Our evolving plan reaches across our organizational chart and deep into our community. The plan maps routes for campus-wide responsibility and engagement in the forward-thinking creativity necessary to manifest our mission.

The commitment to connection woven throughout this campus plan is inspired by the guidance provided by the DHE strategic planning framework. Two projects are emblematic of the ways our goals and strategies form a home for the DHE imperatives of integrating universities with P-12 partners, and providing for innovation and new academic programming. First, the **Westfield State Experience**, a signature program for student success, consists of first year cohorts, second year reflection and planning, third year engagement high impact practices, and finally, an intentional transition from college to career. The \$40 million renovation of **Parenzo Hall**, which will house the **Center for Student Success and Engagement**, is a cornerstone in our program planning. By housing student success projects in close proximity, staff with a common goal will be able to collaborate daily and students will be less likely to "fall through the cracks." **The Center for Innovation in Education and Industry Partnerships** provides a space for students and community partners to engage productively in online-hybrid environments to facilitate co-enrollment, expand course choices, and provide a bridge to employment. Moreover, during the life of this plan, our **transfer agreements** and **pathways to degree completion** with community partners will be expanded; P-12 partnerships will be extended and scaled up.

During the 2017–2018 academic year, Westfield State University managed the rippling effects of changes in leadership (five members of cabinet had been at the university for one year or less), took on a national search for three academic deans in the plan to move to a college structure, contended with its own local bias incidents reflective of the national culture, and yet, kept the campus and strategic plan moving.

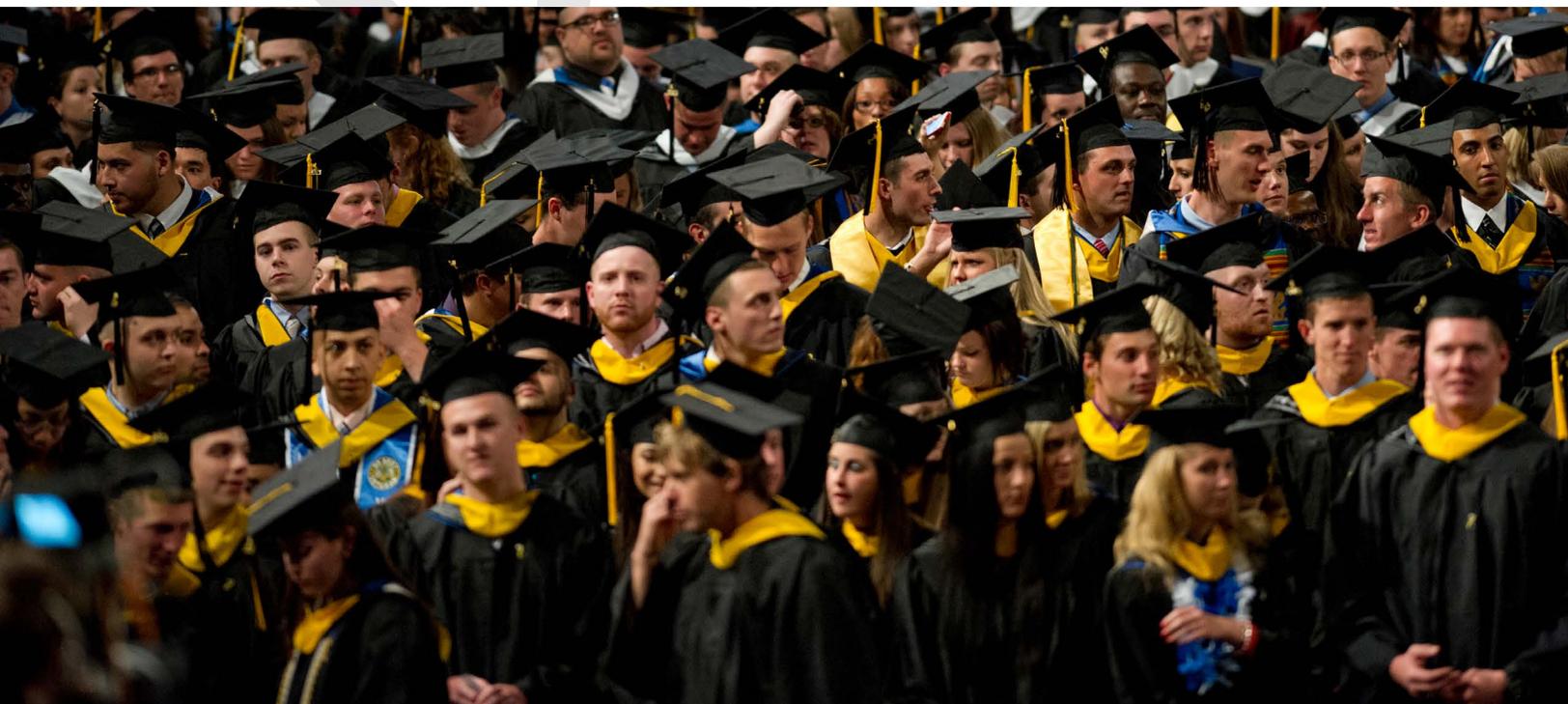
During the summer months, the cabinet and the Board of Trustees have refined the strategic priorities and set a five-meeting framework for solidifying the specific academic programs to be included in the final version of the plan. Driving the strategic goals toward implementation will require targeted and sustained efforts. Currently, the implementation plan is being designed and associated costs are being calculated. Our plan must attend to predicted changes in the student population, with enrollment projections indicating a decline of 10 percent from FY18 to FY24. Westfield State University's strategic planning links enrollment forecasts to budget planning, with all relevant projections being taken into account. Our initiatives include those to generate new revenue and intensify efficiencies.

Westfield State University proudly joins the institutions of the state system of higher education in planning for a vibrant future. Through achievement of the strategic plan Westfield State University will be recognized as a **model comprehensive institution committed to student success**. When the work of the plan is finalized and implemented, Westfield State University will remain true to its values, while being nimble and forward thinking in the dynamic and challenging higher education landscape.



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Our history is making history

Since our inception, Westfield State University has embraced the mission of a teaching institution, placing the student experience at the center of our work. Much has been written about the evolving landscape of higher education, the challenges we face from industry disruptors and intense competition for students on the horizon; yet as a public teaching institution our focus remains the same: providing an accessible high quality education. Thus while conversations on our campus about strategic planning sometimes brought to light places we need to adjust, refocus, and adapt, one point on which we all agreed is to maintain a vigilant focus on our students and their success. That focus is emblematic of our historical roots as a forward thinking institution.



HISTORY¹

On September 4, 1839, Westfield State University was founded in Barre, Massachusetts, as “one of the most important educational experiments in American history: the development of the normal school to provide teachers for the common schools of the mid-nineteenth century.”

On that first day, 20 pupils—12 women and eight men—gathered in the new town hall to begin a revolutionary project: free, public higher education for the citizens of the Commonwealth. In this, the first public coeducational normal school in the United States, all of the nation’s ideals would be embodied. An enlightened citizenry was seen as the necessary base for the democratic experiment being worked out in the new nation. A trained force of teachers was essential to prepare the country’s youth to take on the responsibilities inherent in the freedoms guaranteed under the Constitution.

As the first secretary to the Massachusetts Commission to Improve Education (later the State Board of Education), Horace Mann pursued his dream of a great system of free public schools, organized on solid educational principles which would be established in the “normal schools.” Westfield was to become one of the models for the “normal school” idea which would spread across the nation and much of the world.

Mann’s dream had humble origins. In two years at the Barre location, 160 students were taught with limited resources. The first principal and primary faculty member, Dr. Samuel P. Newman of Bowdoin College, also kept all records, supervised the dormitory and acted as janitor. In 1844, the Board of Education voted to move the campus to Westfield, where civic leaders had long sought a college for their community.

The Westfield Normal School thrived in its new setting. Faculty and graduates went on to found and staff comparable institutions across the country. In the 1870s, the Japanese government sent a prince to study at Westfield so that its practices could be emulated in Japan.

The school was especially important because it erected no barriers against students due to gender, race, religion, or income. Western Massachusetts native Samuel Chapman Armstrong, a commander of African-American troops in the Civil War, founded Hampton University for the

education of African-Americans and also sent ex-slave pupils to Westfield Normal School.

So, while not many so-called freedmen were able to take advantage of higher education opportunities at that time, attending Westfield Normal School was one of the few opportunities they had. Among them was Samuel Courtney, an African-American physician elected to the Boston School Committee in the 1890s, for whom one of the current campus residence halls is named.

Although its primary mission was the preparation of teachers, Westfield Normal School graduates entered careers as diverse as medicine, law, publishing, the ministry, and government service. In the words of Dr. Robert Brown, “For those pupils with ambition and a bit of luck, it became the gateway to new lives.”

In 1847, the alumni association was born when the first graduates gathered for a reunion in Westfield. National figures gave speeches, the local newspaper saturated its pages with coverage and “ladies of the village” prepared a feast for all. This tradition of linking the college and community continues through community service programs, education partnerships, and cultural events.

In the 1930s, the Normal School became a State Teachers College with a curriculum leading to the Bachelor of Science in education. Soon thereafter, alumni and citizens of Westfield led the hundreds of advocates who helped deflect proposals to close public teachers’ colleges.

After surviving this threat, the college again saw a period of growth, moving from the building which is now Westfield City Hall to the current Western Avenue campus, dedicated in 1956. In the 1960s, the state authorized the Bachelor of Arts degree as an alternative to the teaching program. As enrollment quadrupled between 1960 and 1967, the college added new buildings and instituted continuing education and graduate programs. In 1967, its name was changed to Westfield State College. For several decades, growth continued with expansion of the campus and programs, and in 2010, its name was changed to Westfield State University.

Today, as in decades past, the context of education in the Commonwealth provides opportunities to engage the historic strengths of our institution, while meeting contemporary demographic and workplace challenges with innovative programming.





CAMPUS IN CONTEXT

Strides in Success



100% pass rate
at the first sitting of the
NCLEX in 2017

In alignment with both workforce development needs as identified by workforce cabinet data skills and prospective student interest, we have invested in starting new, selected academic programs in both undergraduate and graduate areas, including an undergraduate degree in health sciences.



We are pleased to offer STEM-area courses in the Dr. Nettie M. Stevens Science and Innovation Center, which opened in the fall of 2016.



**STUDY ABROAD
OPPORTUNITIES**

28 increased to
providers,
offering more than
300 programs



**FIRST PHYSICIAN
ASSISTANT
program at a
Public University
in New England**



In our continued efforts to increase our retention and graduation rates, Westfield State began a series of initiatives including “first-year only” courses and a campus read.



Over
5,500 students
contributing over
61,000 hours
of service to our
communities each year



PARENZO HALL RENOVATION

Westfield State University received a \$21.25 million investment from the Commonwealth for capital repairs and improvements, to renovate our oldest building, Parenzo Hall. Through the Parenzo Hall renovation project, the University aspires to transform the dated building into a state-of-the-art hub for student success and workforce development. In addition to optimal space utilization, renovations will create two new centers—the Center for Innovation in Education and Industry Partnerships and the Center for Student Success and Engagement. The **Center for Innovation in Education and Industry Partnerships** will leverage technology to serve as the nexus for innovative collaboration in Western Massachusetts, partnering with K-12 school districts, community colleges, and industry partners. It will teach students and community partners how to engage productively in online-hybrid environments that increase flexibility for students, facilitate co-enrollment, expand course choices and provide a bridge to employment. Also within the renovated space, the **Center for Student Success and Engagement** will attend to the student-outcomes goals of the Vision Project. Currently, our student success programs are scattered, leaving students vulnerable to “falling through the cracks” and stifling the synergies that arise when staff with a common goal collaborate daily.

THE WESTFIELD STATE EXPERIENCE

The Westfield State Experience is our **four-year signature program** designed to **retain** students, make **high-impact practices** available to all students, and **close the achievement gap** by providing coherent and targeted programming throughout our students’ time at Westfield State. The **first year** experiences, including FYO courses and cohort groupings support students as they adjust to school. The **second year** guides students through a reflective process with the goal of each student developing a feasible road map to success built on a clear set of options. The **third year** engages students in high-impact practices. Our faculty have championed investment in undergraduate research and creative work, spearheading two student showcase events each year which have seen expansive growth. The number of poster presentations have more than doubled in the span of three years. Upon his arrival at Westfield State, President Ramon S. Torrecilha, Ph.D. committed to the development of a **Center for Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity (CURCA)**, which opens this fall in a newly renovated space in the Campus Center. **In the last year**, the students are supported in their process of transitioning to either a career or graduate school. This signature program is situated to play an essential role in the strategic plan and a key role in achieving the system-wide goals of college participation, completion, and closing the achievement gap.

ACCESS

We have taken advantage of the State University Internship Incentive fund each year. This year, we matched the state's funding of \$156,000 and distributed \$256,000 to support student internships. Furthermore, monies secured through fundraising efforts have defrayed the cost of tuition and fees, providing previously unattainable access to summer internships for 50 students.

PARTNERSHIPS

Westfield State has aggressively expanded partnerships with local public school systems and community colleges. Our Springfield-based **Reach-to-Teach** program engages high school students on a path to teacher licensure with their commitment to eventually teaching in their community. This program will expand to Holyoke.

Recently developed, **The Westfield Promise** early college program brings Westfield State faculty members into local high schools to team-teach college-level "stretch" courses. This program expands early college opportunities by targeting mid-level students who are not encouraged to consider college. This program enrolled 90 students during its pilot year in Westfield, Springfield, and Holyoke. Bringing the University's RN-to-BSN program to both **Springfield Technical Community College** and Greenfield Community College's Northampton location has facilitated better service of our educational partners. Furthermore, agreements have been signed with **Greenfield Community College**, opening a joint admission venture, as well as the **University of Massachusetts Law School** for a 3+3 program.



With enrollment growth and our continued status as the most residential of the Massachusetts state universities, we have continued to invest in residential life. A state-of-the-art residence hall opened in 2013 to house 411 students. The creation of living learning communities (LLC) have provided essential development opportunities for our students. Popular LLCs include **LGBTQIA** (i.e., supporting students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex and asexual or allied) and **Pave the Way** (i.e., first-year, transfer, and first-generation students with easier access to urban education and TRiO resources, among others). In addition, resident assistants have designed an event/discussion/short course with faculty members to strengthen connections among the campus community.



In 2016, Westfield State transitioned to a self-operated dining program with three goals; improve meal quality, support the regional economy by buying local, and become a more sustainable program. Through a partnership with the **University of Massachusetts Amherst**, Westfield Dining Services has shared best practices, healthy food sources, and programmatic resources. By all measures, the new dining program is a success and will be leveraged with the student housing program to provide a high-quality residential experience.



CAMPUS IN CONTEXT

External Factors

WORKFORCE

With more than 1,000,000 adults in Massachusetts with some college education or an associates degree, according to the US Census Bureau, there is an expansive set of learners who will need continued workforce training, degree completion, or life-long learning opportunities.

Partnerships with local and regional employers are crucial to meet the workforce needs of the Commonwealth. The environmental scan (see page 11) supports the importance of our long-standing and nascent partnerships with community colleges, public school districts, local businesses and organizations like the Economic Development Council, Greater Westfield and Springfield Chambers of Commerce and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

We are prepared to expand and update the workforce in Massachusetts in the most needed occupations in the Pioneer Valley and in the Commonwealth: nursing, accounting, social work, information technology and education.

New certificate programs, satellite site programs, stackable credit options, revision of legacy programs geared toward innovation and career pathways provide options for Westfield State University to reach and serve the learners of the Commonwealth. The Center for Innovation in Education and Industry Partnerships will play a central role in that endeavor.

OVER 400 area businesses, schools, and organizations rely on a **WESTFIELD STATE UNIVERSITY** student as a full or part-time intern/clinical placement **EACH YEAR**

HIGHER EDUCATION TRENDS

ROI

The value of a college degree is in question nationally as the cost of a degree outpaces subsequent growth in income. Colleges are being asked to establish and sustain a greater return on investment model.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The public is insisting on greater transparency about student outcomes and program performance.

NEW DELIVERY MODELS

Accelerated degrees, industry accreditation, and low-cost degrees are opening the post-secondary educational marketplace to a wider range of learners.

PERSONALIZATION

Student-centered, active learning is emphasized, along with a rejection of the “one size fits all” approach to education.

MICRO-LEARNING

Delivering content to learners in small, specific bursts over time or just when needed enables students to progress at their own pace.

HIGH-VELOCITY LEARNING

Active problem-solving experiences such as games, simulations, and role playing can be more effective teaching strategies for today’s learners.

NON-TRADITIONAL ENROLLMENT GROWTH

Enrollments by older students are projected to grow twice as fast as those of traditional students from 2012–2022. This group is more concerned about money/cost of college, so financial aid leveraging is critical.

DIFFERING LEARNING MODELS AND MEDIA

Non-traditional students are more open to digital learning options, and prefer other adaptive/collaborative learning settings. Flexibility is key to the other time demands and obligations they face.

DISRUPTIVE PROVIDERS

Continued growth of new, “disruptive” providers, challenging traditional degree credentialing, and focusing on outcomes such as job placements, advancement, and salaries.

COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION MODELS

These models, along with data driven outcomes assessment, and progress tracking are growing in popularity.



STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS



STEP 1: FORMATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

GOAL: ENGAGE A BROAD BASE OF CAMPUS COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Consists of representatives from across the campus including faculty, staff, students, and administration as well as two trustees, invited to serve as special guests at each meeting.

STEP 2: CAMPUS KICK-OFF

GOAL: PROVIDE THE COMMUNITY WITH AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS AND GENERATE SUPPORT

- Established a strategic planning website and email address to ensure that members of the community had consistent access to information.
- On September 8, 2017, DHE Commissioner Dr. Carlos Santiago came to Westfield State and conveyed the crucial message that we must prepare our campus for a shifting student population and attend to the economic need of the region. The kick-off event began with a meeting with the strategic planning steering committee followed by a campus-wide town hall and a reception.
- Over 200 members of our campus community attended the Strategic Planning Kick-off event.

STEP 3: CAMPUS DIRECTION

GOAL: INITIAL INPUT FROM THE CAMPUS REGARDING THE DIRECTION OF THE PLAN.

Focus Groups

- 12 focus groups
- 77 participants (students, staff, faculty, trustees, alumni & foundation members)

Focus group highlights

- Beautiful, safe campus
- Caring faculty and staff
- Extensive student support services
- Wide array of academic programs
- Aging infrastructure
- Talent loss
- Issues related to poor communication

STEP 4: DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIC GOALS

GOAL: INPUT FROM THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY TO DETERMINE THE STRATEGIC GOALS

An online survey was utilized to conduct a SWOT analysis. The survey was open to all faculty, staff, administrators, Board of Trustee members, and a random sample of the student population. The survey contained both closed-ended and open-ended questions and included items addressing topics such as academic programs, campus climate and resources.

The survey was sent to over 7,000 possible participants and was completed by nearly 700 Westfield State stakeholders.

Participation rates: 70% college administrators, 45% trustees, 47% full-time faculty, 30% of staff. Adjunct faculty, alumni, and students' response rates were 4%, 5% and 7% respectively.

SWOT Survey: Key Quantitative Results

Of seven potential university initiatives (opportunities) offered on the survey, those of highest priority to respondents were:

- Improve communications and open discussion across the Westfield State community
- Emphasize programs that make Westfield State unique
- Strengthen Westfield State's infrastructure to support academic and administrative operations and functions

When asked to rate the extent to which nine factors could prevent Westfield State from achieving its educational mission, respondents most frequently selected the following:

- Budget constraints for salaries, financial assistance, recruitment efforts
- Lack of responsiveness to changing student expectations and needs
- Trends that are impacting all of higher education

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with a number of statements about Westfield State within broad institutional categories. Those items with 75%+ respondent agreement included:

Institutional Environment/Culture

- Westfield State is a good place to learn

Academics

- Westfield State students are encouraged to be involved in internships

Student Engagement

- Westfield State offers appropriate academic support for students
- Westfield State cares about student success

Facilities

- Westfield State library is appropriate to meet the needs of the institution

Westfield State University | Strategic Planning Process

Overall, fewer respondents expressed agreement with the statements related to Communication at the University than any other category, and this was particularly true for the following statements:

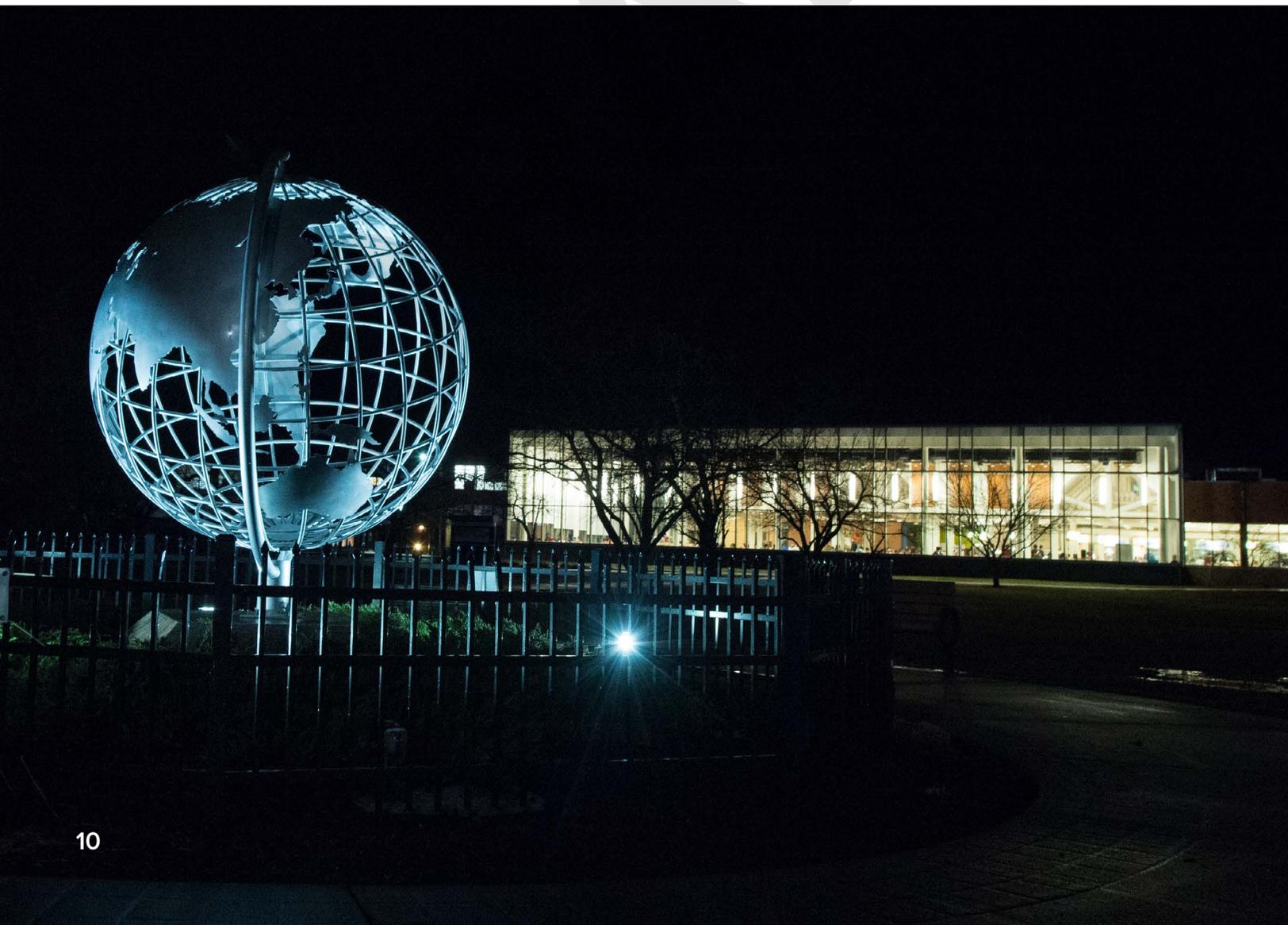
- Westfield State communication is top-down, and bottom-up
- Communication between the Westfield State administration and faculty/staff is good.

Also of note, senior administrators agreed that communication between the Westfield State administration and faculty/staff is good at more than twice the rate of faculty or staff (59% vs. 29% and 26%, respectively).

SWOT Survey: Key Qualitative Results

Open-ended items yielded direction in specific areas. For example, the results of the qualitative items indicate that we are in need of work in:

- Creating an inclusive environment for students, faculty and staff
- Modernizing the curriculum
- Updating our use of technology in a variety of areas
- Making processes and procedures more manageable for students
- Being transparent in decision-making



STEP 5: ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

GOAL: ASSESS THE ENVIRONMENT FOR WESTFIELD STATE OVER THE NEXT DECADE AND MORE TO ADD CONTEXT TO OUR PLANNING

The consulting firm provided Westfield State with an environmental scan that combined data from a variety of local, regional, and national sources.

Key Findings Westfield State enrollment²:

- Over the last decade, total enrollments across the MA state colleges increased 14%. Westfield State exceeds the system average, but ranks third in total enrollment growth (22%)
- Westfield State's undergraduate enrollment growth in the last decade (20%) is also third highest among the MA state universities
- Graduate enrollments at most of Massachusetts' state colleges declined, but Westfield State grew its graduate student body by 50% over the last 10 years
- Nearly three-quarters of Westfield State's transfer students (72%) originate from the Massachusetts community colleges, ranking it first among the state universities (61% average)

Key findings workforce data³:

Occupations with the largest number of annual job openings requiring a college degree through 2024 include:

- Registered nurses, general and operations managers, accountants and auditors, software developers, preschool teachers, management analysts, elementary school teachers, and financial managers

The fastest growing occupations through 2024 requiring a college degree in Massachusetts include:

- Nurse practitioners, physical therapists, clinical counseling and school psychologists, personal financial advisors, registered nurses, and market research analysts.

The Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts identifies the region's largest industries as follows:

- Aerospace, creative economy, entrepreneur resources, financial services, health care, hidden tech, information technology, life sciences, manufacturing, medical devices, plastics, renewable energy, and tourism

There is a significant regional industry sector which requires STEM related credentials, including aerospace and other technical occupations

Key findings national trends:

- Shifting Demographics⁴ – Public flagship institutions are growing out-of-state share of entering freshman classes. Therefore, regional public colleges and universities pick up more of the in-state students who have fewer choices.
- Non-traditional Enrollment Growth⁵ – Enrollments by older students are projected to grow twice as fast as those of traditional students from 2012 to 2022. This group is more concerned about money/cost of college, so financial aid leveraging is critical.



STEP 6: ANALYZE THE DATA

GOAL: BRING A SET OF GENERAL STRATEGIC CONCEPTS TO THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY AND DEVELOP THOSE CONCEPTS

“Campus Dialogue Sessions,” members of the strategic planning committee conducted open sessions where community members were asked to engage with each other in small group, guided discussions of each of the strategic concepts derived from the focus group and survey data.

Participants: Over 170 members of the campus community participated in dialogue sessions in the month of March. Data from these sessions was used to expand on the strategic concepts to create draft strategic goals.

The draft strategic goals were then brought to each division by vice presidents for refinement and comment. More than 100 participants at this stage, including department chairs, and other leaders, first in an online working session and then in in-person working sessions designed to refine the goals and begin to build a pool of strategic priorities and strategies to support the goals.

In an interactive process, the data from these sessions was reviewed by the President’s cabinet to ensure cross divisional planning. The priorities were refined and then reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Strategic Planning.

STEP 7: PRESENTATION OF MATERIALS

GOAL: REVIEW PROGRESS AND ACADEMIC DIRECTION

In June, separate retreats were held for both the Board of Trustees (BOT) and the cabinet.

At the BOT retreat, the strategic plan, thus far, was presented to the members of the board. The members of the board explored their role in promoting these strategic goals, including suggesting initiatives and action steps exclusive to the BOT, as well articulating their role in supporting the action steps proposed by the campus community. BOT members will take part in discussions of the ongoing work of measuring the success of the plan as it is implemented, as well as their roles in providing financial support for the plan through the institution’s budgeting process.

At the cabinet retreat, the members of cabinet reviewed the work done within divisions to refine strategies and initiatives.



NEXT STEPS

To focus and deepen our nascent academic direction from five strategic working sessions with academic deans, college-specific meetings, chairs and program directors, and faculty are scheduled through September 2018. These sessions will solidify academic direction and commit to specific programs by September's end. At those sessions workforce data and departmental annual report data will be workshopped to align those data with program development and identify gaps in both existing and proposed programs.

Cabinet will collaborate to convene working groups by strategic initiative and discuss the locus of responsibility for, and assessment of, the outcomes of each initiative. The resulting implementation plan includes necessary costs associated with initiatives. Enrollment Management and Administration and Finance are engaged in a coordinated effort to bridge enrollment projections with the budget planning process. This information is being shared with appropriate constituencies to determine the financial cost of each initiative and note additional resources for implementation and assessment. Iterations of this work will be shared with the Strategic Planning Committee for feedback.

During the fall semester we will submit the plan to the Westfield State University Board of Trustees for approval and bring the approved plan forward to the Board of Higher Education.



MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

Refined Mission, Vision and Values

Our work on the mission, vision and values was a process of reaffirmation and refinement. With input from the community, the Strategic Planning Committee worked to create a more succinct mission, vision, and values statement while maintaining our core principles.

Mission

Westfield State University is a public institution offering accessible quality undergraduate and graduate programs in the liberal arts, sciences, and professional studies. Our welcoming community focuses on student engagement and success. We contribute to the economic, social, and cultural growth of the northeast region by developing the knowledge, skills, and character essential for students to become responsible leaders and engaged citizens.

Vision

Westfield State University strives to be the premier public comprehensive institution in the Northeast region through its commitment to student engagement and success.

Values

Westfield State University commits to values that strengthen a common bond among all members of our community. These values represent a commitment to others, a commitment to ourselves, and a commitment to a diverse learning environment where everyone is respected.

OUR VALUES:

EMBRACE DIVERSITY:

We treat all members of our community with dignity and respect.

BUILD A STRONG COMMUNITY:

We are inclusive and ensure equity, supporting the personal development of all community members, and embracing multiple perspectives.

MAINTAIN EXCELLENCE AND INTEGRITY:

We maintain excellence and integrity in all that we do.

ENGAGE IN THE OUTSIDE COMMUNITY:

We support civic engagement in local, regional, and global initiatives.

COLLABORATE WITH EACH OTHER:

We make decisions in a transparent and collaborative manner.

PROVIDE ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION:

We commit to providing an accessible, affordable public higher education for all.



STRATEGIC GOALS

Westfield State University Strategic Goals

THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

As a teaching institution our focus has always been on our students. Naming the student experience as our central strategic priority keeps our focus on our mission, reinforcing for us that our goal is to provide access to an exceptional student experience both in and out of the classroom for all of our students.

ENROLLMENT

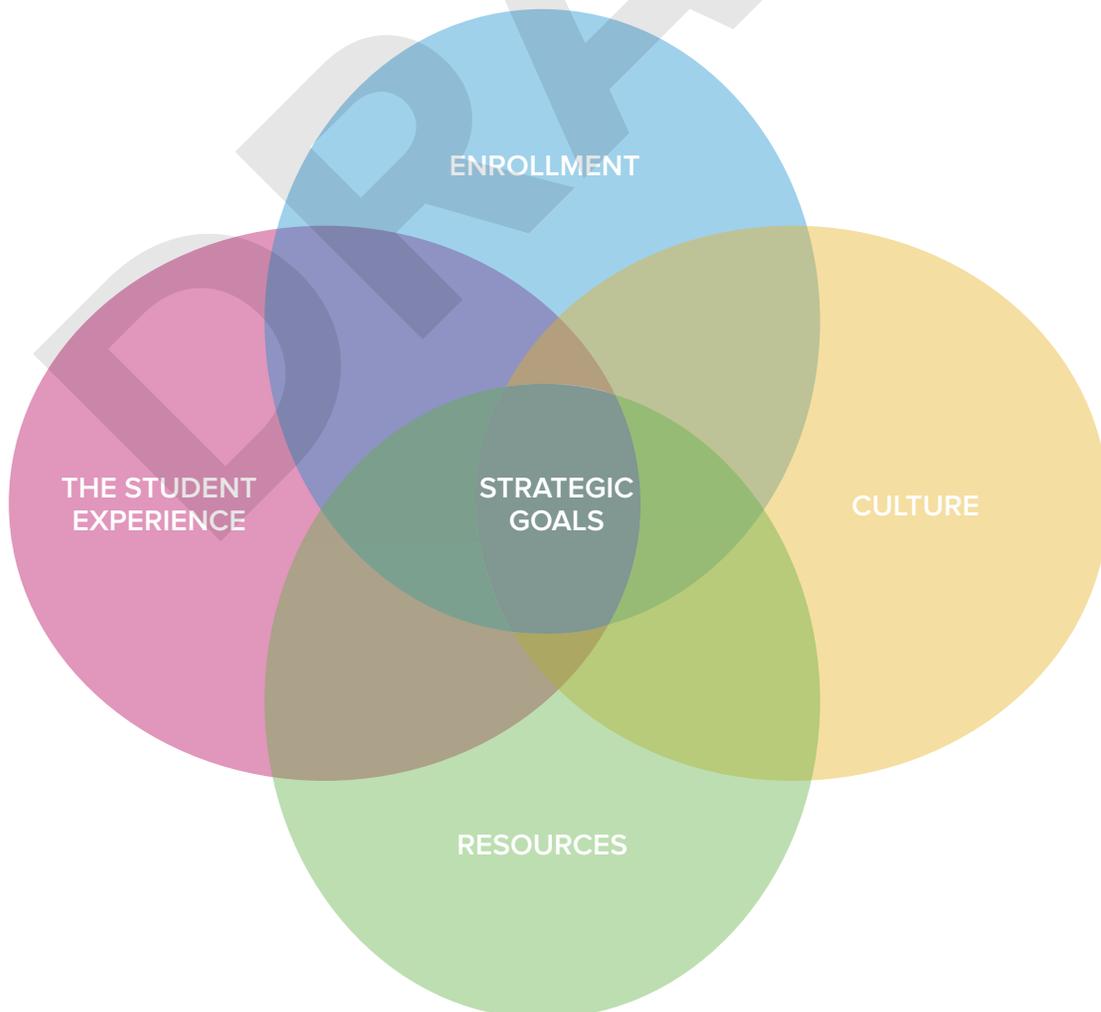
The institution needs to face, head on, the data which indicate a consistent and dramatic decrease in the population of high school-aged individuals in Massachusetts and the northeast region. We must prepare to welcome and support an increasingly diverse population of students and recognize that their needs may differ. Strategic enrollment management will prepare us for the shifting demographics and support our mission to contribute to the economic, social and cultural growth of our region.

CULTURE

Attention to the culture of the institution provides the opportunity to prioritize programs and initiatives that support our values including diversity, inclusion, respect, and collaboration while improving communication in all directions. The stronger our institutional culture, the better the experience for our students.

RESOURCES

In light of the continued decline in financial support from the state and the shifting demographics of the student population, the institution must engage in extensive and sustained development of, and planning for, resources of all types to insure a stable institution and implementation of mission critical initiatives that support student success.



GOAL 1:

THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: ACCESS TO A FULLY INTEGRATED AND EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE

PRIORITY 1:1 STRENGTHEN THE COMMON CORE AND MODERNIZE ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING

Strategies

- 1:1:1 Revise the common core, keeping in mind liberal arts competencies
- 1:1:2 Reform legacy programs geared toward innovation and career pathways
- 1:1:3 Build new and responsive undergraduate and graduate stackable credit options

See also strategy 4:2:1

PRIORITY 1:2 OPTIMIZE THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE BY ALLEVIATING BARRIERS IN AND OUT OF THE CLASSROOM

Strategies

- 1:2:1 Implement Westfield State Experience programming and create synergy among existing student support programs such as TRIO, Urban Ed, Banacos Center, Reading and Writing Center
- 1:2:2 Analyze and enhance the academic advising structure and process
- 1:2:3 Create a seamless experience for day and CGCE students
- 1:2:4 Assess and enhance and student activities for residential and commuter students

GOAL 2:

ENROLLMENT: PREPARE TO RECRUIT, WELCOME, AND SUPPORT STUDENTS IN AN INCREASINGLY COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT

PRIORITY 2:1 ENGAGE THE ENTIRE CAMPUS IN THE WORK OF RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, GRADUATION

Strategies

- 2:1:1 Increase academic profile of the university
- 2:1:2 Institute “Enrollment 101” training and reinforcement for employees
- 2:1:3 Increase coordination between divisions to advance stakeholder engagement in recruiting, retaining, mentoring students

See also, 1:1:1, 1:2:2

PRIORITY 2:2 SUPPORT STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT TO REACH A MORE DIVERSE POPULATION OF STUDENTS

Strategies

- 2:2:1 Develop additional 3+1, 3+2, 4+1 programs to serve the emerging northeast demographic
- 2:2:2 Expand partnerships with local public-school systems for early college, including the Westfield Promise

PRIORITY 2:3 INCREASE FINANCIAL AID

Strategies

- 2:3:1 Cultivate existing donors to increase endowed scholarship amounts
- 2:3:2 Commit institutional resources to financial aid
- 2:3:3 Develop net tuition models and increase yield rates

GOAL 3

CULTURE: CONSISTENTLY LIVE OUR INSTITUTIONAL VALUES

PRIORITY 3.1 CREATE A COLLABORATIVE, TRANSPARENT AND COMMUNICATIVE ENVIRONMENT THAT CELEBRATES ACCOMPLISHMENT AND INSTILLS PRIDE IN THE INSTITUTION

Strategies

- 3:1:1 Develop an institution-wide onboarding and consistent professional development program
- 3:1:2 Enact institutional values in everyday communication
- 3:1:3 Seek opportunities to build community

PRIORITY 3.2 ADOPT INCLUSION EVERYDAY AS AN INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Strategies

- 3:2:1 Implement and coordinate diversity and inclusion practices, policies and programs across the entire campus

See also: Priority 1:1 and Strategies 2:1:3, 2:2:3, 3:1:1, 3:1:2, 3:1:3

GOAL 4

RESOURCES: EXPAND THE INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

PRIORITY 4.1 DIVERSIFY REVENUE SOURCES BY SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES

Strategies

- 4:1:1 Develop financial incentive model to support innovation
- 4:1:2 Develop alternative revenue streams

PRIORITY 4.2. OPTIMIZE USE OF CURRENT RESOURCES UTILIZING TRANSPARENT PROCESSES

Strategies

- 4:2:1 Develop and implement thresholds and procedures to initiate, review, and eliminate programs and procedure
- 4:2:2 Develop internal expertise to support simplicity and automation while improving stakeholder satisfaction
- 4:2:3 Initiate a master plan process

PRIORITY 4.3 INVEST IN UPGRADING AND IMPLEMENTING TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

Strategies

- 4:3:1 Develop adaptable technologies to support the student experience



STRATEGIC GOALS

Strategies Addressing Statewide System Goals

Each of our university-wide strategic goals and priorities is developed to align directly with or to support the system-wide goals of **increasing college participation**, **college completion**, and **closing achievement gaps**. The strategies most directly impactful on the Westfield State student body, 94% of whom are sons and daughters of the Commonwealth, are mapped below onto the system-wide goals to which they are most closely matched. Priorities which act directly on the university as an organizational entity are not mapped here, as they attend uniformly to establishing the foundations of financial health and operational efficiencies required to meet system-wide goals.

COLLEGE PARTICIPATION

- Revise the common core
- Reform legacy programs geared toward innovation and career pathways
- Build new and responsive undergraduate stackable credit options
- Assess and enhance student activities for residential and commuter students
- Increase academic profile of the university
- Institute Enrollment 101
- Increase coordination between divisions to advance stakeholder engagement in recruiting, retaining and mentoring students
- Develop additional 3+1, 3+2, 4+1 programs to serve the emerging northeast demographic
- Expand partnerships with local public-school systems for early college, including the Westfield Promise
- Commit institutional resources to financial aid
- Cultivate existing donors to increase endowed scholarship amounts
- Enact institutional values in everyday communication
- Implement and coordinate diversity and inclusion practices, policies and programs across the entire campus

COLLEGE COMPLETION

- Build new and responsive undergraduate stackable credit options
- Analyze and enhance the academic advising structure and process
- Create a seamless experience for day and CGCE students
- Institute Enrollment 101
- Increase coordination between divisions to advance stakeholder engagement in recruiting, retaining, mentoring students
- Expand partnerships with local public-school systems for early college, including the Westfield Promise
- Commit institutional resources to financial aid
- Cultivate existing donors to increase endowed scholarship amounts
- Enact institutional values in everyday communication
- Seek opportunities to build community
- Implement and coordinate diversity and inclusion practices, policies and programs across the entire campus
- Develop adaptable technologies to support the student experience
- Develop internal expertise to support simplicity and automation while improving stakeholder satisfaction

CLOSING ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

- Implement Westfield State Experience programming and create synergy among existing student support programs such as TRIO, Urban Ed, Banacos Center, Reading and Writing Center
- Increase coordination between divisions to advance stakeholder engagement in recruiting, retaining, mentoring students
- Enact institutional values in everyday communication
- Seek opportunities to build community
- Implement and coordinate diversity and inclusion practices, policies and programs across the entire campus
- Develop adaptable technologies to support the student experience

COLOR KEY

	
THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE	ENROLLMENT
	
CULTURE	RESOURCES



STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND ACADEMIC DIRECTION

INITIATIVES

Strategic Initiatives and academic direction give the strategic plan life on campus. Below are specific initiatives proposed by University divisions and being discussed for implementation.

GOAL 1: STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Expand course development/revision grant programs

Expand number of hybrid and online delivery options

Integrate high impact pedagogies in student research and creative work, internships, and throughout targeted academic programming

GOAL 2: ENROLLMENT

Coordinate “emerging leaders” programming through student activities

Increase investment in ongoing professional development for personnel in management/supervisory roles

Develop mechanisms to acknowledge excellence in faculty and staff

Provide onboarding and consistent professional development for employees

ACADEMIC DIRECTION

Already we have begun the groundwork for an achievable plan resting on the linchpin of student success. The \$40 million dollar Parenzo Hall renovation project will house the **Center for Innovation in Education and Industry Partnership** and the **Center for Student Success and Engagement**. This successful planning and pairing evinced our capabilities to integrate workforce data, summon our community and K-12 partnerships, and prepare for the changing population of learners. Westfield State University’s past is marked by its success as an accessible institution offering a strong liberal arts core alongside regionally recognized professional programs. Its future will rest on meaningful common core reform, innovation and modernization of our curriculum in key areas and a solidification of our dedication to engaging pedagogies that deepen experiential learning. While we invest in our campus current strengths, we will also expand our reach to students and enhance the vitality of the Commonwealth by working with our regional partners to develop new, applied certificate programs and graduate programs. We will work with our community college and public school partners to scale up transfer agreements/dual admissions agreements and early college programming and work through our **Westfield State Experience** program, a campus-wide collaboration, to offer high impact, experiential learning opportunities, such as internships, to all students.

Academic program development under discussion turns toward high demand workforce areas like health, STEM, finance and business, social work and education. Building on the reputations of our criminal justice program, Westfield State University’s math and computer science departments are collaborating on developing a cybersecurity program. World languages and cultures is initiating a translation and interpretation program with emphasis on applications in social contexts including medicine. The Master of Public Administration seeks to bolster its offerings with a concentration. Off-site professional development courses with community partners are among the initiatives under consideration for implementation. Criminal justice is exploring an emphasis on rehabilitation and joining with theoretically and professionally relevant partners like social work. Economics and Business Management is prepared to mature a concentration to a full bachelor of science degree in accounting.

GOAL 3: CULTURE

Hold more open forums; record the open forums

Create office of diversity responsible for coordinating and supporting diversity on campus (faculty fellows, director, Title IX)

Implement campus climate survey

Hire more faculty and staff of color

Integrate Higher Ed/Higher Ground, diversity across the curriculum activities into the campus community

GOAL 4: RESOURCES

Develop revenue sharing model between academic departments and CGCE

Increase use of facilities during nonpeak times

Seek new partnerships that leverage existing strengths

Assess institutional capacity for comprehensive campaign (at year 3 initiate campaign)

Analyze current use of campus spaces

Strategically align use of space with institutional mission

Maximize potential of current advancement platforms for messaging relevant constituents

Continually review technology improvements and operational efficiencies across all units

While we will create initiative specific metrics to assess progress at the action level of the plan, the outcomes of the enactment of the plan should be measured by our persistent overarching goals, which are aligned with the system-wide goals to stabilize enrollment, increase accessibility, increase retention rates, increase graduation rates, and decrease the achievement gap. Below is an assessment of our current status in comparison to our peers with regard to two key critical indicators.

MASSACHUSETTS STATE UNIVERSITY PEER 2016 RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES

INSTITUTION	ONE YEAR RETENTION RATE FOR FULL-TIME STUDENTS (PERCENT)	SIX YEAR GRADUATION RATE (PERCENT)
Massachusetts Maritime Academy	87	76
Massachusetts College of Art and Design	90	72
Westfield State University	77	66
Bridgewater State University	80	59
Worcester State University	78	56
Framingham State University	74	55
Fitchburg State University	75	54
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts	79	53
Salem State University	79	52

The aspirational peer group below was constructed based on an initial list of public institutions, and then a combination of factors including size of undergraduate population, prevalence of full-time vs. part-time students, selectivity and Arts and Sciences and professional program mix. Of the 124 peer institutions who met these criteria, only 11 institutions had both a higher retention rate and six-year graduation rate than Westfield State University. These institutions form our aspirational peer group in the chart below.

ASPIRATIONAL PEER 2016 RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES

INSTITUTION	ONE YEAR RETENTION RATE FOR FULL-TIME STUDENTS (PERCENT)	SIX YEAR GRADUATION RATE (PERCENT)
The College of New Jersey	94	87
SUNY College at Geneseo	87	81
Ramapo College of New Jersey	86	73
SUNY Oneonta	83	72
Truman State University	87	72
State University of New York at New Paltz	87	72
Stockton University	86	70
Salisbury University	84	69
SUNY College at Brockport	82	68
Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania	83	68
University of Washington-Bothell Campus	84	67
Westfield State University	77	66

Source: IPEDS Fall Enrollment and Graduation Rate Surveys

COMPLETION, ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY, CLOSING ACHIEVEMENT GAP

MAJOR INDICATOR	BASELINE	TARGET
STUDENT EXPERIENCE: ACCESS TO A FULLY INTEGRATED, EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE		
Six-year graduation rate (IPEDS)*	66%	68%
Six-year graduation rate – black-white – closing achievement gap	-11% pts	-9% pts
Six-year graduation rate – Latino/a-white – closing achievement gap	-13% pts	-11% pts
Retention rate (IPEDS)	77%	80%
ENROLLMENT: PREPARE TO RECRUIT WELCOME AND SUPPORT		
Percentage of students of color**	22%	26%
Decrease the financial need gap for the highest need students	\$4,000	\$2,000
CULTURE: CONSISTENTLY LIVE OUR VALUES		
Number of faculty and staff of color	133	145
RESOURCES: EXPAND INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES		
Westfield State Foundation raises 1.5 million each year	***	\$7,500,000
Percent increase in non-tuition/fee revenue****	4.3%	5%
Maintain Composite Financial Index (CFI)	4.1	4.1

* Given the attributes of our current cohorts we can expect a dip in retention, leaving any increase as a heavy lift

** Overall student body, excluding attribute “unknown”

*** Historical average 750,000; 1.5 million is new base

**** Uses FY19 budget as the basis for the calculation

In line with the state’s Performance Measurement Review project, we intend to add both formative metrics and central indicators including Transfer Degree Seeking Graduation Rates and degree production trends in high demand occupations. We seek state direction and support for bolstering our efforts to collect data on employment rates and median income of graduates.

Metrics specific to our strategic priorities will be agreed upon and adopted in the fall, but will likely include indicators such as percentage increase in underserved student population participation in high impact practices such as internships, research and creative activity, learning communities, improved responses to campus climate surveys, and increased engagement in campus activities.



We are proud of our accomplishments and know that we have provided a more intense focus on student success over the past decade. It is within this context, that Westfield State University moved forward to create an institutional strategic plan encompassing a refined mission, vision and values statement and an aspirational, yet realistic, set of priorities and initiatives designed to move the institution forward in a challenging context. With our continued focus as a teaching institution committed to student success, we set out to take an honest look at the current state of our institution, its strengths and weakness, its programs and its practices. We committed to constructing a plan that built on our tradition as a student-focused institution, as we looked toward adapting for the future.

We learned a great deal from the months of dialogue with our community. The data in all of its forms, reinforced the centrality of our students and our dedication to their success. Members of our community agreed that our strengths include a dedication to student success, a strong array of academic programs, offering substantial student support services and that overall, Westfield State is a good place for students to learn. The data also revealed a general need to update communication, technology, professional development, programs, and resource distribution to keep the institution up-to-date and responsive to changing student expectations and needs. Thus, the work to develop our strategic planning goals, priorities, and strategies, again, emanated from our consistent focus on student success and the factors that would have the most impact on the student experience through the life of the strategic plan and beyond.

Notes

¹The Rise and Fall of the People's Colleges: The Westfield Normal School, 1839-1914 by Robert T. Brown, Westfield State University retired professor of history, and original director of the Raymond G. Patterson Alumni Archive. These notes are adapted from his previously published writings on the College's history.

²<http://www.mass.edu/datacenter/home/home.asp>

³<http://www.mass.gov/lwd/economic-data/projections>

⁴https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/nations-prominent-public-universities-are-shifting-to-out-of-state-students/2016/01/30/07575790-beaf-11e5-bcda-62a36b394160_story.html?utm_term=.792ca4fd4eff

⁵<https://www.bnccollege.com/Achieving-Success-for-Non-Traditional-Students-01-11-17.pdf>

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