



Westfield State University **STRATEGIC PLAN** 2019–2024

SETTING THE ROAD MAP WITH A FOCUS ON:



**THE STUDENT
EXPERIENCE**



ENROLLMENT



CULTURE



RESOURCES

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

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PLAN SUMMARY

The Planning Process and Document

The Westfield State University Strategic Plan asks—and addresses the question—**What do students need to learn to explore the problems that matter in the Commonwealth and to position the institution to address global change?**

Our plan addresses the pragmatic urgency for us to prepare to educate students from increasingly exciting and diverse backgrounds and to provide opportunity for further education to the one million adult learners with some college education in Massachusetts and beyond so they can serve the public good of building a vibrant economic, social, and cultural Commonwealth.

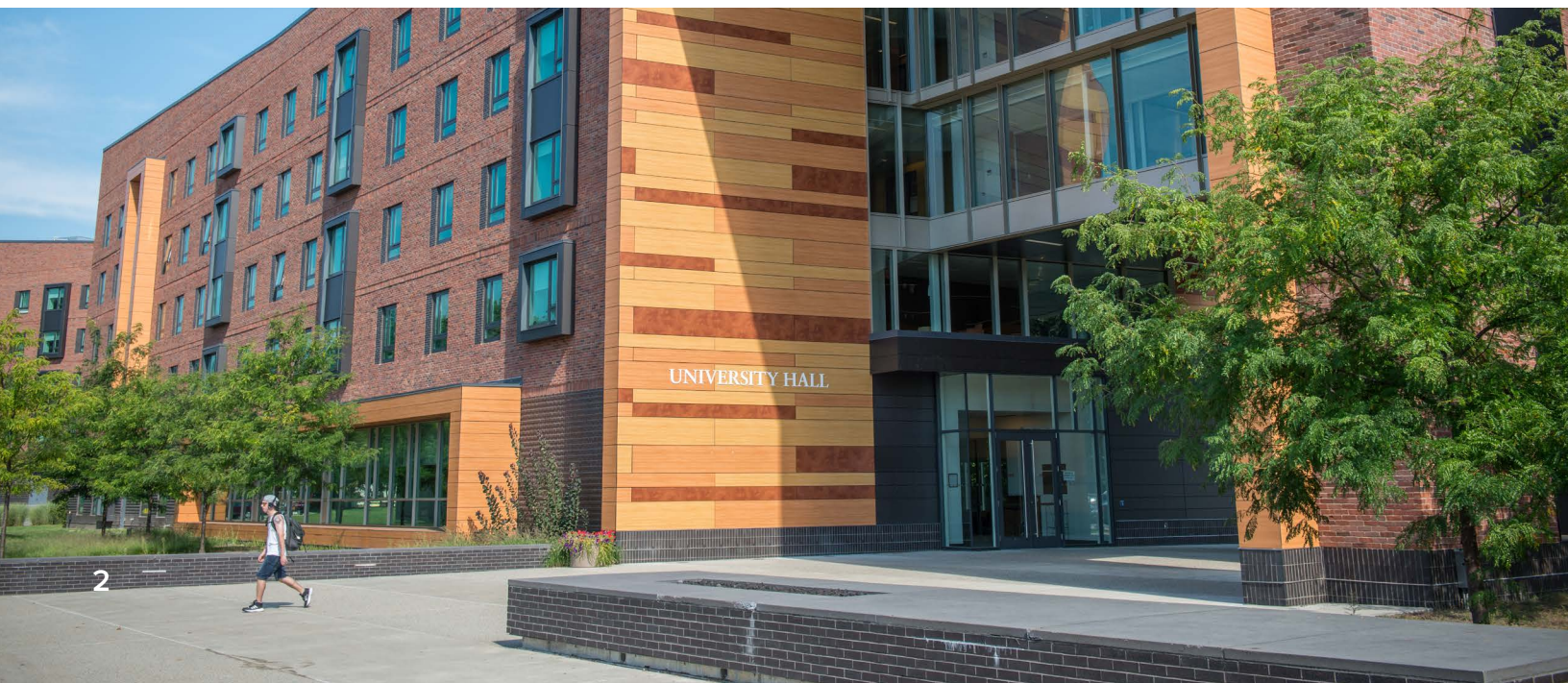
This document is organized to share with the reader:

- An overview of the plan and our campus history,
- The campus contexts that shape our location in the state system of higher education,
- The campus engagement that made this plan a successful community-building endeavor,
- The dimensions of the plan itself: mission, vision, values; strategic goals and priorities, metrics
- The implementation scaffolding that ensures our campus actions are tied to achieving our goals

STRATEGIC GOALS

Building on sustained dialogue among stakeholders, data gathered on workforce needs and established institutional benchmarks, the Westfield State University Strategic Plan provides articulation of the actions needed to reach our strategic goals: exceptional student experience, strategic enrollment, creation of a culture supporting our values, and expansion and stewardship of all types of resources. Our plan reaches across our organizational chart and deep into our community. It maps routes for campus-wide responsibility and engagement in forward-thinking action to manifest our refined mission.

The commitment to connection woven through this campus plan is inspired by our institutional history and by the guidance provided by the Department of Higher Education strategic planning framework: integrating universities with P-12 partners, and providing for innovation in, and new, academic programming.



THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

As a comprehensive university our academic direction is the foundation of our goal to provide for an exceptional student experience at Westfield State University. Westfield's academic direction hinges on partnerships, strong and plentiful and creative. An academic direction rooted in partnership provides for integrative education along the life cycle continuum. By partnering with P-12 districts, community colleges and industry leaders, Westfield State University will create a college-going culture in Western Massachusetts and beyond, and provide student-centered curricular models to respond to the changing needs of our student population and the changing features of workforce alignment.

As our academic direction achieves the goal of a fully integrated and exceptional student experience through the implementation of the strategic plan, Westfield State University will be characterized by nimble content delivery, relevant pedagogies, and innovative programming designed to meet the needs of our changing student population, changing landscape of Commonwealth job growth, and consistent need for educated and engaged citizens. These priorities are dependent on pre-college engagement, community partnerships, and internal university synergies.

At the core of realizing our academic direction and abiding by the Department of Higher Education framework are two entities to be housed in the \$40 million renovation of Parenzo Hall: The Center for Innovation in Education and Industry Partnerships and The Center for Student Success and Engagement. These centers are cornerstones for our program planning. The Center for Innovation in Education and Industry Partnerships will leverage technology to serve as the nexus for innovative collaboration in Western Massachusetts. 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. The Center for Student Success and Engagement will attend to the “Big Three” outcomes of the Vision Project (college participation, college completion, closing achievement gaps) by bringing together in one place student success programs currently scattered, leaving students vulnerable to “falling through the cracks” and stifling the synergies that arise when staff with a common goal collaborate daily. Among the support programs and offices which will comprise this center include the Banacos Center, Urban Education, Advising Center, Reading & Writing Center, and TRIO programs.

Westfield State University's promise to its students, to its community partners and to the Commonwealth means the university walks the walk of partnership. Here at home The Westfield State Experience is the culmination of campus and community partnership. This signature program unites Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and the early college opportunities of the Westfield Promise to provide each student a road map from high school, college admissions and through graduation. In year one, experiences including FYO courses and cohort groupings and targeted advising support students as they adjust to college. In year two, students engage a reflective process to develop a feasible plan for understanding the import and consequences of selecting a major and a career path and planning for college success and graduation. In year three, students engage in the full potential of high-impact practices, including undergraduate research, civic engagement and internships. In the fourth year, students are supported in their transition from the university to either graduate school or career.

Among the many tensions characterizing debates about higher education on campuses and in communities nationwide is the debate over the relevance of liberal arts programming and professional programs. We treat this tension as an opportunity to re-instantiate the value of higher education as a public good and as an essential opportunity to provide economic and personal meaning for our students. Our comprehensive mission insists we prepare students to lead, to inspire, and to adapt. We do so through our liberal arts commitments infused throughout our curriculum in both core and major arenas. It also insists we are responsive to the workforce needs of the Commonwealth. As we deepen our program review processes and engage in ongoing research about what programs are needed, we build on our many historic strengths including those in criminal justice, education, business and psychology. We nurture new programs, for example, in health. New and revised programs outlined in this plan provide a pipeline to high demand areas outlined by the Workforce Cabinet (e.g., health care, finance, human services, cybersecurity).



ENROLLMENT

Similarly, the commitment to the comprehensive mission of state institutions as well as the changing population of new learners means our strategic plan must attend to both similarities and differences between the needs the four-year residential college student and the expanding number of adult learners who will not seek that experience. Our strategic goal in enrollment aims to prepare to recruit, welcome and support students in an increasingly competitive environment. Our actions will engage the entire campus in bringing students to Westfield State for an exceptional experience. Strategic enrollment decisions and increased financial aid provide the promise of partnership, from bringing students to campus in early college contexts, to repackaged financial aid, down to each and every Westfield State community member has as an ambassador for enrollment. We see our new programming, supports for our existing programs, and synergy as providing support for all students. Also crucial in our plan to serve a diverse population of students is the knowledge that Commonwealth residents need to be lifelong learners. University education is no longer a one phase, one-time experience.

Enrollment management predicts a 10 percent drop in enrollment of traditional age, first-year, first time students during the lifetime of the plan. Through careful planning and programming, the four-year experience, combined with stackable credits, community college partnerships, certificate programs the university will attend to the needs of the range of learners who wish to pursue post-secondary education in Massachusetts.

Enrollment forecasts are tied to our budget models and the institution is prepared to dedicate \$1 million per year to fund strategic initiatives to ensure institutional sustainability and transformation in support of all our students during this exciting time in higher education.

CAMPUS CULTURE

The planning process outlined in the pages that follow demonstrates the sustained dialogue and reflection that characterized this process. This dialogue does not end with the filing of the strategic plan. It is embedded in the plan itself. During our planning we heard campus articulations of the need for deep and broad communication. The initiatives and actions outlined in the implementation, attend to planning and careful resource allocation in an effort to increase campus awareness of process, involvement, and criteria decision-making. We, like the nation, are engaged in the deep reflection, planning, and actions necessary when placing diversity and inclusion at the forefront of campus priorities. As we strive to provide for an increasingly diverse student population, create responsive programming, and alleviate barriers to student success in and out of the classroom, we actualize the commitment of each individual on campus to the success of our students. Building a culture responsive to change and through which our values can be actualized is part of creating an exceptional student experience. Our plan attends to cultural change through campus conversation about high priority issues, conducting research on how we can improve our campus culture, providing for structured onboarding and professional development to support faculty and staff, attending to diversity and inclusion, and celebrating our campus-wide successes.

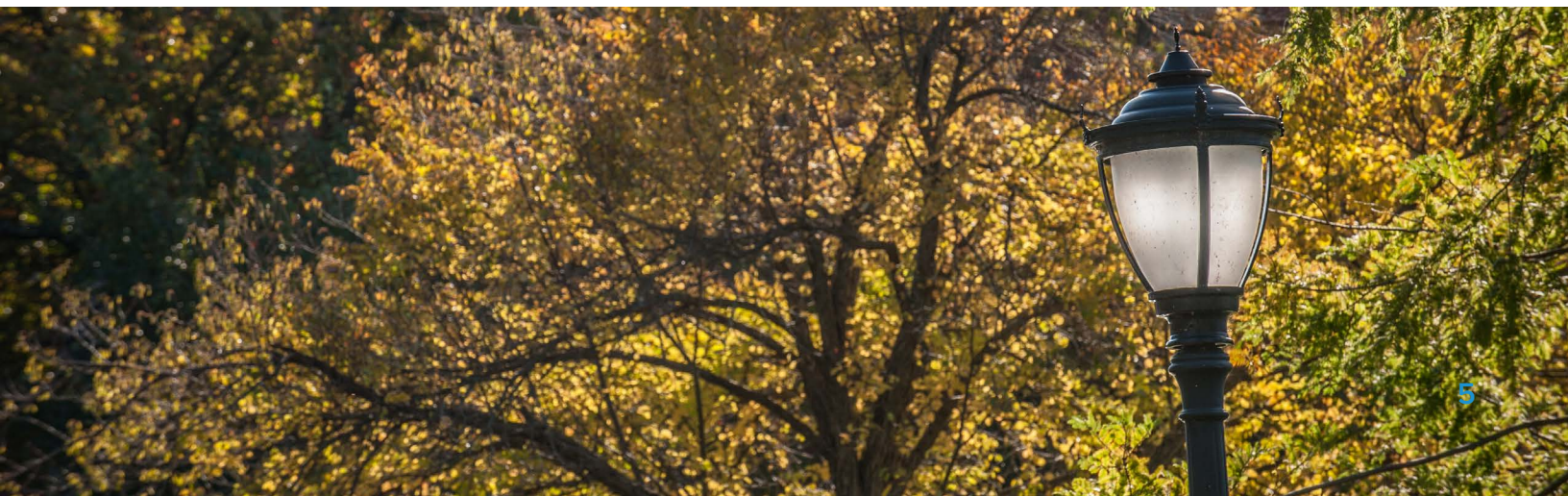
RESOURCES

Institutions across the country struggle with conversations about resources: who has them, what happens when resources are reduced, what priorities are reflected in resource allocation, resource development, financial and budgetary literacy. In light of declining financial support and the shifting demographics impacting enrollment, the institution must engage in extensive and sustained planning for resources of all sorts to be leveraged to insure a stable university and implementation of mission critical initiatives that support our students. Further, our ability to identify and clarify processes across and through the institution will in part determine how we move forward with both flexibility and focus.

Enrollment Management and Administration and Finance are engaged in a coordinated effort to bridge enrollment projections with the budget process. Budget processes and priorities are being shared with budget directors and relevant committees.

WORK THE PLAN, PLAN THE WORK

Our campus is no stranger to change. Westfield State has managed the rippling effects of changes in leadership, changes in national climate and the demoralizing effects of a faculty contract unsettled. Yet, the campus keeps moving, keeps teaching, and keeps addressing the students who need us. The plan itself is a change for campus. Our efforts over the past five years to build a culture of planning which will allow us to evaluate, build, and sustain the highest quality opportunities for our students are manifest in this plan. Built into the plan are imperatives requiring research and evaluation so we may best strengthen the health of the institution, and consequently, the Commonwealth.





OVERVIEW OF INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY

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.





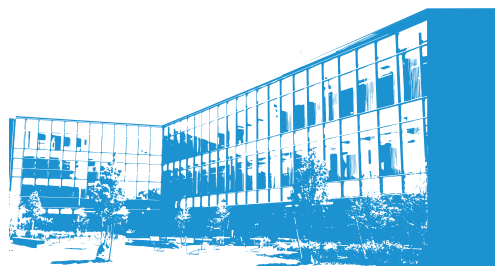
CAMPUS IN CONTEXT

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.

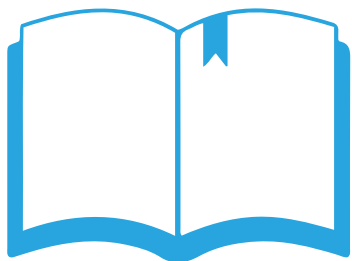


STUDY ABROAD OPPORTUNITIES

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 PREPARE TO FILE

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 as 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.

During the fall semester, the university brought forth a successful Touch Point II presentation to the Board of Higher Education. The Strategic Planning Committee met repeatedly with the aim of providing an organizational template to record initiative and action step information gathered from the divisions to synthesize into the implementation plan and to provide direction to divisional vice presidents. The development of the implementation or operational plan needed to be localized work, meaning that it took place inside the divisions and then was submitted for refinement and inclusion into a usable plan. Strategic Planning Committee members attended three All-University Committee meetings to discuss the emergent plan and the Board of Trustees was updated throughout the semester. The division of Administration and Finance refined the budget planning process to align resource allocation processes to support the strategic plan. Information sessions regarding budget process are being presented in early spring.



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

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 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

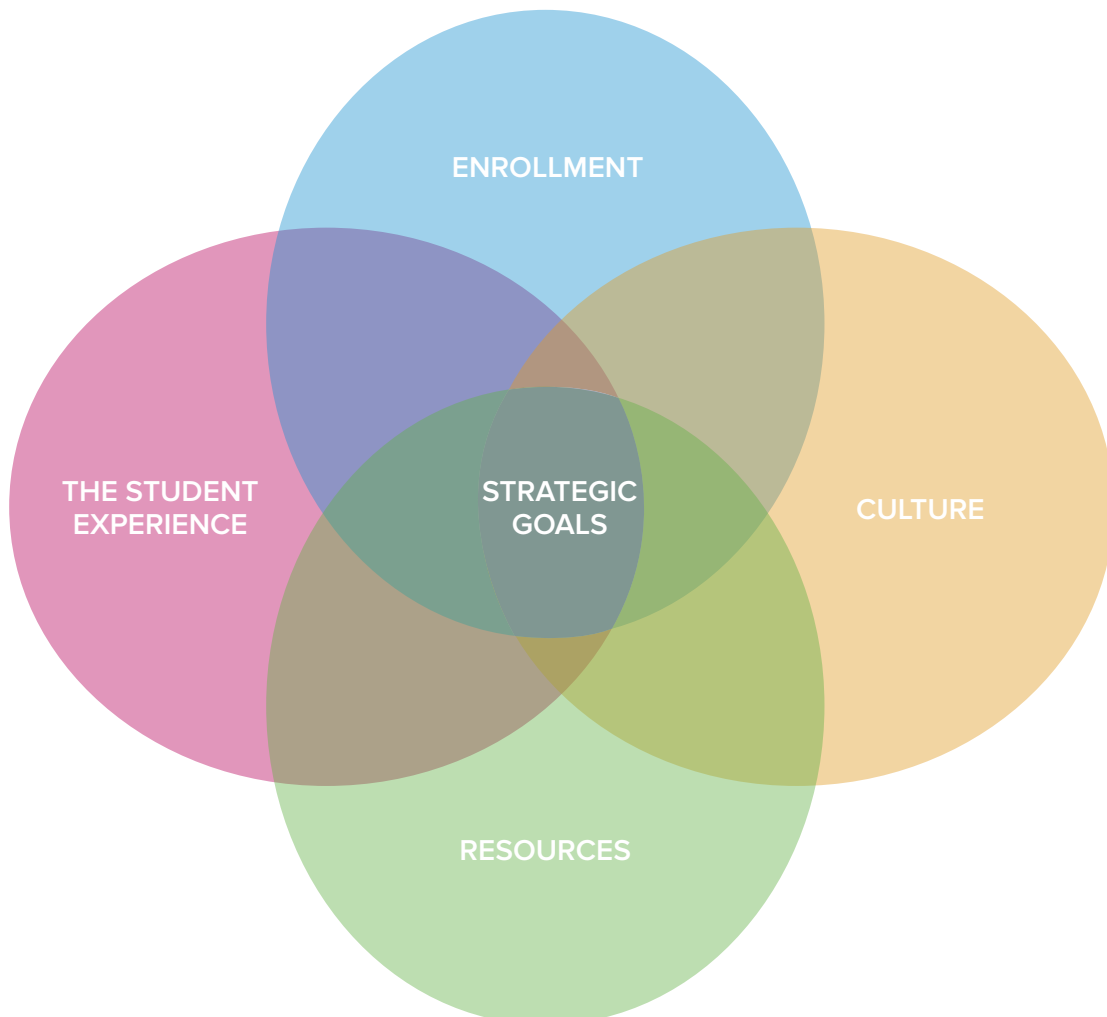
The institution needs to face, head on, the data which indicate a consistent and dramatic decrease in the population of high school-aged individuals in Massachusetts and the northeast region. We must prepare to welcome and support an increasingly diverse population of students and recognize that their 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 REVISE THE COMMON CORE
- PRIORITY 1.2 SUPPORT ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING KEEPING IN MIND LIBERAL ARTS COMPETENCIES AND EMERGENT CAREER PATHWAYS
- PRIORITY 1.3 PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADULT AND COMMUNITY PARTNER LEARNERS
- PRIORITY 1.4 OPTIMIZE THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE THROUGH CLEAR PROCESS AND PARTNERSHIP

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
- PRIORITY 2.2 SUPPORT STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT TO REACH A MORE DIVERSE POPULATION OF STUDENTS
- PRIORITY 2.3 INCREASE FINANCIAL AID

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
- PRIORITY 3.2 ENACT INSTITUTIONAL VALUES IN EVERYDAY COMMUNICATION
- PRIORITY 3.3 ADOPT *INCLUSION EVERYDAY* AS AN INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

GOAL 4:

RESOURCES: EXPAND THE INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

- PRIORITY 4.1 DIVERSIFY REVENUE SOURCES BY SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES
- PRIORITY 4.2 OPTIMIZE USE OF CURRENT RESOURCES UTILIZING TRANSPARENT PROCESSES
- PRIORITY 4.3 INVEST IN UPGRADING AND IMPLEMENTING TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

Strategic Concept: Exceptional Student Experience

GOAL 1:

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

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

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1.1 REVISE THE COMMON CORE

1.2 SUPPORT ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING KEEPING IN MIND LIBERAL ARTS COMPETENCIES AND EMERGENT CAREER PATHWAYS

1.3 OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADULT AND COMMUNITY PARTNER LEARNERS

1.4 OPTIMIZE THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE THROUGH PARTNERSHIP AND PROCESS

1.1 COMMON CORE REVISION

The structure of a revised common core will ensure transfer and degree pathways with community college partners, as well as opportunities for early college experiences through K-12 partnerships.

ACTION ITEMS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	START	COMPLETE	LEADER
Core committee established	Committee convened and working	2018	Ongoing	Provost
Core committee gathers data to analyze core	Data analyzed and processed and presented to constituents	2018	2020	Core reform committee
Models selected by core committee	Models available for review by campus constituents	2019	2020	Core reform committee and Academic Affairs Staff
Director of the core assigned	Director begins and assumes leadership of core management	2020	Ongoing	Provost
Departmental and university curriculum committee processes completed	Academic departments and university transition to core structure	2021	Ongoing	Academic Affairs Departments

1.2 SUPPORT ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING KEEPING IN MIND LIBERAL ARTS COMPETENCIES AND EMERGENT CAREER PATHWAYS

To make the academic landscape of the institution responsive to the emergent needs of the Commonwealth our plan includes provisions to support existing academic programs as they engage disciplinary developments and workforce needs (e.g., Criminal Justice, Education, and Business) and add critical mission programs (e.g., Integrated Health). Additionally, the institution will develop robust graduate and certificate programming in areas defined as high need in the Northeast and in the Commonwealth, informed by data on best practices and needs articulated by the Workforce Skills Cabinet (e.g., health care, financial services).

ACTION ITEMS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	START	COMPLETE	LEADER
Provide for innovation and strengthening in academic programming through research and regular program review	Review four programs per year	2019	2024	Provost and College Deans
	Follow-up appropriately: e.g., develop graduate programs and interdisciplinary connections	2019	2024	Provost and College Deans
	Explore creative alliances and program development: e.g., including the creation of Health Administration in MPA & Health Policy Concentration within MSW and MPA	2019	2024	Provost and College Deans
Create and adjust programs to meet emergent workforce needs (e.g., financial services, human services)	Examine feasibility and possible programs: e.g., including Bioinformatics and Data Science in Mathematics and Computer and Information Sciences; rehabilitation and recovery orientations in Criminal Justice, early childhood non-licensure programming, Accounting 4+1, Accounting B.S., division of Economics and Management into three areas	2019	2024	College Deans
Hybrid and delivery modalities documented systematically and expanded	Hybrid learning environments infused throughout the curriculum with targeted percent of university courses offered online and hybrid	In progress	Ongoing	College Deans

PRIORITY 1.3 OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADULT, TRANSFER STUDENT, AND INDUSTRY PARTNER LEARNERS

ACTION STEPS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	START	COMPLETE	LEAD
Prior learning assessments, building on grant funding provided by the DHE AY2018	Clear process established and communicated regarding use of PLA	2019	2021	Dean, CGCE
Opportunities provided to engage both current employees, entrepreneurs and adult learners through CIEIP partnerships	Develop 2 learning partnerships per year (e.g., Mercy Medical)	Initiated	Ongoing	New director
Create new degree pathways with community college partners	4 pathways articulated and implemented in psychology, education, criminal justice, business	2019	2021	Dean, Undergraduate Studies
Certificates and stackable credit programs launched following market research and feasibility studies	Certificates might include specific skills (e.g., computer skill sets, medical translation) or content areas (e.g., anti-racist pedagogy, critical pedagogy)	2020	2024	Dean, CGCE



PRIORITY 1.4 OPTIMIZE THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE THROUGH PARTNERSHIP AND PROCESS

ACTION	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	START	COMPLETE	LEAD
Assess advising structure across the campus: faculty, professional, programmatic	70% of students entering as first year and undeclared, declare a major after accumulation of 30 credits	2019	Ongoing	Dean, Undergraduate Studies
	100% of student declare major after accumulation of 70 credits	2019	Ongoing	Dean, Undergraduate Studies
Eliminate administrative barriers between day and CGCE students	Registration, billing and advising revised to “one-stop” model for day and CGCE students	2019	Ongoing	Dean CGCE, Registrar, Dir. Financial Aid
Assess residential life programming	Fresh Eyes report reviewed and implemented	2018	2019	Dir. Res. Life
Implement the <i>Westfield State Experience</i> programming	100% first year courses include student mentors	2019	Ongoing	Deans: SA and AA
	First year read implemented with first year write	2019	2021	Deans: SA and AA
	Emerging leaders programming coordinated with enhanced residential curriculum programming	2019	2021	Deans: SA and AA
	“The first six weeks” implemented	2019	2021	Deans: SA and AA
	High impact practices implemented across all four years of a student experience	2020	2024	Deans: SA and AA
	20% increase in Career Center appointments each year	2021	2024	Deans: SA and AA
Opportunities for younger learners	Scale up Westfield Promise in Holyoke, Springfield, Westfield	2019	2024	Dean, CGCE
	Expand Westfield Promise to two new communities	2021	2024	Dean, CGCE
Expand dual admission	Solidify dual admission, processes, and agreements with GCC, HCC, STCC, BCC	2018	2019	Provost and VP:EM



IMPLEMENTATION

Strategic Concept: Enrollment

GOAL 2:

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

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- PRIORITY 2.1** ENGAGE THE ENTIRE CAMPUS IN THE WORK OF RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, GRADUATION
- PRIORITY 2.2** SUPPORT STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT TO REACH A MORE DIVERSE POPULATION OF STUDENTS
- PRIORITY 2.3** INCREASE FINANCIAL AID

PRIORITY 2.1 ENGAGE THE ENTIRE CAMPUS IN THE WORK OF RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, GRADUATION

INITIATIVES TO MEET PRIORITIES	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	START	COMPLETE	LEAD
Hold 4 enrollment 101 work-shops per year on best practices in customer service, enrollment, financial aid literacy	100% campus employees provided with training opportunities	2019	Ongoing	Dir. Admissions
Web redesign reflects talking points for the campus	100% consistency in messaging & web function	2020	2022	Dir. Admissions
Raise academic profile of institution raise	Grade point average for admitted students from 3.2 to 3.4 over five years	2020	2024	Dir. Admissions
	Average SAT score moves from 1020 to 1050	2020	2024	Dir. Admissions
Market residential life as student success experience	Increased residential population	2019	2024	VP: EM

PRIORITY 2.2 SUPPORT STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT TO REACH A MORE DIVERSE POPULATION OF STUDENTS

INITIATIVES TO MEET PRIORITIES	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	START	COMPLETE	LEAD
Establish connection with diverse partners to enhance recruitment and retention of students, staff and employees	Develop two new relationships with community partners, organizations, schools per year	2019	Ongoing	Division VPs
Expand early college programming of the Westfield Promise	Explore expansion into two new communities	2019	2024	Dean, CGCE
	Scale-up early college programming of the Westfield Promise to Holyoke, Springfield, Westfield	2019	Ongoing	Dean, CGCE
Intensify presence of Urban Education programming in recruiting	100% presence of Urban Education alumni at admissions events	2019	Ongoing	Dir. Urban Ed & Dir. Admissions
Expand dual enrollment with community college partners				See Goal 1
Develop additional programs to serve the emerging Northeast demographic				See Goal 1

PRIORITY 2.3 INCREASE FINANCIAL AID

INITIATIVES TO MEET PRIORITIES	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	START	COMPLETE	LEAD
Cultivation of existing donors	Increased endowed scholarship amounts by 5 each year	2019	Ongoing	VP:IA
Commit institutional resources to financial aid	Add \$150,000 to financial aid each year	2019	2024	VP:A&F
Develop net tuition models	Reduce gap in EFC	2019	2024	VP:EM



IMPLEMENTATION

Strategic Concept: Culture

GOAL 3:

CULTURE: CONSISTENTLY LIVE OUR INSTITUTIONAL VALUES

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

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

PRIORITY 3.2 ENACT INSTITUTIONAL VALUES IN EVERYDAY COMMUNICATION

PRIORITY 3.3 ADOPT *INCLUSION EVERYDAY* AS AN INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

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

INITIATIVE	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	START	COMPLETED	LEAD
Develop institution-wide onboarding and consistent professional development programming	Complete onboarding and professional programming developed for skills, management and leadership training	2020	Ongoing	Associate VP, HR
	100% new employees receive onboarding schedule	2020	Ongoing	Associate VP, HR
	100% existing employees participate in minimum of one PD each year	2020		Associate VP, HR
Develop additional mechanisms to acknowledge excellence in faculty and staff	Supplement existing showcases, public events, and recognition days with an award platform for team recognition through campus task force	2020	Ongoing	Associate VP, HR
Hold open forums and record them	Two open forums each semester	2019	Ongoing	Director, Communication

3.2 ENACT INSTITUTIONAL VALUES IN EVERYDAY COMMUNICATION

INITIATIVE	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	START	COMPLETED	LEAD
Web feature points of pride	Web site revised	2019	Ongoing	Directors Mkt/Comm
Recognize staff for out-standing accomplishments	Process and procedure developed and promoted for each division	2019	Ongoing	VP-Student Affairs
Seek opportunities to build community	Rotating full day retreats 2x per year through Academic Affairs	2019	Ongoing	Provost
Implement Brown Bag Lunch Series	1x per month series coordinated by task force	2020	Ongoing	Dir. HR

PRIORITY 3.3 ADOPT *INCLUSION EVERYDAY* AS AN INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

INITIATIVE	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	START	COMPLETE	LEAD
Implement and coordinate diversity and inclusion practices, policies and programs across the entire campus	Implement case management system for federal compliance programs using cloud-based software with 6 user licenses	2020	Ongoing	DO
Hire diverse employees across campus	Increase in student Res. Life staff hired who reflect diversity of students	2019	Ongoing	Deans, Program Directors
	Increase in faculty/staff from diverse backgrounds	2019	Ongoing	Area VPs
Develop communication campaign to address centrality of diversity and inclusion	Communication plan and pieces produced and launched	2020	2021	Dir. Mktg.
Create office of diversity	DO, Investigator, Faculty Fellows Div Across Curric and HE/HG hired	begun	Ongoing	VP:A&F
Climate study	Implement in years 1 & 5	2019 & 2024	2019 & 2024	Dean, undergraduate studies



IMPLEMENTATION

Strategic Concept: Resources

GOAL 4:

RESOURCES: EXPAND THE INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

PRIORITY 4.1 DIVERSIFY REVENUE SOURCES BY SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES

PRIORITY 4.2 OPTIMIZE USE OF CURRENT RESOURCES UTILIZING TRANSPARENT PROCESSES

PRIORITY 4.3 INVEST IN UPGRADING AND IMPLEMENTING TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

PRIORITY 4.1 DIVERSIFY REVENUE SOURCES BY SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES

INITIATIVE	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	START	COMPLETE	LEAD
Develop financial incentive model to support innovation	Innovation fund established and process for distribution and assessment unrolled	2019	Ongoing	VP:A&F
Increase IA support to the University	25% increase in number of corporate sponsorships and major donors	2020	Ongoing	VP:IA
Increase grants and sponsored research funding	Assess functions and establish targets	2019	Ongoing	Dean of faculty
Increase activity and contracts for non-credit activities	Assess possibilities and establish goals	2021	Ongoing	Dean, CGCE
Develop alternative revenue streams	Develop investment strategy to leverage cash needs	2020	Ongoing	VP:A&F
	Expand use of campus facilities, including residential life spaces, and services during non-peak periods	2020	Ongoing	VP:EM & Dir. Dining Services

PRIORITY 4.2 OPTIMIZE USE OF CURRENT RESOURCES UTILIZING TRANSPARENT PROCESSES

ACTION	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	START	COMPLETE	LEAD
Develop internal expertise to support simplicity and automation while increasing stakeholder satisfaction	Decreased number of existing manual processes	2020	Ongoing	AVP F&A; ITS CIO
Review redundant processes and develop more efficient processes.	Invest in automated software products to reduce paper forms	2020	Ongoing	Assoc. VP Budget & Planning
Develop criteria to assess programs and threshold for initiating and maintaining	Number of programs reviewed and modified per year	2020	Ongoing	All Divisional VP
Update the campus Master Plan	Identify funding and process to begin planning in conjunction with DCAMM	2021	2022	VPAF

PRIORITY 4.3 INVEST IN UPGRADING AND IMPLEMENTING TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

ACTION	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	START	COMPLETE	LEAD
Develop adaptable technologies to support student experience per goal 1	Pathways established for CIT work with faculty on best-practices	2020	Ongoing	Dean, AIS
Develop 5 year technology plan	Acquisition of Banner Document imaging management system, implement cloud based budget planning tool	2020	2022	Dean AIS and CIO
Assess institutional capability for capital campaign	Launch fundraising campaign for Parenzo Hall	2021	2022	VP:IA
Review technology improvements	Identify opportunities to use and implement mobile technologies for student use	2022	2025	CIO and Dean AIS

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	AMBITIOUS
STUDENT EXPERIENCE: ACCESS TO A FULLY INTEGRATED, EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE			
Four-year graduation rate (IPEDS) 2012 cohort base	53%	55%	58%
Four year graduation rate achievement gap B/W (2012 cohort)	-24% pts	-20%pts	-17%pts
Four-year graduation rate achievement gap Latinx/W (2012 cohort)	-10% pts	-8%pts	-6pts
Six-year graduation rate (IPEDS)*	66%	68%	70%
Six-year graduation rate: B/W 2010 cohort base	-11% pts	-9% pts	-5% pts
Six-year graduation rate: Latinx/W 2010 cohort base	-13% pts	-10% pts	-8%pts
Retention rate (IPEDS)	77%	80%	82%
ENROLLMENT: PREPARE TO RECRUIT WELCOME AND SUPPORT			
% students of color**	22%	26%	28%
Decrease the financial need gap for the highest need students	\$4000	\$2500	\$1500
Enrollment targets “traditional” students	1050	1050	1100
Enrollment targets CE undergraduates	567	>5%	>8%
Enrollment targets graduate students		10%	%12
CULTURE: CONSISTENTLY LIVE OUR VALUES			
% faculty and staff of color	18.85%	21%	23%
Climate study conducted in year one will provide measure	TBD after survey	TBD after survey	TBD after survey
RESOURCES: EXPAND INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES			
Increase philanthropy in support of the institution	\$750,000	\$1,500,000	\$2,500,000
Percent increase in non-tuition/fee revenue***	4.3%	5%	7%
Maintain Composite Financial Index (CFI)	4.1	4.1	5
Residential occupancy goals based on design capacity	89%	94%	100%
Increase institutional commitment to financial aid	\$250,000	\$1,250,000	\$1,500,000

* 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”

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



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.bncollege.com/Achieving-Success-for-Non-Traditional-Students-01-11-17.pdf>

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