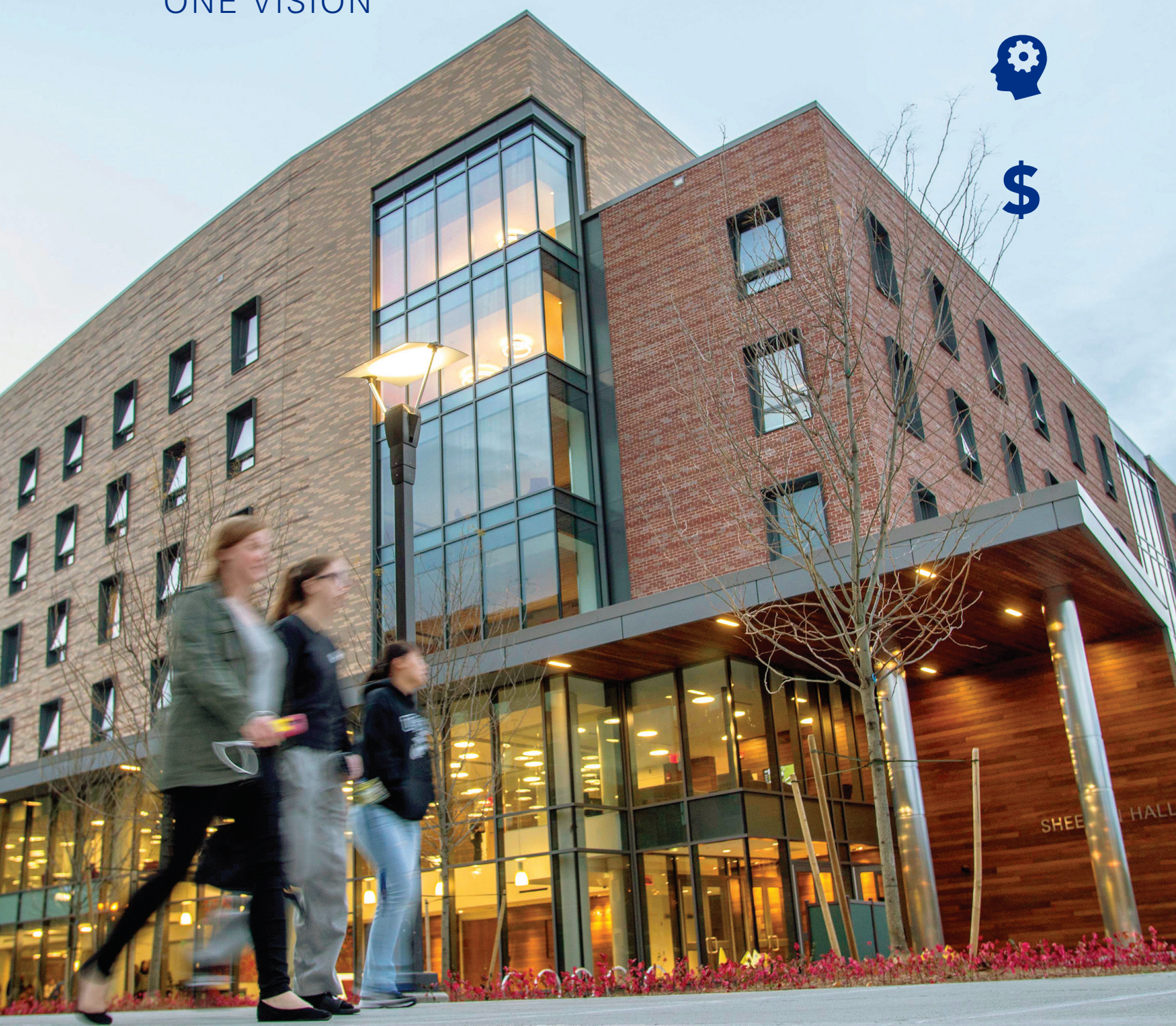


# STRATEGIC PLAN VISION

2020

FIVE GOALS  
ONE VISION







# STRATEGIC PLAN VISION 2020

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## 2017-2018 STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

### Introduction

During the 2014-2015 academic year, a steering committee of faculty, staff, administrators, students, alumni, and trustees was convened to develop a new strategic plan. Worcester State University's mission and core values were reviewed, a **new vision** emerged from the **campus dialogs**, and the plan was unveiled **The Strategic Plan 2015-2020: Scholarship, Partnership, and Leadership for a Changing World**. It was approved by the Board of Trustees in October 2015).

### Summary of the Review Process

The 2017-2018 Strategic Plan Review Committee (SPRC) was comprised of 11 members representing all divisions of the university, appointed by the President's Office. The committee was chaired by the Assistant Vice President for Assessment and Planning.

The SPRC assigned at least two committee members to each division to be responsible for communicating with that division, answering any questions, and choosing excerpts from that division to be highlighted in the final report. To avoid a conflict of interest, committee members were assigned to divisions other than their own.

For 2017-2018, the University focused on Goals 2 and 4 of the Strategic Plan. The leadership of each division updated their action plans for all goals (see the Master Action Grid brochure) and wrote a narrative report for the goals focused on this year (see the Strategic Plan Evaluation brochure). Each division presented their report orally to the SPRC committee and answered questions regarding the report and action grids.

### Worcester State in Numbers

80% 

2017 First-time  
Freshman Retention

27 

New Faculty  
Members Hired

91% 

Alumni survey respondents  
employed/in graduate  
school within six months  
of graduation.

16% 

2017 Freshman  
Enrollment Increase

500  DONORS

I Love WSU Day 2018

17:1 

Student to Faculty Ratio

## **Strategic Plan Progress Report**

Worcester State University has made great strides over the past year in fulfilling the strategies for Goals 2 and 4. For each of the goal's strategies, we have highlighted accomplishments for this year.

### **GOAL 2: Leverage WSU's distinctive strengths, both to enhance the University's reputation and to prepare students to lead, serve, and make a difference in the world**

- ▶ **Capitalize on WSU's urban location as a programmatic strength and educational asset**  
Enrollment Management has created print and online promotional materials highlighting WSU's urban location, cultural opportunities and HECCMA (Higher Education Consortium of Central Massachusetts) cross-registration.
- ▶ **Expand efforts to integrate arts and sciences in innovative ways that enhance learning and distinguish WSU**  
The 11th annual Celebration of Scholarship and Creativity, which showcased innovative student achievement, added a new digital twist this year in the form of electronic posters. This event highlights both research and creativity at the undergraduate and graduate levels.
- ▶ **Better articulate the relationship between academics and workforce alignment, particularly in the arts and humanities**  
Enrollment Management promoted workforce outcomes of a WSU degree by adding career pathway information and US Department of Labor-based information for workforce options/likelihoods for every academic major on WSU's website.
- ▶ **Promote and stress curricular inter-disciplinarity and programmatic connectedness to enrich learning and create multiple potential paths for WSU students to pursue upon graduation**  
New interdisciplinary programs have been created, or are being developed, including psychobiology, substance abuse counseling, and ethnic studies.
- ▶ **Cultivate and enhance local, regional, and global connections to benefit students and strengthen WSU's contributions in the wider world**  
WSU continues to nurture local and regional connections to benefit students, including working with Worcester Public School Systems, Girls, Inc., local and regional hospitals, and the Worcester Department of Public Health. Internationally, WSU's Study Abroad continues to maintain and/or increase participation and develop sustainable international partnerships.
- ▶ **Nurture student interest in and appreciation for diversity, global awareness, environmental literacy, and engaged citizenship**  
The WSU Civic Corps run by the Binienda Center, with cross-divisional collaboration between Sociology and the Office of International Programs, connects students with service learning and volunteer opportunities for diverse students in the local community and national/international organizations.



PREPARE STUDENTS  
TO LEAD AND  
IMPACT THE WIDER  
WORLD

► **Expand opportunities that encourage development of leadership potential within the student body**

The Office of Student Involvement and Leadership continues to offer leadership opportunities for students, including a Student Leader Orientation, Student-Athlete Captain Leadership Breakfasts, and two leadership retreats for CLEWS (Community and Leadership Experience at Worcester State) mentors. University Advancement and Academic Affairs continue the Robert K. O'Brien '58 Next Big Idea contest, which offers aspiring entrepreneurial students the opportunity to present their ideas for a new business to a group of experienced professionals and the chance to earn cash prizes to start or grow that business.

► **Strive to have the top degree-completion rate among the state universities in Massachusetts**

University Advancement has found that students in the 2011 cohort who received at least one scholarship (regardless of the monetary amount) had a graduation rate of 86.5% and students entering in Fall 2016 who received at least one scholarship were retained at a rate of 93.8%.

► **Improve career-related services and expand professional networking opportunities for WSU students and graduates**

Academic advising, career counseling, and tutoring continue to be a priority on campus. 2017 Tutoring Services included roughly 31 courses and offered tutoring services for 450 hours per semester. This impacted approximately 428 students each semester. The Academic Success Center provided intensive academic supports to 314 first-year students who were identified as developmental level in reading, math or English based on their Accuplacer Placement Test scores. After intervention, 208 students from this cohort increased their scores on a subsequent Accuplacer Placement Test.



**GOAL 4: Cultivate a vibrant campus life and a collaborative work and learning environment in which all members of the WSU community feel welcomed, included, respected, empowered, and valued**

► **Foster a culture of engagement, pride and gratitude among all WSU constituencies**

Enrollment Management will begin offering an employee recognition award in AY 2018-2019 to recognize positive contributions to the campus community by staff members or faculty from any division.

► **Promote greater collaboration across divisions in support of shared, university-wide goals and mutual accountability for progress**

The Campus Climate Committee, a university-wide committee convened by the president to address issues of diversity on campus has held multiple forums for faculty, staff, and students and will be presenting a final report with recommendations to the president this year.

► **Increase options for all students to participate in campus life outside the classroom**

Student Affairs has created more events to take place on nights and weekends to address concerns that commuter and non-traditional students could not attend events. In addition, events specifically for commuters were planned this year.

► **Establish living-learning communities in the residence halls and more student gathering spots throughout campus**

Living-learning communities were replaced with FYRE (First Year Residential Experience) due to low faculty and student participation in living-learning communities. The Library is creating two adaptive and collaborative work spaces for presentations, as well as independent and group study.

► **Create more opportunities for informal interaction among students, faculty, and alumni and between senior administrators and the rest of the campus community**

As of April 2018, Admissions is currently awarding 30 new Adopt-A-Scholar scholarships. University Advancement is planning an event for Fall 2018 where all new students will be invited to participate in the Tri-Board Dinner to meet their new donors. Academic Affairs invites alumni to join advisory boards, invites alumni to campus for events, and places students in internships with alumni.



► **Nurture a campus culture that promotes cultural awareness and sensitivity as well as commitment to social responsibility and environmental stewardship**

The Office of Sustainability has implemented impactful initiatives such as:

- Providing hydration stations at which over 500,000 water bottles have been refilled
- Supporting two solar fields by purchasing net metering credits totaling 6.5 megawatts
- Saving \$50,000 annually by switching to LED lighting
- Achieving LEED Gold certification for four buildings
- Purchasing fitness equipment that when used, generates electricity that goes back into the Wellness Center's power
- As of May 1st all copy paper will be 30% post-consumer recycled and all notepads will be 50% post-consumer recycled.

► **Significantly improve internal communication and ensure faculty and staff feel they have a voice in setting strategic direction and priorities for the University**

The President has established 'Campus Conversations' where faculty, staff, and students are able to meet and talk with the President about campus concerns. 7 Campus Conversations occurred in 2017-2018.

► **Celebrate contributions to campus and community by faculty, staff, students, and alumni who embody WSU's core values**

University Advancement hosted a 'Gala of Gratitude' to celebrate the end of the Change Lives Campaign and honor donors.

► **Ensure opportunities to succeed at WSU are equally available to all members of the faculty and staff**

Academic Affairs created a new adjunct teaching award to recognize excellence in teaching by adjunct faculty.

► **Promote a pluralistic student experience and ensure that students of diverse backgrounds see themselves reflected in the adult population and leadership ranks on campus**

With multiple staff vacancies and an extended search process the Counseling Center was able to diversify Counseling Center staff.

► **Seek ways to increase alumni presence on campus and engagement with WSU through events and lifelong learning opportunities that correspond with their interests**

Career Services, in conjunction with University Advancement, Alumni Relations, and Academic Affairs continues to collaborate on a Fall/Spring event where students are trained on professional table manners, interviewing techniques, and networking. October's event had 44 registered students and 12 area employers who volunteered their time. The Psychology and Urban Studies capstone/internship professors also joined the partnership. This past Spring event was the largest ever attended with 80+ students. Faculty representing Health Education, Psychology, and Biology also contributed to make this event a success.

## **Hallmark Achievements**

While Goals 2 and 4 were the focus of this year's assessment, activities related to the other goals continue. Below are some highlights for Goals 1, 3, and 5 for this year. For a full list of activities since the start of the strategic plan, see the Master Action Grid brochure.

### **Goal 1: Enhance the undergraduate academic program and expand graduate programs in a community of learning that promotes academic excellence and innovation**

- Enrollment Management and Academic Affairs completed installation of the first governance and catalog management system, as well as beginning installation of course scheduling software towards increasing efficiency across departments and maximizing scheduling options
- Enrollment Management worked with Academic Affairs to create marketing and recruitment efforts for non-traditional students
- The Jumpstart /WSU partnership recruits and trains students to deliver literacy workshops in four high-poverty Worcester classrooms. Over the course of three years, this program has trained approximately 109 WSU students. During this academic year, WSU had 45 active students, who after completing the training, classroom literacy work, and observation hours, received a \$1500 AmeriCorps scholarship. Approximately one third of our student members completed this program as part of work-study. This highly effective, cross-divisional collaboration between Academic and Student Affairs has leveraged \$165K in AmeriCorps funds and about \$36K in Federal Work Study Awards
- During the last year and the early part of this academic year, Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management, and the President's Office continued discussion with a third party supporter regarding wholly online programs with a potential to increase students in graduate areas. Additionally, four faculty received Quality Matters training in online and hybrid course design and delivery and are enthusiastically championing further support for faculty to engage with technology

### **Goal 3: Attract and enroll a diverse pool of highly motivated students and attach institution-wide priority to promoting their retention and success**

- Admissions enrolled 90 new out-of-state students in Fall 2017, an increase of approximately 29% from Fall 2016.
- Admissions awarded WSU's first out-of-state merit scholarships
- Enrollment Management contracted with Art & Science Consulting to conduct the university's first positioning study
- The IT, Marketing, and Admissions Departments completed the acquisition and installation of 1st customer relationship management (CRM) software to improve frequency and quality of communications with prospective students
- WSU Athletic coaches, in partnership with University Advancement, are actively recruiting student-athletes that are "WSU caliber"—successful on and off the field. The Athletics Department is monitoring progress on an annual basis in addition to awaiting the review of the six-year cohort
- Student Leaders Orientation keynote speaker Adrian Haugabrok completed a half-day training in Summer 2017 focused on leadership and the value of diversity and inclusion.





PROMOTE  
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE  
AND  
INNOVATION



ENROLL AND  
RETAIN DIVERSE  
AND MOTIVATED  
STUDENTS



PROMOTE  
FINANCIAL STRENGTH  
AND  
STABILITY

- In collaboration with Admissions and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the Office of Student Involvement and Leadership Development (OSILD) produced a new Student Services video which was shown at the 2017 First-Year Orientation Program.
- The Office of Military Affairs/Veterans Services, in partnership with the Financial Aid Office, encouraged all military/veterans to fill out the FAFSA. This has led to a higher rate of FAFSA usage, scholarships, and emergency funding for military/veteran students' needs.
- DGCE has improved non-matriculated student advising and access for non-traditional student populations by hiring a new Non-Matriculated/Adult Student Advisor to assist non-traditional student populations (working three evenings a week)

**Goal 5: Promote financial strength and organizational sustainability while continuing to secure and invest the resources required to maintain WSU's reputation for excellence and value**

- The first out-of-state merit scholarship program has led to an increase in enrollment of out-of-state students
- Enrollment Management with Academic Affairs and Administration and Finance has continued work to secure funding for dual/concurrently/early enrollment of high school students, including the \$40,000 Commonwealth Dual Enrollment Grant (DHE) and 100 Males to College Grant (DHE)
- Installed new customer relationship management software associated with approximately 7% increase in applications for Fall 2018 as compared to Fall 2017
- The Athletics Department is on track to generate approximately \$100K in net revenue for rentals, exercise, etc. The amount of Wellness Center available space for rent, however, is almost maxed out.
- The Athletics Department has rented an ice hockey rink from Worcester Ice Center to use as WSU's home ice.

## Recommendations

- In order for all members of the community to feel included in decision-making, it is recommended that each division distribute its action grid widely, so that all members of the division have the opportunity to contribute actions related to the strategic plan
- For evaluation purposes, it is recommended that divisions provide, wherever possible, metrics that support the strategic plan
- The University should work on long-term solutions to funding and supporting faculty and student research and incentivize as well as increase support for faculty research grants
- Continue to explore ways to expand online programs, particularly for graduate and certificate programs
- Encourage faculty and students to integrate arts and sciences both inside and outside the classroom.
- Explore ways to reduce faculty advising load so that faculty can focus more on meaningful advising and less on 'nuts and bolts' issues
- Offer more opportunities for informal interactions between students, faculty, staff, and administration
- Provide more opportunities for professional and personal development for faculty and staff at all levels
- Clarify the purpose and outcomes of the Liberal Arts and Sciences curriculum for faculty and students



## Next Steps

For the academic year 2018-2019, Worcester State University will be focusing on Goal 3: "Attract and enroll a diverse pool of highly motivated students and attach institution-wide priority to promoting their retention and success" and Goal 5: "Promote financial strength and organizational sustainability while continuing to secure and invest the resources required to maintain WSU's reputation for excellence and value." By the end of academic year 2018-2019, all goals will have been assessed at least once.

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