

# STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

## PART 1: UPDATE AT YEAR 2

### **Goal 1: Offer Programs of the Highest Quality**

The first goal of the *Strategic Plan* is to strengthen the academic core of the University by offering academic programs of the highest quality. This entails the strengthening of existing academic programs while developing new and innovative programs at both the undergraduate and graduate level that reflect the needs of a changing world and respond to our students' interests. The University sustained its commitment to the expanded academic programming by growing the number of full-time faculty to 403, the largest in the institution's history. New tenure-track faculty were hired to support growth areas in, for example, Criminology and Criminal Justice, Financial Planning, and Sport Management. These programs have been instituted and have attracted new students to the university, and in the case of Financial Planning, gained national distinction.

The University made strategic investments in existing programs, such as media production, through the construction of a new \$2.4M state-of-the-art Broadcast Studio in 2014. The programs in Music, including the nationally-recognized Jazz Studies program, have been supported by the \$500K renovation of two recital halls in Shea Center and \$400K for six new soundproof music practice rooms in Gaede Hall. The College of Education and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences finalized strategic plans this past year. In preparation for its fall 2015 AACSB visit, the Cotsakos College of Business has drafted a revised mission statement and a concise statement of strategic initiatives. As well, Cheng Library has also completed a strategic plan. The College of Arts and Communication and the College of Science and Health are in the process of developing strategic plans. All of these plans are directly aligned with the University Strategic Plan and will support implementation of university goals within the colleges and programs.

First implemented fall 2011, the University has made steady progress through the continued development of the innovative University Core Curriculum. As departments continue to add additional courses to the UCC, an assessment plan has been developed that ensures that the UCC meets the intended goals of a broad-based liberal arts program.

William Paterson University is committed to enhancing our students' participation in and appreciation for civic activities. Goal Five of the UCC pertains to community and civic engagement; in Fall 2013, 31 courses were offered that fulfill this requirement, up from 25 courses in Fall 2012. The University continues its active involvement in the American Democracy Project, helping to register youth voters and sponsoring programs and guest presentations on the power of youth and democracy. And the University is a founding member

and active participant in the New Jersey Campus Compact, which enhances students' civic engagement through curricular and co-curricular activities.

Part of the strengthening of academic programs is the enhancement of selected international experiences for student and faculty exchanges. In October 2013, President Waldron participated in a Presidents' Forum on the future of international education at Zhejiang University of Technology (ZJUT) in China, and solidified our relationship with ZJUT while there. William Paterson hosted its first Chinese exchange faculty member through this agreement, Wang Li, in Fall 2012, and has hosted 100 Chinese students in 2012 and 2013 as part of the "Hands On Series." The University also hosted 20 faculty twice yearly from the University of Windesheim, and each summer sends 8-10 WPU faculty to Windesheim, furthering our partnership with that institution's education faculty. This past year a university task force met to review International Education and has submitted its report for review to the Provost.

The Division of Academic Development has changed to provide the types of academic and personal support needed to ensure the success of our students. The division has developed and implemented new support programs for transfer students and continuing students, and coordinates academic student support programming for all William Paterson students. Three staff members were redeployed from Enrollment Management to Academic Development in 2013 to provide comprehensive support there, and in addition, a strategic financial investment of \$60,000 was made to upgrade to full-time the coordinator of the Early Alert Program (2013).

At the graduate level, the practitioner-oriented DNP program graduates its first class of students in May 2014. Additional laboratory and simulation space has been programmed in the new academic building for the Nursing, Communication Disorders and Public Health programs. The University supported the creation of a new full-time MBA director to expand the MBA program (2013). The new Master's in Literacy is offered exclusively online, the first such at the University, and similar new online offerings are the focus of graduate education in the College of Education. An additional doctoral degree, PsyD in Clinical Psychology, has been approved and the Psychology department is beginning to market and recruit students for a fall 2015 start.

## **Goal 2: Achieve Student Success by Increasing Matriculation, Retention and Graduation**

The second goal of the *Strategic Plan* relates to the recruitment, retention, and graduation of a motivated and prepared class of students. To that end, the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan was developed and implemented in 2013, and Dashboard Indicators for the Board of Trustees were aligned to key enrollment management areas (see Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, and Dashboard Indicators 2011-2014). Overall enrollment has remained flat for the last two years, falling below expectations and Dashboard Indicators goals, although the incoming student profile has improved on combined SAT (up seven points since 2011 to 1015) and high school GPA (up to 3.17 from 3.08 in 2011). One-year retention has not improved for

first-time freshmen (75%) or transfers (78%). Four-year and six-year graduation rates have improved, to 19.8% for four-year and 49.4% for six-year. These improvements are encouraging but are well below where the University needs them to be.

To help build enrollments, the University contracted with Royall and Company to reach out to prospective high school students to increase interest in attending WPU. The number of completed applications in 2013 increased 27% over 2012; 69% of those who applied were accepted, but only 21% enrolled.

Most recently, a Student Success Team was created to provide leadership on improving retention and graduation rates by enhancing student academic success. This cross-divisional team analyzes student performance data and makes recommendations to help students address academic, financial and student engagement issues. Improving retention and graduation is a major priority of the Strategic Plan, and the Student Success Team is working to make sure that academic growth is at the heart of retention efforts.

This team, along with faculty in the academic departments, draws heavily from the data generated through the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), in which the University has participated biennially over the last eight years. The University adopted NSSE in 2011 as its primary source for gathering student engagement and satisfaction data, and the current 2012 data and eight-year historical context were presented to each academic College for discussion (see NSSE 2012 Report).

To help incoming students fulfill their basic skills needs, the Summer Foundations Program was implemented in 2011 and results are very positive. In 2010, 66% of incoming students were placed into remedial courses. In 2013, that percentage has decreased to 25% -- and should drop further -- as students are strongly encouraged to participate in refresher courses and workshops during the summer in order to pass placement tests and begin graduation-credit coursework in their first semester. To help students stay on course toward graduation, new students are now prepackaged into 15-credit hour schedules instead of 13-credit hour schedules. To aid students in managing their course requirements and schedule, the University has purchased DegreeWorks software, with programming and implementation scheduled to be completed in 2015.

Persistence at WPU is directly affected by the cost of attendance, and for the last three years, the University has kept tuition increases at historically low levels of 2.0%, 1.9%, and 1.9%. In spring 2013, the Student Accounts Office modified its policies to allow students with unpaid bills of \$1,000 or less to be able to continue to register for the next semester. A new methodology for the awarding of institutional scholarship aid to a greater number of students was implemented by the Division of Enrollment Management in 2013. The Pioneer Grant Program, underwritten by the Alumni Association, was initiated in 2013 to cover small financial gaps in

students' accounts, allowing their continued enrollment. The Division of Institutional Advancement increased its focus on student scholarship support, resulting in a \$200,000 increase in scholarship dollars from 2011 to 2013. Efforts at improving persistence will continue and will be evaluated to assess their effectiveness.

Advancement fundraising fell below projected goals, raising \$3.1M in new cash and commitments in FY13 against a \$4.5M goal. In response, a new major gifts officer was hired in 2013, and the search began to replace a major gifts officer who left the University. We have developed a corporate strategy team, comprised of advancement and campus partners to strengthen our relationships with local and international corporations for the benefits of our students through internships, entry-level positions, and philanthropic support for our academic programs. The total assets of the Foundation have increased by 23% or \$3.3 million, the overall endowment by 25% or \$1.8 million and the scholarship endowment by 57% or \$1.9 million over the three year period of FY11-FY13 (see University Foundation Annual Report).

### **Goal 3: Provide Students with Exceptional Opportunities Beyond the Classroom**

Enhancing students' opportunities beyond the classroom is the third goal of the *Strategic Plan*. In addition to the course-related civic opportunities that are part of the UCC and the international opportunities mentioned above, the University has entered into an agreement in 2013 with the newly-created Great Falls National Park for the development of academic programming there. As part of the University's commitment to the NJ Campus Compact, Christine Kelly, professor of Political Science and Jeff Wakeman, director of Campus Activities, serve as co-chairs to develop activities around civic engagement. And the University is providing a satellite office for NJ Campus Compact statewide executive director Saul Peterson this year.

### **Goal 4: Enhance the Sense of Community Beyond the University**

The fourth strategic goal seeks to foster a sense of community throughout and beyond the University. In 2012, to enhance weekend and evening programming for students, the University committed \$100,000 as a strategic investment to hire a new professional in Student Development. In response to student requests, the University invested \$125,000 for expanded hours in dining services to provide greater flexibility for food service on campus.

Connections to our alumni have been enhanced by the implementation of a new Alumni Engagement Strategy in 2012. Alumni participation at events has increased, particularly at Homecoming, which attracted over 300 former students in 2013. Homecoming in 2013 was expanded to include an Alumni Art Exhibit.

To ensure the facilities at the University are modernized and welcoming, the University conducted a mini-Master Plan for the Core Academic Zone of the campus. This plan led to the demolition of the obsolete Coach House and the development of a plan for a new academic building, housing three health science-related departments and providing 16 modern general use

classrooms. The new \$40M academic building was partially funded through a State of New Jersey general obligation bond in 2012 with the University contributing \$10M toward the project.

Site preparation for the 1,200 space parking garage was completed in March 2014, with construction beginning shortly thereafter. The University has also completed programming recommendations for an extensive renovation of Hunziker Hall and Wing, two workhorse classroom buildings on campus. The renovation for both Hunziker buildings will commence once the new academic building is completed in 2016.

In summer 2013, obsolete single-paned windows were replaced in Raubinger Hall with energy-efficient ones; motion sensors have been installed to turn off lights in classrooms when not in use. The interior and site lighting of the new Parking Garage is the first campus building to utilize predominantly LED lighting technology, which will save thousands of dollars and significantly reduce carbon emissions over the lifetime of the building.

### **Goal 5: Establish the University as a Model of Outstanding Affordable Public Higher Education**

Establishing the University as a model of outstanding, affordable public higher education is the final goal of the *Strategic Plan*. The University has taken significant steps to keep tuition and fee increases as low as possible without cutting programs or services; redistributed scholarship dollars to provide the greatest impact on the greatest number of students; and provided \$200K in additional scholarship support for students. To diversify income streams and expand the University's fundraising ability, a strategic investment of \$110,000 was made in 2012 to conduct a wealth screening and campaign feasibility study. Funds raised through annual events such as the Legacy Gala in April and Golf Outing in September have increased, with the Legacy Dinner raising \$110,000 and the Golf Outing raising \$41,000 (2013).

Identity building is inherent in the strategic plan. The University hired Fuseideas to develop a marketing campaign that promotes the University's identity, builds its image and engages prospective students, as well as the University's full range of constituents. In partnership with Fuseideas, we launched the Will. Power. campaign in the fall of 2012 and the campaign is now being integrated throughout University marketing. The advertising campaign combines broadbased and narrowly targeted ads for both undergraduate and graduate recruitment. As part of the campaign, we increased support for graduate studies with almost half of the budget for the purchase of ads now allocated for graduate. The ad campaign is performing well with digital click-through-rates that exceed industry standards and growing numbers of visitors to our web landing pages. New undergraduate and graduate student enrollment, which are partially attributed to marketing, have increased. The campaign includes the redesign and rebranding of the University web site, creation of a digital viewbook, an increased emphasis on social media,

and integration of the brand throughout digital and print communications. University staff members continue to generate increasing levels of publicity, much of which highlights faculty and academic programs. Continued distribution of WP magnets to students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends continues to expand visibility for the University throughout New Jersey.

## **PART 2: MOVING FORWARD**

In November of 2012, after almost two years of planning, discussion and organization, William Paterson University unveiled a 10-year strategic plan. This plan laid out five over-arching goals, and provided a structure that included 22 sub-goal areas, with each of these sub-goal areas emphasized by more than 75 specific objectives. This plan is a thorough, complex and forward-looking document to help William Paterson to develop strategically.

Committee 2022, the group charged with monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Strategic Plan, has met twice this year to consider best steps to continue moving forward with the Strategic Plan. The Committee noted that there has been movement and successes with the Strategic Plan. At the same time, the committee also noted a need to look at how best to continue the implementation of the plan, a need to move from a start-up phase to a more action-oriented implementation and sustainability phase.

In reviewing the work that has taken place, Committee 2022 and other groups on campus have noted significant areas of overlap between specific goals, sub-goals and objectives of the strategic plan. These areas of overlap often result in one or more of the stand-alone teams addressing the same issue.

To enable the university to move from this **start-up** phase, a phase characterized by significant and widespread involvement from all areas of campus (in the current model there are 16 stand-alone teams comprising over 200 individuals) to an action and sustainability phase, we are developing a revised structure for the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The strong work done by the initial workgroups resulted in numerous actions and recommendations. These recommendations will continue to provide guidance as we move to additional actions on the Strategic Plan.

### **Goal area one: Offer Academic Programs of the Highest Quality.**

The existing structure and process for academic program development and review, including the work done in instructional technology, will be the mechanism for implementing goal area one. Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Warren Sandmann will have primary responsibility for management of this area, and will work with the faculty, departments, deans, and curricular bodies to carry out this element of the Strategic Plan. As the majority of this goal area revolves around academic program development, the specific faculty senate councils that work with academic programming will play lead roles.

**Goal area two: Achieve Student Success by Increasing Matriculation, Retention and Graduation.**

Two groups will share primary responsibility for this area. The Strategic Enrollment Management Team, led by Vice President for Enrollment Management Kris Cohen, will continue its work. In addition, the newly formed Student Success Team, a cross-divisional group of faculty, staff and administrators, led by Associate Provost Danielle Liataud and Associate Vice President for Student Development and Dean of Students Glen Sherman, will lead work on issues of student success primarily related to retention, including student engagement, academic support and advising. The Student Success Team reports through the vice presidents for Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management and Student Development, so these three vice presidents will be responsible for management of this area. As in goal area one, these two groups will also work with existing university groups in implementing the goals of this area. Student success is a responsibility of all in the university community. In the academic area, deans will also be responsible to work with their faculty and departments on issues of student success.

**Goal area three: Provide Students with Exceptional Opportunities Beyond the Classroom**

**Goal area four: Enhance the Sense of Community Beyond the University**

As noted earlier, there are areas in the Strategic Plan that overlap. This is one of those areas. In looking at the larger goals as well as the sub-goals in these areas, the connection is engagement: Engaging the university and its students with external partners; engaging internationally; engaging in-class with out-of-class experiences; engaging students and alumni. Goal area four also includes a focus on the campus itself as an engaging place, with the need to update and maintain facilities.

As we move forward with the Strategic Plan in these areas, the following groups will have major roles: The newly formed Civic Engagement Team will help provide direction and consistency in university efforts to connect in-class and out-of-class activities and to develop regionally and nationally recognized co-curricular activities, including ongoing work with Campus Compact, American Democracy Project and other existing, strong programs, including developing connections with UCC Category 5. The university's commitment to civic engagement in the core is a key part of the plan to make sure students are able to connect what they do in class with the world outside of the classroom. The existing Alumni Engagement group, led by Janis Schwartz, will continue to develop and enhance alumni engagement activities. The Campus Facilities Advisory Committee will lead efforts on the campus master plan. Vice President for Student Development Miki Cammarata and Vice President for Academic Affairs Warren Sandmann will have responsibility for oversight of the Civic Engagement Team. Vice President for Institutional Advancement Pam Ferguson will have responsibility for student and alumni engagement activities. Vice President for Administration and Finance Steve Bolyai will have responsibility for campus facilities work.



## **Goal area five: Establish the University as a Model of Outstanding, Affordable Public Higher Education**

The activities in goal area five are not always clearly tied to one area or one group's responsibility. To implement these goals and objectives, the following groups and individuals will have lead responsibility. Vice President for Institutional Advancement Pam Ferguson, her team, and the Foundation Board will continue to lead efforts to expand the University's fundraising. Vice President for Administration and Finance Steve Bolyai, working with his team, will lead efforts on continuous improvement of the University's administrative and business processes, and will also lead work, in collaboration with the Campus Climate Action Committee and Campus Facilities Advisory Committee, on continuing to make William Paterson a "green" institution. Provost Warren Sandmann will continue to work with the Deans and departments to align budget and staffing decisions with the Strategic Plan. John Polding, Associate Vice President for Human Resources, and Michelle Johnson, Chief Diversity Officer and Director, Employment Equity and Diversity, will lead efforts on strengthening professional development.

Responsibility for diversifying funding streams is shared across the university. Each area of the university has a role to play in this task, including expanding facility usage in the summer, developing additional community and industry partnerships, increasing grant and funded research, offering campus-based performances and presentations, and developing more programs through continuing and professional education. This task will be managed by the administration as a whole, under the direction of the President and the Board.

Two other areas will need increased attention as we move forward: Prioritization and Accountability.

Prioritization: It is both a cliché and a truism: If everything is a priority, nothing is a priority. To continue to move forward on our strategic plan, as well as to make sure we do so in a thoughtful and focused way in an era of limited resources, requires the university to make decisions based on specific priorities. We need to do this under the guidance of the strategic plan, and in a way that allows us to have a tight focus on specific projects that best allow us to realize our strategic goals. For the next phase of the Strategic Plan, our actions will be prioritized by a need to grow our enrollment and increase our retention and graduation rates. A focus on these priorities does not mean we ignore any of the goals of the Strategic Plan. But as we move ahead in the next few years, these priorities will shape much of our progress in the Strategic Plan.

The focus on these two areas will give impetus to specific actions.

- A focus on increasing retention and graduation rates will help spur us to develop academic and student support programs to ensure that our students are learning what they are supposed to learn, and have the abilities we say they need to have—when students are learning and succeeding, they are more likely to stay and graduate; this focus will also

help us continue to develop financial and other support programs that make it more likely that students will be able to stay in school and learn.

- A focus on enrollment, retention and graduation provides additional direction in how we seek, raise and use outside funds, and how we upgrade and update our facilities, our technology and our residential offerings.
- A focus on enrollment, retention and graduation also will help provide direction to departments and deans as they consider the development of new academic programs and potential redesigns of existing academic programs.

Accountability: Parallel to the development of the Strategic Plan, the University, under the direction of the Board, revised the Dashboard Indicators. These indicators provide specific metrics for many of the elements of the Strategic Plan. There are other areas of the Strategic Plan, however, that need accountability measures. As we move forward, we will combine the existing Dashboard Indicators with the development of these additional metrics so that we can hold ourselves accountable for progress on the Strategic Plan.

There will continue to be an annual report to the campus community in each year. The report will look at progress in implementing the strategic plan, will use metrics to evaluate specific progress, and will also include discussion of priorities for the upcoming period.

The original strategic plan was developed with five goal areas, and each divisional vice president was given responsibility for one of the five goal areas. This responsibility structure will remain in place, and the divisional vice presidents will be responsible for managing the reporting process for each of the goal areas, including the development of needed metrics for the report.

**Summary:** In fall 2014 we will be starting our third year with this strategic plan. This is an opportune time for reflection on what we have done and movement toward what we need to do to continue the implementation of the plan. The goals, vision and spirit of the plan as conceived in 2012 remain and will guide the work that is done going forward. The processes that are being developed now are not changes to the plan, but instead are means by which we can move ahead with a 10-year plan. The energy and activity of our start-up phase will now be part of an ongoing effort to achieve the goals we set in 2012. Our strategic plan process will continue to evolve as we achieve in certain areas, find we need to do more in certain other areas, and respond to any changes in our environment by prioritizing specific areas of the plan for a specific time period. A 10-year strategic plan provides us with the benefit of a stable long-term vision, as well as the luxury of being able to adapt to the immediacies of our situation. We remain excited about the possibilities presented to us by this strategic plan.

**Committee 2022:** Collin Banks, Steve Bolyai, Miki Cammarata, Kris Cohen, MaryAnn Cooper, Kim Daniel-Robinson, Pam Ferguson, Stuart Goldstein, Jean Levitan, Stephanie Quackenbush, Kara Rabbitt, Warren Sandmann and Sue Tardi