WVU's Strategic Transformation

WVU Strategic Transformation launched in March 2019. Trained department chairs and unit leaders conducted transformational visioning sessions with their respective units to solicit ideas to chart WVU's future. Over 60 units submitted ideas. In May 2019, a team representing a cross-section of WVU, reviewed the submissions, articulated key themes that framed WVU's strategic direction and identified specific initiatives. The team generated narratives to articulate the context and intent of the distinct themes. The following is a draft set of goals and illustrative initiatives based on broad campus input to support strategic transformation at WVU. For each goal, we provide a sample metric as an example for how progress towards strategic goals may be measured.

Guiding Principles

There are key principles guiding the development of the strategic transformation plan and process. First, the process of generating strategic transformation was intentionally inclusive and included participation of diverse individuals across WVU. The intent was to hear from faculty and staff about what makes WVU unique, what reflects and explains strategic successes, and what strategies can build upon that distinctiveness to move the university forward. Second, teaching, research and service are purposely integrated into all strategic goals. This is an acknowledgement that the core missions of advancing and disseminating knowledge are unified activities that contribute to all strategic goals. Third, engagement of all constituents (students, staff, faculty, alumni and partners) is critical to achieving strategic transformation. Therefore, the assumption is that a full complement of constituents are reflected in each goal.

Goal 1: Be an exemplary land-grant university that advances and promotes West Virginia and the Appalachia region

WVU is a modern, transformative land-grant university that serves as a beacon of hope for educational attainment, innovation for local, regional and global economies and for integrating Appalachia's rich cultural heritage. By engaging with local, state and regional partners, we are honoring and elevating communities and enriching people's lives.

Illustrative Initiatives

- Increase the depth and scope of community-engaged research to address critical community needs and advance opportunities.

- Achieve status as an Innovation and Economic Prosperity (IEP) University through the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities by codifying, elevating and advancing campus enterprises supporting economic and community development.

- Expand experiential and service-learning opportunities for students to contribute to West Virginia communities, organizations and culture.

- Increase state and regional economic development through research commercialization, industry partnerships, technology transfer and business incubation.

- Enhance teaching, research and engagement activities that support entrepreneurship, technology-based economic growth and workforce development.

- Expand access to healthcare to promote improved health outcomes for all residents of the region.

- Advance WVU Extension Services and programs to leverage research, teaching and service opportunities to engage persistent issues and elevate West Virginia communities.

Sample Metric

Receive designation as an IEP University from the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities in recognition of economic engagement activities across talent and workforce development, innovation and the development of place.

Goal 2: Be a leader in the creation and dissemination of knowledge

WVU is a preeminent land-grant research university that advances scholarship at the highest level and applies knowledge to confront the pressing challenges of our time. WVU is a center of academic excellence that responds to a rapidly changing world by providing innovative educational experiences to prepare students for career paths and meaningful lives and advances distinctive, relevant and engaging academic programs for an integrated, global society. WVU is committed to a holistic approach to higher learning that addresses critical issues through research, inquiry and innovative approaches to teaching and learning.

Illustrative Initiatives

- Sustain R1 classification through investments in technology, facilities, resources, grant-support and tech-transfer (focus on resource and administrative support).

- Advance and leverage technology to develop innovative solutions to community, economic and social needs.

- Provide distinct support for graduate students and post-docs to promote their professional advancement and university research activity.

- Promote undergraduate experiences that engage students in generating and applying knowledge through internships, student research programs, service-learning and study abroad.

- Expand curricular models to increase accessibility to knowledge to include general education, online and interdisciplinary degree programs.

- Build and elevate student life experiences that support student engagement, learning and development.

- Improve undergraduate and graduate retention and graduation rates.

- Create relevant, targeted academic programs that prepare students for the changing global marketplace.

- Identify areas of academic and research uniqueness and advantage and invest in areas of excellence and differentiation.

Sample Metric

Number of graduate students, professional students and post-docs per year in strategically identified programs

Goal 3: Be a unified university that is collaborative, integrative and effective

Grow as ONE WVU by embracing shared values that advance and celebrate the collective success of the university and the state. By fostering connections and eliminating barriers across disciplines, programs and campuses, WVU will promote open communication, information sharing and transparent decision-making. WVU will achieve a culture of high performance across all areas of the university by pursuing policies and initiatives that promote efficiency, effectiveness and sound financial practice.

Illustrative Initiatives

- Build a collaborative infrastructure (budget, facilities, technology, course scheduling) that fosters connectivity and encourages cross disciplinary, cross campus engagement/interaction.

- Create a rewards and recognition structure that encourages, celebrates and rewards cross-disciplinary collaboration and cooperation (versus competition).

- Support cross-campus, multi-way communication (based on listening) that ensures the university community speak from the same values and is open and transparent about its activities, efforts and intentions.

- Develop collaborative processes that intentionally brings people together across disciplines, campuses, colleges, units and centers to create new programs (academic programs, projects, curricula, events, etc.) that advances the university and the state.

- Integrate, align and develop talent (people) to produce effective collaboration.

- Implement a transparent and effective budget, resource and financial processes and management.

Sample Metric

Number of external grants submitted by faculty and staff representing more than one department, campus or unit.

Goal 4: Be a model of social equity

Reflecting our land-grant ideal as the people's university, we will be a leader for social equity, inclusion and diversity. WVU will create avenues of access and success for students, staff and faculty and nurture a university where historically underserved people are supported and valued. We will provide opportunities for meaningful connections across differences as we work for a more just and equitable university and society.

Illustrative Initiatives

- Create avenues for recruiting diverse student, staff and faculty and expand opportunities to retain them.

- Improve campus climate through intentional initiatives that promote all and support underrepresented groups.

- Integrate social equity in the student experience and education.

- Create opportunities for University community members to engage with a global perspective.

Sample Metric

Diversity rates in student recruitment, faculty and staff hiring.

Goal 5: Be a university that advances a culture, climate and organizational structure that promotes sustainability, well-being and an enriched quality of life

Support, promote and develop a culture that contributes to sustainability, enriched quality of life and enhanced opportunities to learn, live, work and grow for all students, staff and faculty. WVU will build spaces and places that promote accessibility, fellowship and collaboration among the university community. We will nurture welcoming workplaces with infrastructure, practices and policies that promote wellness and career growth.

Illustrative Initiatives

- Design accessible and welcoming physical infrastructure.

- Identify and develop opportunities and mechanisms to empower faculty, students and staff to collaborate in creating an inclusive and supportive campus community.

- Stewardship of place and encouraging sustainability.

- Support a culture of respect, service, accountability, appreciation and curiosity.

- Create workforce programs/offerings/benefits (health insurance, mental health resources, workplace flexibility).

- Develop professional development, advancement and recognition practices and opportunities for employees and students across their career life cycle, maintain engagement and promote advancement.

Sample Metric

Faculty and staff satisfaction rates.