

Wichita State University Strategic Planning Initiative: 2013

The Wichita State University strategic plan establishes big audacious goals for Wichita State University based on a new vision, mission, and values. The plan is a strategic management tool to assist everyone at the university in administration, academic programs, student services, support services, and other operational departments¹ to evaluate initiatives and allocate resources to reach the university's goals.

The ultimate purpose of this strategic plan is to keep university members working toward the lofty vision and big audacious goals that the Wichita State University Strategic Planning Steering Committee identified as important for the transformation of Wichita State University. The Steering Committee's work is based on data gathered from meetings with Wichita State University faculty, staff, and students, the Wichita State University Alumni Association members, and the larger community of the city of Wichita and the state of Kansas.

It took phenomenal integration of a body of work to create this plan. Hence, it is essential that it be viewed in its entirety rather than dissected into pieces.

Vision

Wichita State University is internationally recognized as the model for applied learning and research.

This vision means Wichita State University will be “the model” not merely “a model” for requiring students to apply their skill sets in practical or real world contexts. It requires that everyone at Wichita State University can state what each student will be able to accomplish in terms of applied learning or applied research. This vision extends beyond the student experience—it requires that everyone at the university engage in or support applied learning and research. The fulfillment of this vision will be realized in many different ways across the Wichita State University campus.

Mission

The mission of Wichita State University is to be an essential educational, cultural, and economic driver for Kansas and the greater public good.

¹ The term “department” is used throughout this document to include all administration, academic programs, student services, support services, and other operational entities of Wichita State University.

Values

There are universal values that underlie all behavior at Wichita State University. These include integrity, personal responsibility, collegiality, knowledge creation, and education. It is expected that Wichita State University faculty, staff, and students will display honesty and truthfulness in all their actions. All are expected to show individual initiative as well as cooperative interaction among colleagues in accomplishing the goals of Wichita State University. The importance of the creation of knowledge and the education of people are universal values accepted by everyone at the university.

There are distinctive values that are unique and integral to accomplishing Wichita State University's strategic plan. They are unique to this specific strategic plan. Each goal described below is supported by the following distinctive values.

At Wichita State University, we value...

- *Seizing opportunities*
- *Success for all stakeholders*
- *Diversity of culture, thought, and experience*
- *Adaptive approaches*
- *Teamwork*
- *Positive risk-taking*

Big Audacious Goals

As the big audacious goals were developed, a litmus test was applied to each. We asked: In what ways...

1. is this goal important and significant?
2. is this goal tied to the data collected during the strategic planning initiative?
3. does this goal stretch us?
4. are we being bold enough with this goal?
5. can every department see the application, meaning, and relevance of this goal?
6. will this goal stimulate important questions and dialogues?
7. is there logic to this idea?
8. do we have confidence in this goal?
9. does this goal challenge our personal assumptions?
10. does this goal provide us with focus?

Each of the goals detailed below, met the litmus test.

Goal 1: Guarantee an applied learning or research experience for every student by each academic program.

The purpose of this goal is to ensure that every student who graduates from Wichita State University experiences applied learning or applied research across all of their studies. This goal will be a condition of graduation rather than merely an opportunity. Applied learning and research will be infused throughout students' educational experiences. Real world experience (experiential learning) that allows students to develop and apply their skill sets will be incorporated into the curriculum of each academic unit. This goal is not achieved by simply offering a capstone course or a graduate project. It is not the sole responsibility of the Office of Cooperative Education and Work-Based Learning or some other program on campus. Rather it is the responsibility of each and every academic program to ensure that all students who come through their program apply their skill set in real world contexts. The achievement of this goal will look different in every program.

This may seem like an obstacle for some. It is not—it is an opportunity. It is an opportunity to change our way of thinking and achieve our vision of being the model for applied learning and research. It challenges us to move our academic programs from “in curriculum” to “designed by the student.”

The achievement of this goal will require:

- faculty professional development to improve the skills to infuse applied learning and research into the curriculum.
- development of cross discipline and community partnerships.
- changes in teaching delivery methods. Wichita State University is behind in delivery technologies such as distance learning.
- the need to be proactive rather than merely reactive.

Questions that need to be asked to achieve this goal include:

- How does our academic program accomplish this goal?
- What do applied learning and applied research mean to each student services and support services unit?
- With what portfolio (both visual and intellectual) will students exit the university?
- How does our academic program or department add to this portfolio?
- How do we infuse this concept of application into the curriculum rather than add it to our program?
- What might we need to let go of to make this goal possible?
- What partnerships across disciplines or with the community, or both, need to be developed? Ask ourselves, “Where would our students work?”
- What partnerships between academic units and support staff need to be cultivated?
- If we think we are already providing applied learning or applied research opportunities for students, how do we take it to the next level?

The measures of success for this goal include that every:

- academic program explains, in specific terms, the applied learning and research experienced by every student who takes its classes.
- department ensures that it adds to every student's visual and intellectual exit portfolio.
- academic program explains, in specific terms, how applied learning and research are infused into its curriculum.
- department explains how it restructured itself to guarantee every student an applied learning or research experience.
- department identifies partnerships it created with other disciplines, support staff, or the community to create applied learning and research experiences for all students.

Goal 2: Pioneer an educational experience for all that integrates interdisciplinary curricula across the university.

The intent of this goal is to ensure integration of learning to develop critical thinking skills in students. Students need to be able to make important connections between their field and how it influences society and culture. Students need to be able to write about and for their professions.

This goal is different than General Education requirements. It is more than sending a student over to another department to take a class. This goal will require faculty to work across disciplines to create an integrated student experience. It will be imperative to use transformational approaches to integrate curricula rather than merely "adding on" classes.

The achievement of this goal will require:

- discovery and elimination of duplications in curricula.
- faculty professional development to cultivate the skills to engage in interdisciplinary curriculum development.
- professional development for faculty, staff, and administration to enhance the ability to teach and model critical thinking skills.
- staff and administrative support of interdisciplinary curriculum development.
- changes in teaching delivery methods. Wichita State University is behind in delivery technologies such as distance learning.
- creation of appealing spaces for faculty collaboration, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- colleges to change their advising processes and class prerequisites.
- rewards for faculty, staff, and administrators who work on the development of interdisciplinary initiatives.

Questions that need to be asked to achieve this goal include:

- What might we give up or integrate to achieve this goal (e.g., ownership, control, credit)?
- What must be included to obtain a degree? What can we give up or should we add to integrate with other programs?
- What are our students lacking in order to be successful in their fields? What is the real world application?
- Where are the natural interdisciplinary connections?

The measures of success for this goal include that every:

- academic program explains, in specific terms, its development of an integrated interdisciplinary curriculum.
- academic program identifies its cross disciplinary faculty partnerships.
- department explains, in specific terms, how it creates and supports an educational experience for all that integrates interdisciplinary curricula across the university.

Goal 3: Capitalize systemically on relevant existing and emerging societal and economic trends that increase quality educational opportunities.

The purpose of this goal is to ensure that all new initiatives are tied to existing and emerging social, business, technology, demographic, policy, and economic trends. It implies a systemic approach to identifying and exploiting existing and emerging trends to provide high quality educational opportunities.

The achievement of this goal will require:

- review of over and undersubscribed programs.
- reallocation of funds.
- new ways of delivering education. Wichita State University is behind in delivery technologies such as distance learning.
- new infrastructure.

Questions that need to be asked to achieve this goal include:

- What does this goal mean for our department?
- How do we identify relevant existing and emerging social, business, technology, demographic, policy, and economic trends?
- How do we increase enrollment by being more relevant?

The measures of success for this goal include that every new initiative:

- be judged on its relevance.
- capitalizes on an existing or emerging social, business, technology, demographic, policy, or economic trend.

Goal 4: Accelerate the discovery, creation, and transfer of new knowledge.

The purpose of this goal is to increase the quantity and quality of research projects that advance knowledge, produce intellectual property, and result in the transfer of knowledge for practical application. No one knows what knowledge will be needed 50 years from now. We do know, however, that the creation of new knowledge and ideas is crucial to improving educational, cultural, and economic well-being for the state of Kansas and the greater public good. Research efforts that advance knowledge, enhance Wichita State University's reputation, attract funding, or lead to new products that benefit society will be developed, supported, and accelerated.

Connected to new knowledge discovery and creation is research that results in new inventions, innovations, and technologies that can, more immediately, be marketed. Research efforts that result in income from the transfer of knowledge for practical application as a consequence of innovations, new inventions, or creative use of existing technologies will be developed, supported, and accelerated.

The achievement of this goal will require:

- financial support of basic research projects.
- financial support of projects that transfer knowledge for practical application.
- allocated time for researchers and staff to devote to basic research projects.
- allocated time for researchers and staff to devote to projects that transfer knowledge for practical application.

Questions that need to be asked to achieve this goal include:

- Is our department engaging in or supporting research efforts that advance knowledge, enhance Wichita State University's reputation, attract funding, lead to new products that benefit society, or result in income from the transfer of knowledge for practical application?
- Is our department increasing the quantity and quality of our research projects that advance knowledge, produce intellectual property, or result in the transfer of knowledge for practical application?

The measures of success for this goal include:

- an increase in the number of high quality refereed journal articles.
- an increase in the number of articles in high quality practitioner publications.
- an increase in the frequency with which Wichita State University is cited by media outlets in relation to research efforts and the transfer of knowledge for practical application.
- an increase in the number of patents awarded to Wichita State University.
- an increase in the number and quality of collaborative partnerships with industry and private sector enterprises.

Goal 5: Empower students to create a campus culture and experience that meets their changing needs.

The intent of this goal is to create connections between students in ways that they want to connect. In other words, this goal means stepping away from dictating to students what they should want, or what we think they want, in a student experience. Rather, empower students to create a Wichita State University campus culture and experience where they want to come to class and then “hang-out.” They must be provided reasons to stay on campus. These reasons can come in the form of classroom experiences or other campus activities. The accomplishment of this goal will be the responsibility of every department (i.e., administrative, academic, support, and operational departments), rather than merely the responsibility of Student Life. Wichita State University will look less like a traditional commuter college and become a destination.

The achievement of this goal will require:

- creating enticing spaces for students, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- engaging students in conversations about their needs.
- providing a sense of empowerment to students.
- listening to students about their perceptions of safety issues on the Wichita State University campus and surrounding neighborhoods.
- providing resources and development opportunities for faculty, staff, and administrators that help them engage and listen to students.

Questions that need to be asked to achieve this goal include:

- What must “I” do to empower students?
- What are the needs of faculty and staff to accomplish this goal?
- What are the resources we already have to make this happen?
- What type of campus culture and experience do students desire? What classroom, support and student services, and student life activities will create this culture and experience?

The measures of success for this goal include that:

- campus gathering spaces—large and small—are filled with students on a regular basis.
- students identify Wichita State University as a destination for more than class attendance.
- students feel safe as they go about their activities associated with the campus.

Goal 6: Be a campus that reflects—in staff, faculty, and students—the evolving diversity of society.

Wichita State University cannot fulfill its mission without executing this goal. We learn by being in a diverse setting. Diversity is imperative for the growth of the university. The purpose of this goal is to ensure that the composition of the faculty, staff, and students at Wichita State University mirrors the variety of the types of people found in society, especially race and gender.

The achievement of this goal will require:

- changes in how we look to those we want to reach.
- identification of society's diversity we want to mirror.
- a systemic, systematic, intensive, and interdisciplinary desire to diversify.

Questions that need to be asked to achieve this goal include:

- How is building diversity not simply a marketing issue?
- How is this goal realized through high quality hiring rather than simply a high number of hires?
- What are the risks and whom might we alienate by increasing our diversity?
- How representative is our faculty, staff, and administration currently?
- Do "I" see diversity? How do we make this happen?
- How can we tie into multicultural programs and resources on campus?
- Up until now, what have we valued more than diversity?
- What does our behavior suggest we care about instead of diversity?
- What assumptions do we need to challenge?
- What do we need to learn or relearn?
- What other places have accomplished this goal? What can we learn from them?

The measures of success for this goal include that:

- Wichita State University's diversity—in staff, faculty, and students—mirrors the race and gender diversity of the United States.

Goal 7: Create a new model of assessment, incentive, and reward processes to accomplish our vision and goals.

To accomplish the vision, mission, and goals laid out in this strategic plan, the assessment, incentive, and reward processes at Wichita State University must be transformed. The elements we say we value—seizing opportunities, success for all stakeholders, diversity, adaptive approaches, teamwork, and positive risk-taking—require an integrated reward system that breaks down silos (i.e., insularity) that exist across colleges. This new model is a culture change rather than simply a paper process change. The intent is not to create more paperwork or new administrative

positions but rather to get the existing administration committed to spearheading a fundamental culture change.

The achievement of this goal will require:

- reconfiguring the criteria for tenure and promotion to become transparent, consistent, and universal across colleges.
- rethinking how administrators are evaluated.
- rethinking how staff are evaluated.
- developing incentives and rewards for interdisciplinary work.
- rethinking who gets credit for teamwork and interdisciplinary approaches.
- increasing incentives for service.
- addressing pay inequities among departments.

Questions that need to be asked to achieve this goal include:

- Do we follow clear tenure and promotion criteria? If not, why not?
- Do we need to consider moving away from a traditional tenure and promotion process to accomplish our goals?
- What changes are needed to assessment, incentive, and reward processes for staff and administrators to accomplish our vision and goals?
- What resources and incentives are available to us to make these goals happen?
- Are we reinforcing the behavior needed to achieve these goals?
- Will this change the people we hire and how marketable they are?
- How do we not punish but rather create incentives for interdisciplinary work?

The measures of success for this goal include that:

- tenure and promotion processes are aligned with this strategic plan.
- assessment, incentive, and reward processes for all positions are aligned with this strategic plan.
- every assessment, incentive, and reward is linked to our professed values that reinforce behaviors needed to achieve these goals.
- the other goals in this plan are successfully accomplished.