

HIGHER VALUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION 2017-2027

Preamble

Western Illinois University was founded in 1899 as the Western Illinois State Normal School to address teacher preparation in the State's grammar schools. The faculty and students of Western were eager to meet this need, and the institution soon became known for its well-rounded, deeply committed graduates, a tradition that continues to the day.

As the years passed and the name was changed to Western Illinois State Teachers' College in 1921, and then to Western Illinois University in 1957, our mission continually broadened to include academic majors that prepared high school teachers; the state's earliest and most successful extension program; a multifaceted graduate school; a liberal arts program; and, eventually, distinguished colleges devoted to the Arts and Sciences, Business and Technology, Education and Human Services, and Fine Arts and Communication.

Throughout time, we have earned and maintained a reputation for expanding access to affordable, high-quality degree programs and fostering student involvement in University activities.

We are now a leading University with campuses in Macomb, the Quad Cities, and online. By virtue of our quality, opportunity, and affordability, we serve students from Illinois, across the nation, and around the world.

Together, we advance our traditions of excellence. We empower students to become engaged and productive global citizens committed to making a difference in the diverse communities and professions they represent. Our graduates are leaders in their fields equipped with knowledge, problem solving skills, and community awareness necessary to address the professional, economic, and social issues of our time.

Through successful implementation of Higher Values in Higher Education 2017-2027, we will advance Western Illinois University's hallmarks of excellence.

HIGHER VALUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION 2017-2027

Vision, Mission, and Values

Our Vision

Western Illinois University aims to be the leading public regional university in providing educational quality, opportunity, and affordability. As such, we will have a stable headcount enrollment of over 10,000 students, growing to 12,500 students; employee high-achieving, diverse faculty and staff representative of global society; have retention and graduation rates at the top 25% of peer institutions; and place in the top 10% in national publications that evaluate quality, opportunity and affordability.

Our Mission

Western Illinois University empowers students, faculty, and staff to lead dynamic and diverse communities. We provide student-centered undergraduate and graduate programs characterized by innovative teaching, research, and service, grounded in multidisciplinary, regional and global perspectives. We engage our students in educational opportunities guided by a professional and diverse faculty and staff in collaboration with alumni and community partners.

Our Values

Academic Excellence

Central to our history is the commitment to teaching, to the individual learner, and to active involvement in the teaching-learning process. Western Illinois University's highly qualified and diverse faculty promotes critical thinking, engaged learning, research, and creativity in a challenging, supportive learning community. We are committed to student success in an academic environment that encourages lifelong development as learners, scholars, teachers, and mentors.

Educational Opportunity

Western Illinois University values educational opportunity and welcomes those who show promise and a willingness to work toward achieving academic excellence. We are committed to providing accessible, high quality educational programs and financial support for our students.

Personal Growth

Western Illinois University values the development of the whole person. We are committed to providing opportunities for personal growth in an environment that supports the development of wellness, ethical decision making, and personal responsibility in the global community.

Social Responsibility

Western Illinois University is committed to civic and community engagement, equity, social justice, and diversity and will maintain the highest standards of integrity in our work with others. We create an environment that fosters and promotes citizenship. We serve as a resource for and stimulus to educational, cultural, environmental, community and economic development in our region and well beyond it for the public good.

HIGHER VALUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION 2017-2027

Executive Summary

Higher Values in Higher Education 2017-2027 is based on results from empirical environmental scanning completed by the Social Responsibility Task Force during academic year 2017-2018. This newest edition of the University's 10-year *Strategic Plan* is a **call to action** for the students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of the University. Together, we will advance our traditions of excellence and implement new actions that position Western Illinois University for a strong and sustainable future. As a university community, we will:

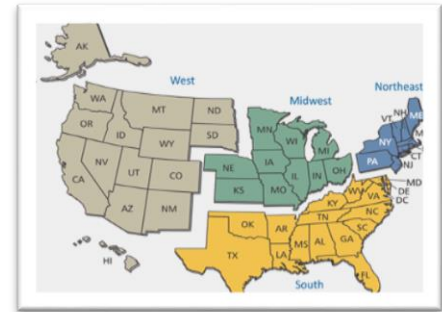
- 1) Stabilize Enrollment at 10,000 Students and Continue Enrollment Growth by:
 - a) Engaging in educational outreach and recruitment activities.
 - b) Focusing on quality.
 - c) Expanding opportunity.
 - d) Advancing affordability.
- 2) Recruit and Retain World Class Faculty and Staff.
- 3) Enrich Academic Excellence by:
 - a) Focusing on the individual learner.
 - b) Maintaining high standards of excellence in instruction.
 - c) Supporting strong commitments to research, scholarly, and creative activities.
 - d) Engaging in mission-driven public service and educational outreach.
 - e) Delivering a strong, user-centered information technology infrastructure.
- 4) Advance Educational Opportunity by:
 - a) Increasing retention and graduation rates.
 - b) Decreasing time-to-degree.
- 5) Support Personal Growth by:
 - a) Promoting health and wellness.
 - b) Enhancing student and community engagement.
- 6) Promote Social Responsibility by:
 - a) Providing safe, accessible, and responsive campus environments.
 - b) Promoting civic engagement and service learning
 - c) Using partnerships to advance the University's vision, mission, values, and goals
- 7) Demonstrate Accountability and Transparency

HIGHER VALUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION 2017-2027

Environmental Scanning and Resultant Action Planning

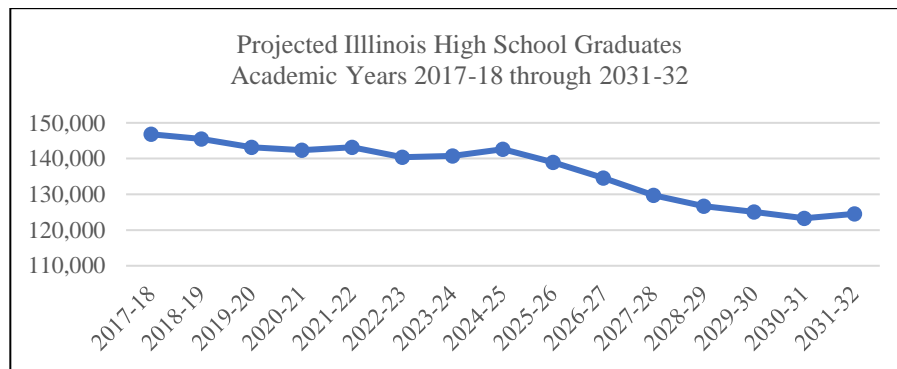
Goal 1: Stabilize Enrollment at 10,000 Students and Continue Enrollment Growth

The next two decades for new student recruitment in the Midwest in general and Illinois in particular will be highly and increasingly competitive unless there is population migration into our state and region. Data published by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education provides high school graduate projections according to the map on the right.



Barring population increases, the Midwest is projected to have a 65,888 student, or 8.9% decrease in the number of high school graduates from 738,805 graduates in Academic Year (AY) 2017-18 to 672,917 graduates in AY 2031-32. The only racial/ethnic designation predicted to increase during this time are Hispanic graduates. They are predicted to increase by 10.4%, from 77,486 graduates in AY17-18 to 87,793 graduates in AY31-32.

Illinois' predicted decrease in total high school graduates is even larger than the Midwest's. The projected number of high school graduates is expected to decrease by 22,241 graduates (15.2%) between AYs 17-18 and 31-32. We look to the state government to restore the economic climate to attract more business and industry, and to restore public confidence in higher education through the restoration of fair and predictable funding to Illinois public universities.



At the same time, we are realistic about the current challenges that we face. The predicted reduction in the number of Illinois high school graduates is compounded by the following facts published by the Illinois Board of Higher Education in January 2018.

- In fall 2016, the number of Illinois residents enrolled outside Illinois as new freshmen increased by 5%, or 1,749 students between fall 2014 and fall 2016.
- The number of Illinois residents enrolled as new freshmen enrolled outside Illinois increased by 73%, from 20,507 students in fall 2000 to 35,445 students in fall 2016.
- The fall 2016 net loss of Illinois residents to colleges and universities in other states was 19,278 students. This total is larger than the total undergraduate student body at every Illinois public university, with the exception of the University of Illinois-Urbana/Champaign.

Clearly, the landscape of Illinois public higher education is changing. In addition to a pool of fewer high school graduates, more students are completing programs in distance education formats, and transcending state boundaries to attend on and off-campus locations. The population of students served are becoming more diverse, and there are new, emerging, and expanding markets of students, including dually enrolled high-school students, degree-completion students, military students, and working professionals who seek career advancement as the “Greying of America” continues.

Given these trends, is it realistic to plan for enrollment stabilization and continued growth? The answer is unequivocally yes. From an empirical perspective, every situation can be viewed as an opportunity or a challenge. We will achieve our objectives through concerted action in the face of demographic trends.

We can retain the lost out-of-state market share. Out-migrating students remain close to Illinois. The top four out-of-state destinations are contiguous to Illinois, and the top two out-of-state institutions are located in Iowa. If the University recaptured just 2.3% of these students, it would represent an annual new freshman increase of 444 students. To accomplish our objectives, we will:

Top States and Universities for Illinois Residents Enrolled Out-of-State Fall 2016 New Freshmen			
Iowa	4,801	University of Iowa	1,690
Indiana	4,470	Iowa State University	1,017
Wisconsin	4,089	Indiana University	901
Missouri	3,543	University of Missouri	894
Michigan	2,166	Marquette University	822
Ohio	2,135	Purdue University	653

Priority 1: Engage in Educational Outreach and Recruitment Activities

We will increase the number of prospective students who visit campus. The Western Illinois University experience, our inclusive, welcoming, and safe campus environments, and host communities sell themselves. Data from the admissions office shows that 20% of all new freshmen applicants ultimately enroll at the University. However, the freshmen yield rate increases to 50% for those applicants who participate in campus activities, prior term first-term enrollment. Having more prospective students will help increase enrollment.

In order to increase the number of current and prospective students who visit our campuses, we will enhance our marketing and educational outreach efforts to bring even more awareness about Western Illinois University, our national leadership in quality, opportunity, affordability, and the successful job placement and graduate/professional school continuation rates of our alumni.

We have the interest base to be successful in our endeavors. The University receives more than 13,000 applications for new freshman, transfer, and graduate student applications annually for fall admission. Applying equally concerted efforts to spring and summer enrollments will yield even more results. Together, we will fuel enrollment growth by:

- Action 1: Using analytics to evaluate and enhance integrated marketing at the institutional, college, and programmatic levels *[University Marketing, University Relations, Quad Cities Public Information, Colleges and Departments]*.
- Action 2: Updating the Macomb and Quad Cities webpages to include more interactive features and ease of access of information *[Internet Technology Advisory Committee, University Technology]*.
- Action 3: Increasing year-round educational outreach activities that bring prospective students of all ages to Western Illinois University *[Faculty and Staff]*.

- Action 4: Bringing more applicants and students who have been accepted to campus prior to initial registration and enrollment *[Admissions, Colleges, Schools and Departments]*.
- Action 5: Implementing strategies to capture a greater market share of enrollment from the University’s immediate 16-county service region *[Admissions, Colleges, Schools and Departments]*.
- Action 6: Documenting plans and outcomes from the President’s Executive Institute in helping with enrollment stabilization and growth *[Vice President for Quad Cities and Planning]*.
- Action 7: Expanding institutional partnerships with foundations and external organizations that support educational outreach and student recruitment *[Faculty and Staff]*.
- Action 8: Engaging in continuous improvement opportunities by:
 - a. Working with an enrollment consultant to identify strengths and implement improvements in undergraduate, general studies, international student, and graduate admission processes *[Admissions; School of Graduate Studies; School of Distance Learning, International Education and Outreach, Colleges, Schools and Departments]*.
 - b. Coordinating an update the 2012 American Association of State Colleges and Universities review of the University’s campus internationalization efforts in the areas of student recruitment, retention, and campus climate *[School of Distance Learning, International Education and Outreach]*.
 - c. Benchmarking and adapting national best practices in student recruitment *[Admissions; School of Graduate Studies; School of Distance Learning, International Education and Outreach, Colleges, Schools and Departments]*.
 - d. Participating in statewide and national associations and initiatives designed to increase student enrollment *[Faculty and Staff]*.

Priority 2: Focus on Quality

Students enroll in postsecondary education for personal enrichment and professional preparation. Where the student chooses to enroll at a specific college or university is an individual value proposition. From a return on investment perspective, results from the *2016 American Freshman Survey* of approximately 200,000 new students enrolled at 200 colleges and universities in the United States indicate that institutional quality—or the academic reputation of a college or university was the primary reason a student selected their institution. Professional preparation—or alumni job placement rates was the second most important factor to this national cohort of new students.

Top 10 Reasons Fall 2016 New Freshmen Enrolled in a Given College or University
1. Academic Reputation
2. Job Placement Rates
3. Financial Assistance
4. Cost of Attendance
5. Completed a Campus Visit
6. Social Activities
7. Size of the Institution
8. Alumni placement in top graduate and professional schools
9. Graduation Rates
10. Living Close to Home
<i>Source: Higher Education Research Institute, University of California-Los Angeles</i>

We are in a favorable position to capitalize upon our academic quality—reputation—and student success—job placement and graduate/professional school continuation rates—to increase enrollment. Quality is synonymous with Western Illinois University. To give just a few examples:

- ✓ Niche.com named Western Illinois University a Top Illinois public university.
- ✓ The Princeton Review named Western Illinois University a “Best Midwestern College” for the 14th consecutive year in August, 2017.
- ✓ Western Illinois University’s inclusion with 657 other colleges named as “regional best colleges” comprise the top 25% of the nation’s 2,500 master’s granting colleges and universities.
- ✓ US News and World Report continually ranks Western Illinois University in the Ten Best Midwestern Public Regional Universities within a 12-state area.

Top 15 Fall 2017 Midwestern Public Universities Ranked by U.S. News and World Report			
1.	Truman State University	9.	Western Illinois University
2.	University of Northern Iowa	9.	University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
3.	Grand Valley State University	9.	University of Wisconsin-Whitewater
4.	University of Wisconsin-La Crosse	12.	University of Illinois-Springfield
5.	University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire	13.	University of Nebraska-Kearney
6.	University of Michigan-Dearborn	13.	Winona State
6.	University of Minnesota-Duluth	15.	Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville
8.	Eastern Illinois University	15.	University of Wisconsin-Stout

- ✓ Centennial Honors College increased enrollment by 494 students (83%) between 2012 and fall 2017, and now serves 1,000 students.
- ✓ Results from the *2017 Alumni Survey* show that 91% of Western Illinois University are employed, 71% within nine months of graduation, and 37% continued with higher education after graduation.

Furthermore, results from *The Economist* show that Western Illinois University alumni place in the top 24% nationally for earning higher salaries than predicted based on econometric variables. Our alumni are significantly prepared to succeed and advance in the workforce. Therefore, we will emphasize institutional quality and student outcomes by:

Action 9: Marketing Quality.

- a. Promoting the University’s national recognitions, job placement rates, and the percent of alumni attending graduate and professional schools [*University Marketing, University Relations, Quad Cities Public Information, Colleges, Schools, and Departments*].
- b. Showcasing student and faculty interactions on homepages and departmental pages on the Macomb and Quad Cities campuses through multimedia applications [*Web Services, Quad Cities Technology, University Marketing, University Relations, Quad Cities Public Information, Colleges, Schools, and Departments*].
- c. Emphasizing the distinctiveness and excellence of Western Illinois University in communications and marketing materials [*University Marketing, University Relations, Quad Cities Public Information, Colleges, Schools and Departments*].

Action 10: Positioning Centennial Honors College at the forefront of the University by:

- a. Increasing the number of honors courses and enrollments [*Colleges, Departments, and Centennial Honors College*].
- b. Launching a Task Force with the objective of relocating Centennial Honors College to high profile locations on both campuses [*President*].
- c. Benchmarking and implementing national best practices in serving honors student [*Provost, Centennial Honors College, Colleges, Schools and Departments*].

Action 11: Using program review and discipline-specific accreditation processes to assure and advance programmatic quality and viability [Colleges, Departments, Provost's Office, Planning, Budget and Institutional Research].

Priority 3: Expand Opportunity

Opportunity and Western Illinois University are synonymous. We provide high quality programs to those who show willingness to work toward achieving shared educational goals, and prepare students for inclusion in the global community. Data published by *US News and World Report* in 2017 shows that the University's graduation rate is 3% higher than predicted based on new student preparation variables.

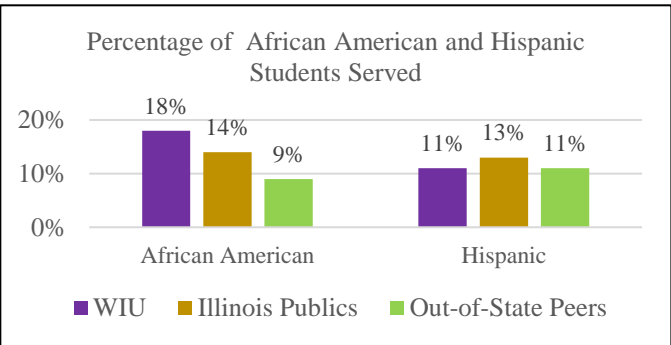
We will continue to provide a quality, well-rounded education to high-achieving, diverse students. Total minority student enrollment as a percent of total university enrollment increased from 26.3% in fall 2013 to 33.8% in fall 2017. Our increases exceed growth trends for all other Illinois public universities, where values increased from 33.5% in fall 2013 to 35.9% in fall 2016. We have diversity rates at or above statewide averages and at our peer institutions.

As the University stabilizes and increases enrollment, we will capitalize upon our growth areas. We have initiated a new high school dual enrollment program, continue to place emphasis on transfer and international student enrollment, and will increase the university's distance education portfolio.

The University has served 61,868 distance education course enrollments since Fiscal Year 2013, generating 175,125 credit hours. Demand for a Western Illinois University distance education continues to increase at record levels. There has been a 42% or 4,179 course enrollment increase between Fiscal Years 2013 and 2017, and a 37% or 10,826 credit hour increase during this time.

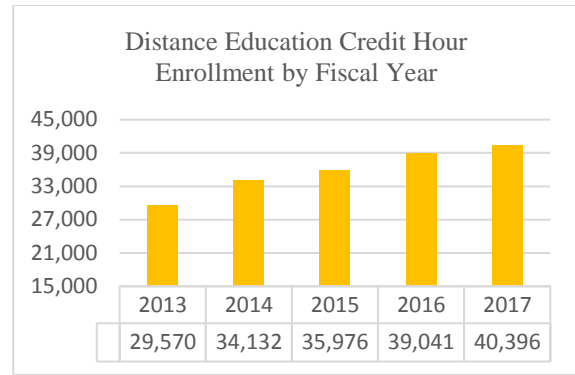
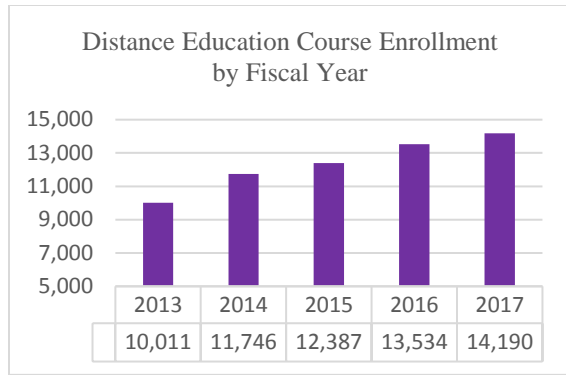
Did You Know?

- Western Illinois University is nationally recognized by the *Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Postsecondary Education*, *Southern Education Review Board*, *US News and World Report*, and *Washington Monthly* for achieving six-year graduation rates higher than predicted based on entering student preparation variables.



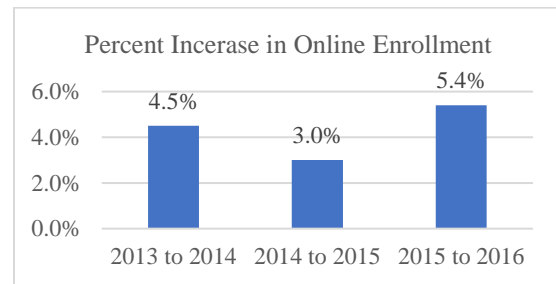
Did You Know?

- Western Illinois University began teaching dual enrollment classes at high schools in fall 2017.
- Academically qualified high school students can take WIU classes on campus, online, and or at partner high schools.
- Over 29,000 Illinois high school students participate in high school dual enrollment courses.



Distance education growth potential exists.

- In 2017, Inside Higher Education documented 14 consecutive years of online enrollment growth, with US News and World Report projecting continuing increases.
- The Online Consortium showed that 28% of college students are enrolled in at least one online course.
- The Babson Survey Research Group showed that 73% of all undergraduate and 39% of all graduate distance students are enrolled at public universities.



Increases in online education will accompany new degree programs in all instructional modalities in areas of need that are consistent with the *Mission* of the University. We will also reinvest in programs demonstrating growth and high growth potential.

We will re-brand the Bachelors of General Studies to increase its attractiveness to working professionals. Baccalaureate degree completion is a growth market. *2017 United States Census Population Estimates* for Illinois indicate 88% of residents age 25 and above have a high school diploma, but only 33% of this population has a bachelor's degree. With eight million Illinois residents between the ages of 18 and 65, there is a growth market. The National Center of Education Statistics projects a 20% increase in college student enrollment of students between 25 and 34 years of age over the next decade.

There are growth opportunities for military students, international students, and students who left the University before graduating. We have long standing traditions of excellence in serving students from these markets.

- ✓ *Military Times* and *US News and World Report* continually rank Western Illinois University as one of the best institutions in the country for serving veterans.
- ✓ *US News and World Report* included Western's online programs in the Top 75 in the nation.

Did You Know?

- Beginning in fall 2018, Western Illinois University will offer Tuition Assistance for active military personnel.
- Western Illinois University currently offers 463 online classes and seven undergraduate and graduate degree programs.
- Western Illinois University enrolled students from 39 states and 58 countries during academic year 2017-2018.
- Baccalaureate degree recipients have \$1.0 million higher lifetime earning rates than those who do not possess a degree.

Expanded student recruitment will be achieved by:

Action 12: Diversifying the campuses *[Faculty and Staff]*.

Action 13: Increasing the number of:

- a. Partner schools and high school dual enrollments *[Academic Affairs, Admissions, Quad Cities Student Services]*.
- b. Partnership agreements and community college dual enrollments *[Colleges, Departments, Vice President, Quad Cities and Planning.]*.
- c. International agreements and international student enrollments *[Colleges, Departments, School of Distance Learning, International Studies, and Outreach]*.

Action 14: Developing and implementing pathway degree program partnerships with community colleges *[Colleges, Departments, Admissions]*.

Action 15: Expanding the University's distance education portfolio. This includes, but is not limited to increasing:

- a. Online majors *[Colleges, Departments, Faculty Senate, Graduate Council, Provost]*.
- b. The number of community colleges hosting the University's online and/or degree programs *[Provost, Colleges, Departments, Vice President, Quad Cities and Planning]*.
- c. Hybrid programs, where 25% percent of instruction is completed on-campus and the remaining 75% in completed online *[Colleges, Departments, Faculty Senate, Graduate Council, Provost]*.

Action 16: Continuing development of new degree programs and post baccalaureate certificates in areas of high demand/critical skills shortages that are consistent with the academic mission of the University *[Colleges, Departments, Faculty Senate, Graduate Council, Provost]*.

Action 17: Reinvesting in high demand, potential for growth programs *[Academic Affairs]*.

Action 18: Rebranding the Bachelor's of General Studies degree program with emphases on degree completion *[School of Distance Learning, International Studies, and Outreach]*.

Action 19: Implementing recommendations from the Military Task Force *[Faculty and Staff]*.

Action 20: Entering and expanding into enrollment growth markets consistent with the *Mission* of the University. As a shared priority of the university community, we will increase enrollments of:

- a. Military students.
- b. Working professionals.
- c. International students.
- d. Place-bound students.
- e. Students that left college prior to completing degree requirements.

Priority 4: Advance national leadership in affordability

Western Illinois University has a long-standing tradition of innovation in affordability and cost predictability.

- ✓ We developed the model for *Illinois Truth in Tuition* legislation that has been replicated by other public and private institutions nationally.

- ✓ We were the first institution in the State to develop dual enrollment agreements with community colleges that includes an agreement with the Illinois Student Assistance Commission on the transfer of financial assistance that can save students up to 25% of the four-year college costs.
- ✓ We expanded Western Commitment Scholarships to include a need based component for new freshmen, the value and duration of Western Commitment Transfer Scholarships, and lowered the cost of high school dual enrollment to 1/3rd of the University's tuition rate.
- ✓ We remain the only Illinois public university that guarantees to cost increases to students for four years in the areas of tuition, fees, and room and board rates.

While we are proud of these accomplishments, we do not rest upon achievements of the past. Opportunity, access, and affordability are key tenants of Western Illinois University. Over 75% of our students receive financial assistance, with 49% of the Macomb students and 32% of the Quad Cities students receiving Pell Grants. In serving a cost sensitive population, we will continue:

- Action 21: Emphasizing in marketing and recruitment materials that Western Illinois University is the only Illinois public university to provide students with a cost guarantee for tuition, fees, and room and board [*University Marketing, University Relations, Quad Cities Public Information, Colleges, Departments, Web Services, Quad Cities Technology*].
- Action 22: Promoting the University's statewide, regional, and national leadership in affordability and cost predictability in a manner that is widely understood [*University Marketing*].
- Action 23: Maintaining competitive values for Western Commitment Scholarship and other financial aid programs [*President's Leadership Team*].
- Action 24: Implementing and evaluating new strategies designed decrease or eliminate the difference between student costs and financial aid [*Student Cost Task Force, Financial Aid, Vice President for Student Services, School of Distance Learning, International Studies and Outreach*].
- Action 25: Initiating recommendations from the Student Cost Task Force [*Student Services, Administrative Services*].

Goal 2: Recruiting and Retaining World Class Faculty and Staff

The strength and definition of a university is its people. The high achieving, diverse employees of Western Illinois University provide expertise, governance, and direction to the university, students, and external consistencies that we serve. Our faculty and staff have represented and built upon the traditions of excellence that have defined the University since our founding in 1899.

With a strong resource base to recruit and retain an excellent faculty and staff representative of the diverse and global society, we will continue to support high-achieving employees who advance the vision, mission, values, goals, and priorities of the University. We will also continue to develop institutional policies and procedures that promote a holistic and supportive environment that responds to employee workforce needs in their personal and professional growth. This will be accomplished by:

Did You Know?

In 2017, *Washington Monthly* ranked Western Illinois University as the 9th best out of 364 Midwest master's granting institutions and in the top 12% of 632 institutions nationally for our faculty and staff's contributions to the public good in the areas of social mobility (recruiting and graduating low-income students), research (producing cutting-edge scholarship and doctorates) and service (encouraging students to give something back to their country).

Priority 1: Recruit and retain high-achieving, diverse faculty by:

- Action 1: Engaging in new actions designed to increase the recruitment and retention of high-achieving, diverse faculty and staff *[Faculty and Staff]*.
- Action 2: Working with bargaining units to develop agreements that allocate available resources to support salaries that meet and exceed the mean of peer institutions *[Bargaining Teams, President's Leadership Team]*.
- Action 3: Implementing negotiated contractual agreements for salary and benefits, and similar compensation for non-negotiated employees *[President's Leadership Team]*.
- Action 4: Supporting the use of release time, tuition waivers, and other University benefits for faculty and staff to advance their educational pursuits *[President, Vice Presidents, Deans, Directors]*.
- Action 5: Developing new and enhanced programs and services specifically designed for the specific professional development needs of faculty and staff *[Center for the Innovation of Teaching and Research, Human Resources]*.
- Action 6: Supporting accomplishments through:
 - a. Promotions *[President, Vice Presidents]*.
 - b. Tenure *[Board of Trustees, President, Provost, Colleges and Departments]*.
 - c. Awards recognizing excellence at the department, college, and university levels *[President, Vice Presidents, Colleges, Departments]*.
- Action 7: Exploring succession planning for Administrative/Professional and Civil Service employees to give promotional pathways *[Human Resources, Academic Personnel]*.
- Action 8: Conducting market equity studies for all staff classifications *[Human Resources, Academic Personnel]*.
- Action 9: Adding to the benefits and services provided by the Family Medical Leave Act) by continuing to implement fiscally responsible, family-friendly institutional policies and procedures that assist employee recruitment and retention *[Board of Trustees, President's Leadership Team]*.
- Action 10: Make recommendations to the Equal Opportunity and Access officers and the president regarding policy, campus initiatives, and programs in support of the University's Affirmative Action program *[University Diversity Council, Faculty, Staff]*.

Goal 3: Enrich Academic Excellence

Priority 1: Focus on the individual learner.

What distinguishes Western Illinois University from peer institutions is the fact that we are a teaching institution. Students are engaged with faculty members in instruction, research, and service beginning the freshmen year and continuing throughout the educational experience. Beginning the freshman year, these interactions occur inside and outside the classroom through curricular and co-curricular programs, services and events. We will uphold and advance these traditions of excellence by:

Fast Facts

- 2,100 employees prepare students to lead in the global community.
- The University offers 66 undergraduate degree programs, 38 graduate degree programs, and two doctoral programs.
- Faculty members teach 96% of undergraduate classes with graduate teaching assistants teaching 4%.
- 67% of the University's budget is allocated to instruction and academic support.

- Action 1: Continuing to support contractual agreements that place instruction as the highest priority of faculty *[Academic Affairs]*.
- Action 2: Maintaining low student-to-faculty ratios and small course sections *[Colleges, Department, Provost's Office]*.
- Action 3: Forming a task force to evaluate the effectiveness of the academic component of the First Year Experience *[Faculty Senate]*.
- Action 4: Launching new living-learning communities based on student demand *[Academic Affairs, Student Services]*.
- Action 5: Completing the evaluation of general education *[Faculty Senate]*.
- Action 6: Enhancing academic and student support structures on both campuses *[Academic Affairs, Student Services, Quad Cities and Planning]*.
- Action 7: Increasing student engagement in educational activities highly correlated with persistence and completion *[Academic Affairs, Student Services, Quad Cities Student Services]*. This includes:
 - i. Internships
 - ii. Student teaching
 - iii. Clinical placements
 - iv. Research, scholarly/creative activities
 - v. Education abroad opportunities
 - vi. Co-curricular and leadership experiences

Priority 2: Promote high standards of excellence in instruction

- Action 8: Maintaining the highest percentage of institutional expenditures in support of instruction and the academic mission of the University *[Board of Trustees, President's Leadership Team]*.
- Action 9: Supporting multidisciplinary course, program, institute, and center development and sustainability *[Academic Affairs, Faculty Senate, Graduate Council]*.
- Action 10: Following the University's Assessment Plan to use assessment of student learning in general education, undergraduate majors, and graduate programs to inform curricular revision and development *[Academic Affairs]*.

Priority 3: Support strong commitments to research, scholarly, and creative activities

The faculty and staff of Western Illinois University are highly accomplished in their fields of expertise. In calendar year 2017, University employees generated over \$11.0 million in external grants and contracts and engaged in 2,144 scholarly and professional activities. The later includes publishing 21 books and 254 chapters/monographs/refereed articles, making 880 conference presentations, and engaging in 853 creative activities. Continuing support for these activities will be achieved by:

- Action 11: Allocating institutional resources and assistance to support the research, scholarly/creative activities, and grants of faculty and staff *[Board of Trustees, President's Leadership Team, Deans, Directors]*.
- Action 12: Supporting faculty and staff travel to professional associations, conferences, and workshops *[President's Leadership Team, Deans, Directors]*.
- Action 13: Providing faculty sabbaticals as a means to advance research and scholarly agendas *[Board of Trustees, Provost, Deans, Directors]*.

Action 14: Augmenting institutional resources to encourage and promote research, creative, and scholarly activities with special emphasis on new and junior faculty members *[Provost, Deans, Directors]*.

Action 15: Hosting domestic and international visiting scholars, executives, and artists in residence programs *[Provost, Deans, Directors]*.

Priority 4: Engage in mission-driven public service and educational outreach

Western Illinois University has a \$473 annual economic impact on its immediate 16 county service area. For the 10 counties that are closest to the Macomb campus, we are the region's largest employer. For the six counties closest to the Quad Cities campus, we are the only public university located in this primarily urban region. Given the importance of the University to our host communities and regions, we will engage and enhance mission-driven public service and outreach by:

Action 16: Participating in the President's Executive Institute as a means to:

- a. Increase community and economic development *[Faculty and Staff]*.
- b. Engage external organizational to advance university goals and priorities *[Faculty and Staff]*.
- c. Respond to emerging needs in the state and region *[Faculty and Staff]*.

Action 17: Using university public service centers, institutes, and broadcasting services to provide community services *[Faculty and Staff]*.

Action 18: Expanding the use of credit and non-credit "short courses" that teach specific sets of skills or knowledge. While not the traditional semester in length, these courses are intended for those who are already working and need to update their skills *[Colleges and Departments]*.

Action 19: Delivering community outreach initiatives through University Libraries *[University Libraries]*.

Action 20: Continuing to support public-private partnerships to advance new and enhanced services to students, faculty, and staff in our host communities *[Faculty and Staff]*.

Priority 5: Deliver a strong, user-centered information technology

Strong commitments to instruction, research and scholarly/creative activities, educational outreach and public service require the provision of strong, user-centered information technology in order for students, faculty, and staff to be successful in these endeavors. The University commitment to this success will be demonstrated by:

Action 21: Achieving goals and priorities from the *Information Technology Strategic Plan 2017-2022 [University Technology]*.

Action 22: Providing user-centered library services and resources to support student, faculty, staff, and community patrons *[University Libraries]*.

Goal 4: Advance Educational Opportunity

2017 *US News and World Report* data shows that Western Illinois University is below the average in first-year retention rates for Illinois public universities (68% compared to 73%), but is ahead on six-year graduation rates (54% to 50%). With concerted effort, we will improve these rates.

Data from the National Student Clearinghouse shows that approximately 30-35% new freshmen start at the University but graduate from another institution. We will raise our retention and graduation rates to the top 25% of our highly competitive peer groups by adapting national best practices.

Retention and Graduation Rates at Western Illinois University and Peer Institutions ¹					
First-Year Retention Rates Macomb Benchmarks		Six-Year Graduation Rates Macomb Benchmarks		First-Year Retention Rates Quad Cities Benchmarks	
James Madison	91%	James Madison	82%	Augustana College	85%
Appalachian State	88%	Truman State	75%	Penn State-Harrisburg	85%
Truman State	87%	Appalachian State	70%	Northern Iowa	83%
Wisconsin-La Crosse	86%	Wisconsin-La Crosse	70%	Saint Ambrose	78%
Grand Valley State	83%	Grand Valley State	68%	Western Illinois-Quad Cities	73%
Montclair State	83%	Northern Iowa	66%	Montana Technological	70%
Northern Iowa	83%	Montclair State	64%	Texas-Permian Basin	69%
Wisconsin-Whitewater	80%	Wisconsin-Stevens Point	61%	Louisiana State-Shreveport	66%
Nebraska-Kearney	79%	Eastern Illinois	59%	Indiana University-East	66%
Wisconsin-Stevens Point	77%	Wisconsin-Whitewater	57%	Auburn-Montgomery	65%
Central Washington	76%	Nebraska-Kearney	56%	Indiana-Kokomo	63%
William Paterson	76%	Western Illinois	54%		
Eastern Illinois	74%	Central Missouri	53%		
SIU-Edwardsville	72%	Central Washington	52%		
Central Missouri	70%	SIU-Edwardsville	50%		
Western Illinois	68%	William Paterson	50%		

Priority 1: Improve retention and graduation rates

Our use of national best practices to improve retention and graduation rates will use results from a meta-analysis of research completed over the last decade. In 2017, Connie Matthiessen of Great Schools.com found that costs, academic preparation, institutional fit, college transition, first-generation status, and perceived relevance are the primary contributors to student attrition. Therefore, we will increase student persistence and completion rates by:

Action 1: Addressing costs and relevance by:

- a. Increasing student, employer, and potential donor access to internship information [Colleges, Departments, Career Services].
- b. Launching a cooperative education model that allows students to take classes and participate in experiential placements at the same time [Academic Affairs].
- c. Exploring the establishment of legacy tuition rates [Student Cost Task Force].

Top Six Reasons Students Do Not Persist at Colleges and Universities Nationally

1. *Cost*: 45% of students dropping out worked more than 20 hours a week, and were not able to balance both roles.
2. *Academic Preparation*: 60% of first year students take remedial classes, and less than 25% of these students graduate.
3. *Institutional Fit*: 2/3rds of students who dropped out cited the lack of academic or cultural fit with an institution.
4. *College Transition*: The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) recommends a high school student-to-counselor ratio of 250:1 to support college preparation. However, the national average is 460:1. ASCA concludes that students are not prepared for postsecondary expectations.
5. *First Generation Status*: 41% of students who drop out are first generation students.
6. *Perceived Relevance*: Students do not perceive the relevance of a college degree.

¹ The Quad Cities did not enroll freshmen during the period for which six year graduation rates are compared.

Action 2: Addressing student preparation by:

- a. Enacting strategies designed to help increase retention and graduation rates for “mid-range” students, where similar initiatives have proven successful in the Office of Academic Services and Centennial Honors College [*Academic Affairs, Student Services, Quad Cities Student Services*].
- b. Increasing student awareness and use of academic support available from Student Services [*Academic Affairs, Student Services, Quad Cities Student Services*].
- c. Increasing student access to electronic student services [*Center for Innovation in Teaching and Research, University Technology, Quad Cities Technology, Student Services, Quad Cities Student Services*].

Action 3: Improving college transitions and fit by:

- a. Implementing strategies to lower the percentage of first-time freshmen who start at Western Illinois University but graduate from another college or university [*Academic Affairs, Student Services, Quad Cities Student Services*].
- b. Engaging in new strategies to increase the persistence and completion of new transfer students. [*Academic Affairs, Student Services, Quad Cities Student Services*].

Action 4: Enhancing retention and graduation rates of first generation and all other students by:

- a. Using results from annual Underrepresented Groups Reports that are submitted to the Illinois Board of Higher Education to document institutional outcomes and plans to increase the participation and achievement of students from traditionally underrepresented groups² [*Faculty and Staff*].
- b. Institutionalizing successful outcomes from the University’s four-year participation in the Higher Learning Commission’s Persistence and Completion Academy that will conclude at the end of academic year 2017-2018 [*Academic Affairs, Student Services, Quad Cities Student Services, Distance Learning*].
- c. Completing the three-year pilot of the Learning Assistants’ Program in the Quad Cities during academic year 2019-2020 and modifying/scaling results other areas, where appropriate [*Assistant Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Participating Faculty*].
- d. Use local results from the National Survey of Student Engagement and other national surveys in planning and evaluating initiatives designed to increase student involvement, retention, and graduation rates [*Academic Affairs, Student Services, Quad Cities Student Services, Distance Learning, Faculty and Staff*].
- e. Continuing institutional participation in statewide and national initiatives designed to increase retention and graduation rates [*Faculty and Staff*].

Action 5: Addressing student persistence and completion in a holistic manner. This includes:

- a. Providing comprehensive academic and counseling services [*Academic Affairs, Student Services*].
- b. Supporting a comprehensive substance abuse educational program [*Student Services*].

² Illinois Public Act 85-283 defines underrepresented groups as minorities, females, and individuals with disabilities.

- c. Providing late night and alternative programming to promote healthy lifestyles *[Student Services, Quad Cities Student Services, Resident Assistants, Interhall Council, Student Government Associations and Registered Student Organizations on both campuses]*.
- d. Implementing strategies for addressing physical and program barriers for students and employees with disabilities.

Priority 2: Reduce time-to-degree

Data published by the National Center for Education Statistics for fall 2006 through fall 2009 cohorts of new freshmen from four-year public institutions nationally shows that slightly over one-third of all students start and graduate from the same four-year public institution within four years (34.8% with the fall 2009 new freshman cohort). This figure increases to nearly three-fifths of all freshmen who graduate in six years (59.1% for the fall 2009 cohort). Percent increases are similar at Western Illinois University, although graduation rates are lower than national averages.

Graduation Rates at National Four Year Public Institutions and Western Illinois University Fall 2006 through Fall 2009 New Freshmen Cohorts									
Graduation Rates	National Cohorts				Western Illinois University Cohorts				
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2006	2007	2008	2009	
4 Years	32.9%	33.5%	34.4%	34.8%	30.6%	29.4%	29.8%	31.5%	
5 Years	51.9%	52.3%	53.1%	53.5%	49.9%	50.8%	49.8%	48.0%	
6 Years	57.2%	57.7%	58.5%	59.1%	54.4%	56.1%	54.3%	52.8%	

Data from the National Student Clearing House published in 2016 shows that the average time-to-degree for baccalaureate degree recipients from four-year public institutions nationally is 5.2 years. The current time-to-degree rate at Western Illinois University of 4.6 years, and below the national average. Students who graduate from Western do so in a manner that requires less time than national averages. We will continue to provide national leadership in decreasing time-to-degree rates by expanding high school dual enrollment programs in addition to:

- Action 1: Granting academic credit for students successfully completing external proficiency examinations *[Schools and Departments]*.
- Action 2: Publicizing departmental protocol for awarding of credit for prior learning and life experiences where appropriate to the discipline *[Schools and Departments]*.
- Action 3: Participating in all facets of the Illinois Articulation Initiative to promote successful student transfer *[Schools and Departments]*.
- Action 4: Increasing responsiveness to student needs by expanding:
 - i. Summer school offerings and enrollment.
 - ii. Undergraduate and graduate hybrid programs.
 - iii. Alternatives to the traditional 16-week semester.
 - iv. Accelerated degree and certificate options where appropriate to the discipline.
- Action 5: Participating in statewide and national initiatives designed to decrease time-to-degree *[Faculty and Staff]*.

Goal 5: Support Personal Growth

Western Illinois University takes a holistic approach to personal growth. The University supports personal growth of our students, faculty, and staff. We also support student, community, and university engagement to further advance personal growth.

In promoting a supportive environment for students, faculty, staff, we provide comprehensive programs, services, and events related to the health and wellness. Optimal health and wellness supports maximum educational and occupational success.

We support student engagement inside and outside the classroom. It is a proven correlate of student persistence and completion. We also support community-university engagement, and the social, economic, and cultural development and enrichment opportunities it provides. We value lifelong learning and participation in institutional events to these ends.

Priority 1: Promote health and wellness.

Cigna Insurance reported in 2017 that 70% of health care costs in the United States resulted from lifestyle choices that could have been avoided. Absenteeism, stress, heart disease, many mental disorders, other chronic illnesses, student attrition, and employee turnover can be greatly reduced, while academic and occupational performance can be greatly increased by making healthy lifestyle changes. Therefore, we will continue support employee health and wellness by:

Action 1: Increasing health, wellness, and recreational programs, services, and activities provided by the University
[Center for Innovation in Teaching and Research, Human Resources, Counseling Center, Campus Recreation, Beu Health Center].

Action 2: Expanding health, wellness, and recreational partnerships with local/regional providers to address needs and services for students, faculty, and staff
[Center for Innovation in Teaching and Research, Human Resources, Counseling Center, Campus Recreation, Beu Health Center, Quad Cities Administrative Team].

Action 3: Evaluating the feasibility of establishing new sports clubs and other areas of campus recreation
[Campus Recreation, Quad Cities Administrative Team].

Action 4: Utilizing the location of the Riverfront Campus adjacent to the Mississippi River and a community bike and pedestrian trail system as a means to increase health, wellness, educational, and community activities
[Quad Cities Faculty and Staff].

Priority 2: Enhance community engagement.

Engagement in cultural, artistic, intellectual, and leadership events is associated with the National Survey of Student Engagement's High Impact Practices for learning and personal growth. Participation in these events supports analyzing ideas, experiences, and lines of reasoning and artistic display in depth; forming new ideas and understandings; encouraging contact among individuals from different backgrounds; and engaging in lifelong learning.

Participation and support of intercollegiate athletic programs also has many benefits related to personal growth. In discussing these advantages, Dr. Robert Sternberg, Provost at Oklahoma State University sites leadership development and a lifetime fitness ethos for student-athletes; a period of stress relief and prosocial behavior for students; and increased school spirit and pride and for the university and its community.

Did You Know?

- A recent survey by National Public Radio found that only 40% of employees participate in health and wellness programs.
- In 2016, the American College Health Association's demonstrated that 53% of college students reported feeling hopeless and 39% reported feeling so depressed that it was difficult to function during the past year.
- The Centers for Disease Control recommends that individuals engage in at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity and two days of muscle-strengthening exercises every week.
- The National Institute of Health estimates that up to 50% of college students are not engaged in physical activity.

We will continue to support personal growth by:

- Action 1: Sponsoring University-theme programming and events for students, faculty, staff, and members of our host communities and regions. [*University Theme Committee, First Year Experience Faculty and Staff, University Libraries*].
- Action 2: Providing programming for first-year students that is integrated with the University theme [*First Year Experience Faculty and Staff, University Libraries*].
- Action 3: Supporting high-profile University speakers on both campuses to increase campus and community engagement [*President, Vice President, University Theme Committee, Environmental Summit Planning Committee, Colleges, Departments*].
- Action 4: Providing the campus and surrounding communities with a diverse season of quality cultural entertainment opportunities [*College of Fine Arts and Communication, Bureau of Cultural Affairs, Performing Arts Society, Office of Student Activities, University Libraries, University Art Gallery, Quad Cities Student Services*].
- Action 5: Providing professional development opportunities in academic disciplines to members of our host and external communities [*Academic Affairs*].
- Action 6: Enhancing opportunities for lifelong learning of senior citizens [*Non-Credit Programs*].
- Action 7: Supporting a broad-based National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I and Football Championship Series varsity intercollegiate athletics program. This includes funding commitments to support our athletic program at a level that allows student-athletes to be successful and competitive within our respective conferences and nationally [*Board of Trustees, President, Vice President for Student Services, Director of Athletics*].
- Action 8: Demonstrating strict adherence to NCAA operating principles related to governance and rules compliance, academic integrity, equity, and student-athlete welfare [*Board of Trustees, President, Athletics*].
- Action 9: Hosting arts and selected athletic events in the Quad Cities to increase community engagement and support for the University [*College of Fine Arts and Communication, Intercollegiate Athletics, Quad Cities Student Services*].

Goal 6: Promote Social Responsibility

The State of Illinois taxpayers, donors, students and their families invest in the *Mission* of Western Illinois University to prepare students to lead in dynamic and diverse communities. And we have a social responsibility to provide safe, accessible, responsive and sustainable environments to support students in fulfillment of these objectives.

Moreover, we have a social responsibility to advance the public good. We are firmly committed to civic engagement and experiential learning in the educational process. We are one of only 8% of the 4,726 Title IV degree-granting institutions across the country to have earned *Community Engagement Status* from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. We are included in a select group of institutions recognized for our “Collaboration with our local, state, national, and global communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.”

As such, we work with business, industry, education, governmental agencies, municipalities, non-profit agencies, and other individuals from the public and private sectors to make Western Illinois University the partner of choice in advancing educational, organizational, cultural, environmental, community and

economic development in our region and well beyond. At the same time, we rely upon our partnerships to advance the vision, mission, goals, and priorities of the University. We will continue advance our *social responsibility* by:

Priority 1: Providing safe, accessible, responsive campus environments.

The Higher Education Research Institute reports that 24% of new freshmen nationally feel unsafe on campus. We are committed to providing safe and secure learning and living environments for our students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University. Furthermore, our *Campus Master Plans* are designed to provide premier facilities and grounds that premier students, faculty, and staff deserve. As part of our facilities planning and curricular delivery, we are strongly committed to environmental sustainability. All of these commitments are demonstrated by:

Action 1: Supporting educational programs, services, and partnerships committed to the prevention of crime; protection of life and property; preservation of peace, order, and safety; and enforcement of laws and University policies [*Office of Public Safety, Student Services, Community University Partnership Program*].

Action 2: Enhancing university facilities by:

- a. Implementing accessibility standards in new construction and campus renovation projects [*Facilities Management, Auxiliary Facilities System, Quad Cities Facilities, Office of Equal Opportunity and Access, Americans with Disabilities Advisory Committee, Council on Campus Planning and Usage*].
- b. Pursuing state funding for the highest facility priorities identified in *Campus Master Plans*, which include new facilities and funds to support deferred maintenance [*Board of Trustees; President; Vice Presidents, Planning, Budget and Institutional Research; Physical Plant; Quad Cities Facilities*].
- c. Achieving annual master plan goals and priorities [*Facilities Management, Quad Cities Facilities*].
- d. Applying institutional resources to address permanent improvements (deferred maintenance) and capital renewal [*President's Leadership Team, Facilities Management, Quad Cities Facilities*].

Action 3: Demonstrating statewide and national leadership in environmental sustainability by:

- a. Earning Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification in new construction and major renovations [*Facilities Management, Auxiliary Facilities System, Quad Cities Facilities*].
- b. Supporting educational opportunities designed to raise awareness of social, environmental and sustainability issues [*Faculty, Staff, Campus Sustainability Committee, University Libraries*].
- c. Achieving statewide, regional, and national leadership in environmental sustainability within all aspects of University operations (e.g., the curriculum, community and co-curricular events, new construction, and administrative operations) [*Faculty and Staff*].

Priority 2: Promoting civic engagement and experiential learning

The American Psychological Association defines civic engagement as “individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern.” These actions take many forms, including volunteerism, service learning, participation in democratic processes, and other actions designed to address social problems and advance the public good. Civic engagement is consistent with our *Mission of*

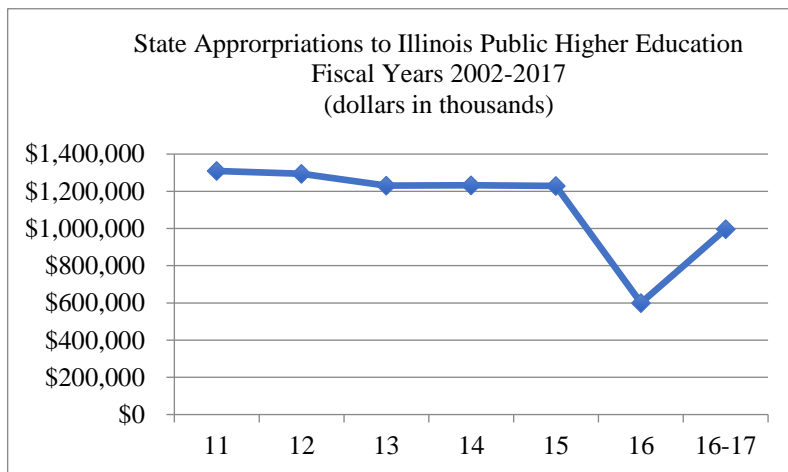
preparing students to lead in their communities. Our alumni have the knowledge, analytical skills, and civic disposition required to address local and global challenges.

Our alumni are prepared to lead and have an immediate impact in their chosen professions. Many Western Illinois University students have had professional experiences through internships, student teaching, simulations, and other forms of experiential learning. The American Association of Colleges & Universities emphasizes the importance of these experiences accompanied by structured reflection because these actions enable students to build practitioner skills in the transition from theory to practice. We will continue to advance students societal and professional preparation by:

- Action 4: Engaging in activities associated with the American Democracy Project *[Academic Affairs, Student Services]*.
- Action 5: Participating in the annual Federal Constitution Day and Martin Luther King Day activities on both campuses *[Academic Affairs, Student Services, Quad Cities Student Services]*.
- Action 6: Supporting student, faculty, and staff actions that are consistent with the University’s Carnegie Foundation Community Engagement Classification *[Faculty and Staff]*.
- Action 7: Receiving institution renewal as a Carnegie Foundation Community Engagement Classification *[Vice President for Quad Cities and Planning, Director of the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs]*.
- Action 8: Increasing student participation in service learning, internships, student teaching, simulations, and other forms of experiential learning *[Academic Affairs, Student Services]*.

Priority 3: Using partnerships to advance the University’s vision, mission, values, and goals.

Funding partnerships are essential in the new fiscal reality faced by Illinois public higher education. During the historic and unprecedented, Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 and 2017 budget impasse, state appropriations for the Illinois public universities were significantly reduced. Moreover, the Illinois public universities received partial and incremental funding with spending restrictions as opposed to full fiscal year budgets for 2016 and 2017.



At the time of writing this *Strategic Plan*, the Illinois Board of Higher Education has recommended a 2% increase from FY 17 final appropriations (representing a 8% decrease from FY15 levels), and the Governor has recommended level funding (representing a 10% decrease from FY 15 levels). To continue advancing institutional quality, we will secure new sources of revenue to continue the advancement of our University and the students that we serve. This will be accomplished by:

- Action 1: Advocating for the restoration of fair and predictable funding to Illinois public higher education in general and Western Illinois University in particular *[All members of the Western Illinois University Community]*.
- Action 2: Cultivating new and existing donors *[Board of Trustees, President, President’s Leadership Team, Advancement and Public Services, President’s Executive Institute, Deans, Directors, Development Officers]*.

- Action 3: Increasing the value received from external giving [*Board of Trustees, President, President's Leadership Team, Advancement and Public Services, President's Executive Institute, Deans, Directors, Development Officers*].
- Action 4: Developing and launching the next comprehensive fundraising campaign for Western Illinois University [*President, Vice President for Advancement and Public Services, Western Illinois University Foundation*].
- Action 5: Increasing the percent of alumni giving to the University [*Advancement and Public Services, Development Officers, Deans, Chairs*].
- Action 6: Increasing the value received from grants and contracts [*Faculty and Staff*].

Partnerships are also essential to addressing non-financial challenges facing the University. We will work with our alumni and external communities in:

- Action 7: Advocating for changes to statewide policy currently contributing to the statewide teacher shortage [*Provost, Assistant to the President for Governmental Relations, College of Education and Human Services*].
- Action 8: Developing a plan for the Alumni Association that links the goals and actions of this *Strategic Plan* to the work of the Association [*Alumni Association, Alumni Council*].
- Action 9: Consulting with external advisory boards to help advance the academic mission and service operations of Western Illinois University, in addition to the goals and actions of this *Strategic Plan* [*President, Vice Presidents, Deans, Chairs, Directors*].

Goal 7: Demonstrate Accountability and Transparency

Every student, alumni, faculty, and staff member represents Western Illinois University. Together, we are responsible for achieving the goals and priorities of this *Strategic Plan*. We will hold ourselves accountable to the successful advancement of the goals and priorities in *Higher Values in Higher Education* to the benefit of our vision, mission and students and communities that we serve. This will be accomplished by:

- Action 1. Using annual Planning and Accomplishments Reports to demonstrate student recruitment plans and outcomes [*All academic departments and administrative units*].
- Action 2. Implementing strategies that help the University place in the top 10% in national rankings of quality, opportunity, and affordability [*Faculty and Staff*].
- Action 3. Continuing to implement the *Priorities and Reinvestment Plan* [*President's Leadership Team*].
- Action 4. Providing:
 - a. Monthly Strategic Plan Updates that summarize actions in progress and related accomplishments [*Vice President, Quad Cities and Planning*].
 - b. Annual Strategic Plan Updates that follows the format of Monthly Strategic Plan Updates, and uses data from annual Planning and Accomplishments Reports as the primary source for documentation [*Vice President, Quad Cities and Planning*].
 - c. Annual Performance Reports to document institutional performance on *Strategic Plan* indicators compared to peer institutions [*Vice President, Quad Cities and Planning; Planning, Budget and Institutional Research*].
- Action 5. Preparing and implementing annual Strategic Plan Supplements to address barriers, challenges, and opportunities unforeseen at the time of writing this edition of *Higher Values in Higher Education*.

- Action 6. Updating this edition of *Higher Values in Higher Education* in academic year 2022-2023 [Social Responsibility Task Force, University Governance Groups, Board of Trustees].
- Action 7. Ensuring the Western Illinois University's ongoing quality and viability by maintaining the University's ongoing relationship with the Higher Learning Commission. This includes:
- a. Submitting Financial and Non-Financial Indicator Reports annually [Vice President for Quad Cities and Planning, Provost's Office, Financial Aid, Institutional Research and Planning].
 - b. Hosting the review of the Quad Cities campus and off-campus locations in academic year 2019-2020, and the Macomb campus on-site visit in academic year 2020-2021 [Vice President for Quad Cities and Planning, Faculty and Staff].
 - c. Engaging in the four-year assurance review in academic year 2024-2025 [Vice President for Quad Cities and Planning, Social Responsibility Task Force].
 - d. Continuing to keep the Board of Trustees and other members of the University community informed of additional required Commission reporting [Vice President for Quad Cities and Planning].

Summary and Conclusion

As members of the Western Illinois University community, we share in the goals of recruiting, retaining, and graduating students as they engage in the discovery, acquisition, and application of knowledge for personal enrichment and in preparation for future occupations and/or graduate and advanced studies. We do so in a manner that is distinctive and nationally recognized by promoting an educational experience inside and outside of the classroom that emphasizes the hallmarks of a Western Illinois University education—academic excellence, educational opportunity, personal growth and social responsibility.

Furthermore, we are nationally recognized for our leadership in quality, opportunity, affordability, community and economic development, and graduating more students than predicted based on academic preparation variables. Additionally, our graduates have lower time-to-degree rates than national averages.

Our student and alumni achievements show that we empower students to become engaged and productive global citizens committed to making a difference in the diverse communities and professions that they represent. Our alumni are leaders in their fields equipped with knowledge, problem solving skills, and community awareness necessary to address the professional, economic, and social issues of our time. Furthermore, we are a strong and resilient institution of higher education.

Despite the historic and unprecedented statewide budget impasse of Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017, and the need to restore fair and predictable funding to Illinois public higher education, we retained our status as a Top 10 Midwestern Regional University by *US News and World Report*, A Best University by the *Princeton Review* for the 14th consecutive year, and as a Best for Vets Institution by *Military Times* EDGE Magazine for the eighth consecutive year.

Additionally, we were one of only 11 colleges and universities from across the United States selected to appear in the U.S. Department of Education's (DOE) *Promising Practices for Improving Student Degree Attainment*. Likewise, we received Minority Access' *Commitment to Diversity Award* and were featured in the DOE report, *Fulfilling the Promise, Serving the Need*.

Simply stated, Western Illinois University's traditions of excellence have and will continue. This will be realized by the successful realization of the goals, priorities, and actions in this *Strategic Plan*.