

# WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA 2015/2016 ACTION PLAN

## University Mission, Vision, and Statement of Strategy

**University Mission** - Please provide a description of your university's purpose and primary objectives for success.

West Chester University, a member of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, is a public, regional, comprehensive institution committed to providing access and offering high-quality undergraduate education, selected post-baccalaureate and graduate programs and a variety of educational and cultural resources for its students, alumni, and citizens of southeastern Pennsylvania.

West Chester University is dedicated to excellent academic programs while supporting an academic environment that ensures student success. As a university owned by the citizens of Pennsylvania, we value and uphold our mission to provide the best educational opportunities possible which will enable the University community to successfully address the concerns of a global society. To this end, West Chester University focuses on teaching students to think clearly and critically, to make logical and ethical judgments, and to communicate effectively with others.

In support of its mission, WCU is particularly proud of several elements of our teaching and learning initiatives that are directly related to student success, both at WCU and in the lives students will lead upon graduating from WCU:

- Each of our academic departments has a Department Teacher Scholar Model (DTSM) that is focused on the ways in which faculty not only define expectations and standards related to their own research, but how that research relates to their teaching. The goal of the DTSMs is to provide a framework for faculty to bring teaching into their research and research into their teaching. This lays a strong foundation for the emphasis we place on undergraduate and graduate student research.
- Each and every WCU student (even transfer students who have completed their general education requirements before coming to WCU) must take at least one Diverse Communities course at WCU as part of their general education experience. Embracing the goal of graduating students who are committed to creating a just and equitable society, Diverse Community courses focus on historically marginalized groups and are framed by theories that lend understanding to the analysis of structural inequities. They seek to foster an informed and reasoned openness to an understanding of difference and are directly linked to our General Education goal of responding thoughtfully to diversity.
- Building on our commitment to the liberal arts tradition, there is a strong link between the goals of our General Education program and the student learning goals that faculty have defined for their programs. These goals are at the heart of preparing students and include effective oral and written communication, critical thinking, ethical decision-making, quantitative literacy, and responding thoughtfully to diversity. In this manner, we seek to give students the toolkit they need to lead rich, productive lives as democratic citizens, with a broad range of skills and abilities to enable them to thrive in the changing conditions of work in the 21st century and to participate in a global society.

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## University Mission, Vision, and Statement of Strategy *(Continued)*

**University Vision** - Please provide a description of your university's goals and aspirations for the years ahead.

West Chester University is dedicated to academic excellence. University faculty and staff will create a dynamic and supportive learning environment that prepares students for successful and rewarding personal, professional and civic lives. Moreover, WCU is committed to partnering with other schools, government, businesses and nonprofits to enhance economic development and the quality of life for all.

West Chester University will build on its standing as a national model for excellence for public regional comprehensive universities. The institution is especially noted for:

- Undergraduate programs that actively engage students in connecting the life of the mind to the world in which they live and work.
- The responsiveness of its graduate and post-baccalaureate programs to regional needs.
- Its focus on providing lifelong learning, technical, and applied skills essential to graduates' success now and in the future.
- A commitment by faculty, staff, and administrators to provide access and to serve effectively the educational needs of a diverse student body.
- Its role as a leading educational and cultural resource and partner in fostering the economic, social, and cultural vitality of southeastern Pennsylvania.

Our discussions with area schools, government, and business leaders have resulted in strategic planning for our academic programs. To this end, WCU is launching a Doctor of Education in Education Policy, Planning, and Administration this summer and recently received Board of Governors approval for master's degrees in athletic training, community nutrition, and clinical mental health counseling. Several additional academic programs are in various stages of development/approval, all based on satisfying needs in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. These programs include bachelor's degrees in: international business; planning; industrial and operations engineering; biomedical engineering; applied and computational mathematics; peace and conflict studies; global studies; and psychological sciences. Programs at the master's level include planning, human resource management, anthropology, financial economics, and a PSM in pharmaceutical chemistry/MS in industrial chemistry. An applied doctoral program, the Doctor of Psychology in Clinical Psychology, also is under BOG consideration.

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## University Mission, Vision, and Statement of Strategy (Continued)

**Statement of Strategy** - Please provide a description of the strategy for fulfilling your university's vision and mission, given your university's current strengths, challenges, and available resources.

West Chester University is committed to the success of every student and to advancing the Commonwealth by delivering academic excellence and innovative programming that addresses the most pressing issues of our time, strengthening diversity and inclusion, and increasing collaborative relationships locally, regionally and internationally to advance the public good.

The University's strategic plan, *Building on Excellence*, provides the foundation for transforming WCU from the excellent university it is today to the extraordinary university it will become in the future. The plan, which is in Year 3 of its first phase, features a series of specific goals and objectives centered around five central themes: *Academics, Enrichment, Sustainability, Diversity and Engagement*.

WCU's Strategic Planning Assessment and Advocacy Committee coordinates campus assessment, review, and implementation of the strategic plan, ensuring that *Building on Excellence* achieves its goals.

### **Academics**

West Chester University is dedicated to building and sustaining excellent academic programs, while supporting and developing an academic environment that ensures student success. Specific objectives include enhancing student learning through measurable learning outcomes; providing an academic environment where students prosper; expanding access to academic programs via both traditional and non-traditional methods of delivery; and strengthening pedagogy, technology, and facilities in support of teaching excellence.

Since the plan has launched, key Academic Theme achievements include:

- All undergraduate and graduate programs were evaluated using the Assurance of Student Learning (ASL) rubric, which evaluates the assessment efforts of all programs of study. This effort is critical to maintaining the high standards of national and program accreditation.
- New graduate professional doctorate programs were approved, including doctorates in public administration and education.
- Implementation of OnBase, a documentation management system.
- Advising Task Force preparing recommendations, to be issued in summer 2016, to support faculty in meeting the standard of advising.
- Increased numbers of WCU students studying abroad as well as growth in international enrollment on the campus.

### **Enrichment**

WCU provides numerous programs and activities that enhance the campus's quality of life as well as that of the region, nation and world. These activities – which include artistic, athletic, cultural and co-curricular events -- are central to the University's educational mission, providing students with experiences that expand and shape their understanding of the world.

Since the plan has launched, key Enrichment Theme achievements include:

- The Office of Student Leadership and Involvement increased participation in academic and professional clubs and academic musical organizations by almost 20%.
- The leadership minor was launched in fall 2015
- The Athletic Mentoring program has shown strong results in contributing to improved student-athlete academic performance.
- Athletics has significantly increased the rental of WCU athletic facilities to community groups.
- Creation of innovative new initiatives for Alternative Spring Break trips, which focus on community service.

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## University Mission, Vision, and Statement of Strategy (Continued)

### Statement of Strategy (Continued)

#### **Sustainability**

WCU has adopted a broad definition of sustainability that emphasizes the importance of appropriate growth and development and integrates environmental, social and economic opportunities. The University views sustainability as integral to education and research, operations and design, fiscal management, campus health and safety, and institutional vitality and effectiveness over the long term.

Since *Building on Excellence* has launched, key Sustainability Theme achievements include:

- Development of an improved budget process, including a University Budget Review Committee to play a key role in strategic resource and budgetary decisions.
- Developed 896 partnerships with business, government, and nonprofits that address critical sustainability issues.
- Geothermal project nearing completion. In 2014, WCU formally decommissioned its 50-year-old, coal-fired power plant.
- Surpassed 80% of the Becoming More Campaign target of \$50 million.
- WCU faculty submitted 60 proposals for \$8.1 million proposed funding of which \$2.2 million was awarded from externally sponsored awards.
- In-house employee development programs increased 29%.

#### **Diversity**

As a public University which promotes academic excellence and emphasizes global education, WCU is committed to providing educational and employment opportunities to previously excluded, disadvantaged, challenged and marginalized populations. West Chester University recognizes that each member of the community brings a unique and diverse combination of background, experiences, and perspectives and that the contributions of each individual bring value our collective diversity.

Since the plan has launched, key Diversity Theme achievements include:

- African American and Latino/a enrollment has increased.
- Communication Studies Trans-cultural Literacy program is flourishing and includes more than 3,000 students in WCU's first Massive Open Online Course (MOOC).
- 17 University Forum proposals for diversity programming were funded, more than double the previous year.
- Campus Climate Survey – the University's second such survey -- was conducted in fall 2015. Campus leaders will use survey results, which will be distributed in spring 2016, to continue to develop an environment that ensures that every student and employee feels fully welcomed and has every opportunity to reach their goals at WCU.
- WCU has been designated a "Military Friendly School" by Victory Media, publisher of GI Jobs magazine. WCU also is now a "top school" in the 2016 MAE&T Guide to Colleges & Universities published by Military Advanced Education and Transition.

#### **Engagement**

WCU is committed to building mutually beneficial relationships with external stakeholders locally and globally. These collaborations will extend the University's impact, attract new resources to advance learning and community well-being, and focus campus talent on the pursuit of the public good.

Since the plan has launched, key Engagement Theme achievements include:

- The Office of Service-Learning and Volunteer Programs increased course selection, resulting in 800,000-plus hours of service in the community, earning WCU the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll.
- The University's main social media networks continue to be a top marketing and engagement tool- connecting with more than 300,000 people per week.
- Alumni events and outreach continue to grow, more than 80 alumni events were held this past academic year.