



“Setting Our Course”

A Strategic Plan: 2016-2021

Mission Statement

Northwestern Oklahoma State University provides quality educational and cultural opportunities to learners with diverse needs by cultivating ethical leadership and service, critical thinking and fiscal responsibility.

Context:

Ever since the university’s development of its five-year strategic plan, the climate of American higher education has changed significantly. Increasingly, colleges and universities are acknowledging that many of the characteristics and practices of former days are being challenged and new ones are developing: ones that take greater account of the personal and career needs of students of all ages and circumstances. The relative monopoly on higher education enjoyed by traditional residential campuses is being challenged by prospective students (again, of all ages and circumstances) who are seeking personal development, skill and knowledge acquisition, and appropriate credentialing to prepare them for careers and socialization.

As the country’s need for highly skilled, entrepreneurial, and collaborative graduates becomes even more pressing, all colleges and universities are challenged to examine their own modes of operation and, without compromising time-honored and time-tested values, to make adjustments that may not simply be “market sensitive,” but also offer professionally exciting and fulfilling new opportunities for faculty and staff. Competency-based assessment, robust academic support, experiential learning, and time variable learning through technology all offer fundamentally enhanced ways of serving students.

While risk, experimentation, and even occasional failure may accompany such changes in an institution’s operations, they may be offset by a shared and sustained sense of commitment to student success, faculty and staff fulfillment, and institutional distinctiveness.

Thus it is, with these recognitions forefront, the university moves to blend traditional values, including its cherished sense of community (based on respect for the potential of all its

members) with an equal recognition that “business as usual” cannot be the path to fulfillment of its institutional Mission.

Accordingly, the plan that follows – fashioned as it was by the collective efforts of all constituencies – calls upon all individuals – students, faculty, staff, alumni, regents, advisors, community leaders, and donors – to work together to ensure Northwestern Oklahoma State University continues to serve the future as well as it has done over its long history.

Key Strategic Directions

The University’s renewed strategic plan addresses four principal areas: (1) the nature, quality, and relevance of the academic programs it offers its students; (2) an enhanced student experience; (3) a campus environment that is sustainable and supportive of all its members; and (4) mutually beneficial partnerships for the future.

Strategic Direction 1: Northwestern will deliver and assess academic programs that include meaningful content and experiences to prepare graduates for successful careers and service to society.

Goal 1: *Review all current academic programs with respect to their content, format of delivery, and mode of assessment.*

Action Steps:

- Continue assessment of programs for relevant and rigorous content, effective delivery, appropriate measures of student learning, and logical sequencing.
- Ensure that all specially accredited programs take necessary steps to continue to adhere to standards for national accreditation within their specified timelines.
- Sharpen the career focus of all academic programs by mapping clear professional pathways, incorporating experiential learning opportunities (including internships), and increasing external links to the larger business and professional communities.
- Comply with guidelines of the state and national Corequisite Initiative to address the needs of students at all academic levels.
- Apply best practice strategies from Title III efforts to decrease below average performance and withdrawal rates in gateway courses.

Goal 2: *With faculty, mutually establish the expectation that each department/division will conduct an assessment of societal trends and needs, including prospective students’ interests, that would necessitate a change of content and/or pedagogical approach.*

Action Steps:

- Using national and regional demographic and employment data, review all current academic programs to ensure consistency with the university's mission, resources, and competitive position in the overall higher education context.
- As appropriate, review at the departmental/divisional level findings from consultations within the discipline and with external constituencies that would call for modifications to curriculum, assessment, and career counselling practices.

Goal 3: *Develop a system that will provide relevant data concerning school outcomes, internship opportunities and program points-of-pride to Northwestern constituencies.*

- Define relevant data and establish a mechanism for its timely and systematic collection and dissemination.

Goal 4: *Increase the number of participants in faculty professional development by improving communication about available resources.*

Action Steps:

- Create timely and convenient opportunities for faculty members to exchange ideas and strategies in person or virtually.
- Update and maintain the existing Blackboard faculty development site.
- Include documented evidence of participation in on-campus or off-campus professional development as creditable activity in the annual faculty evaluation protocol.
- Increase faculty development resources related to new delivery modes (e.g., online and hybrid).

Goal 5: *Maintain student advising as an integral part of a faculty member's professional responsibility while strengthening the effectiveness of advising across the university.*

Action Steps:

- Review and reconfigure as necessary advising training workshops and resources to encourage timely degree completion.
- Maximize the use of existing technology and explore options for new technology for use in student academic advising.
- Through effective advising of new students, increase the number of students who move promptly into credit-bearing courses.
- Implement and evaluate strategies to increase the number of students who declare a major within their first 30 hours.

Goal 6: *Increase online course and other program offerings while ensuring rigorous standards and student learning outcomes.*

Action Steps:

- Ensure consistency of instructional quality across all delivery modes.
- Increase the number of General Education courses offered online.
- Expand online learning orientation opportunities for students beyond those currently offered.
- Evaluate and upgrade as needed the technology and other resources that support reliable and user-friendly online teaching and learning.
- Complete implementation of Doctorate of Nursing Practice process by fall 2017.

Strategic Direction 2: Northwestern will provide a high quality educational experience for all students from the time of first inquiry through graduation.

Goal 1: *Implement the principal recommendations of the recent Enrollment Management Report and Academy for Student Persistence and Completion.*

Action Steps:

- Develop a data-driven branding initiative aimed at identifying the image of our product (in general and in terms of specific product features such as facilities, student life, technology, degree program offerings, etc.) in the mind of our consumer.
- Develop specialized professional development opportunities for faculty and staff members that will provide training and support for recruitment and retention efforts.
- Utilize assessment tools that will provide ongoing feedback from the current student body regarding academic and cultural experiences while at Northwestern.
- Maintain federal grant programs which support student achievement.
- Develop tools and trainings for current students to encourage and empower them to take a more active role in their advisement and education.

Goal 2: *Provide a sustainable, user-friendly, and aesthetically pleasing campus environment.*

Action Steps:

- Develop a system for the evaluation of existing facilities and generate a set of priorities to assist in guiding existing facility upgrades (e.g., Herod Hall, campus mall, residential facilities), and identifying new construction goals and projects.
- Develop a system for collecting data on student preferences and needs related to facilities to inform recruitment and retention efforts.

Goal 3: *Design and implement a consumer-oriented branding initiative that will engage both traditional marketing strategies and social media channels.*

Action Steps:

- Develop targeted messages to ensure prospective students and parents know of the educational opportunities available at the university.

- Develop a program focused on deriving desired word-of-mouth consumer communication.
- Develop a program for informing and educating university employees on strategic selling points derived from branding and marketing campaigns.
- Develop a system of evaluation and measurement to discern the effectiveness of specific marketing and branding efforts.

Strategic Direction 3: Northwestern will develop policies and practices that foster a university-wide culture of excellence, accountability, and collaboration.

***Goal 1:** Review and update where necessary processes across campus that impact students, faculty and staff to ensure cost effectiveness and efficiency.*

Action Steps:

- Review and improve where necessary the processes for travel requests, facility work orders, purchasing and other administrative processes.
- Upgrade administrative management software.
- Upgrade and fully utilize the degree audit software available through the Registry Office.
- Upgrade software and staff knowledge concerning automatic packaging of student financial aid and scholarship awards.

***Goal 2:** Review and revise as needed all internal communication protocols and vehicles to ensure reliable, timely, and consistent sharing of information across all campus constituencies.*

Action Steps:

- Implement a dedicated vehicle for presidential level communications.
- Work closely with campus media, and the Northwestern Foundation and Alumni Association to ensure maximum distribution of information.
- Make available opportunities for constituencies to offer feedback and provide institutional response as appropriate.

***Goal 3:** Conduct an assessment of health and wellness supporting resources for faculty, staff, and students and initiate new protocols as needed.*

Action Steps:

- Promote wellness education and activities through partnership with health insurance provider.
- Target activities for health and wellness program at branch campuses.

- Work with University food service partner to provide nutritional product information and provide healthy meal options for students and employees.
- Continue to support and review expansion opportunities for student intramural activities.

Goal 4: *Develop manager- and staff-training programs that will enhance individual performance and satisfaction as well as support collaboration across divisions and departments.*

Action Steps:

- Identify training opportunities for faculty and staff that can be provided through a variety of delivery mechanisms to help promote professional development and enhance work skills.
- Support efforts for new faculty and staff orientation programs as well as advance training for experienced supervisors.

Goal 5: *Develop a plan to promote environmental sustainability, collaborating with the local community to promote green practices.*

Action Steps:

- Continue support of the student group CORE and employee participating in green initiatives and awareness.
- Work with the cities of Alva, Enid, and Woodward to participate in recycling opportunities.
- Review and implement energy cost savings opportunities across all campus buildings and facilities.
- Evaluate alternative choices for student lab printing of materials, assignments, and papers.
- Evaluate employee options for creating more documents electronically in an effort to reduce printing costs.

Strategic Direction 4: Northwestern will forge strategic partnerships that advance the mission of the University.

Goal 1: *Implement a comprehensive development program that secures private investment to support important initiatives and areas of most critical need.*

Action Steps:

- Successfully advance the three core objectives of the Imagine Northwestern campaign through meeting the stated financial goals.
- Develop initiatives to expand the base of donors who regularly support the University.
- Implement giving programs that provide unrestricted funding that can be directed to areas of critical importance.

- Raise the awareness of the importance of private giving and develop a culture of philanthropy with alumni, employees and students.

Goal 2: *Serve as a regional center for thought and action to improve the quality of life for northwest Oklahoma and the surrounding area.*

Action Steps:

- Develop a strategy to promote the University as regional center for educational services, the arts and athletic competition.
- Serve as an active participant in organizations that promote the growth and development of the region and seek leadership roles as necessary.
- Successfully begin and grow the Doctorate of Nursing Practice program to improve access to health care providers, especially in rural and underserved areas.

Goal 3: *Strengthen mutually beneficial partnerships with business and industry.*

Action Steps:

- Develop and implement an internal structure to target and engage business and industry entities across Oklahoma.
- Strengthen ties with business and industry through the active engagement of alumni working at selected companies.
- Increase opportunities for the employment of graduates and internship possibilities of current students.
- Increase the number of academic-program-specific industry advisory councils.

Goal 4: *Working with alumni and friends, demonstrate to policymakers the value of the University to the people of Oklahoma.*

Action Steps:

- Implement a communications strategy to better inform alumni and friends of trending topics that affect the mission of the University.
- Build a network of private sector advocates that can assist the University in its state legislative efforts.
- Support efforts to engage state Congressional leaders and federal agencies in order to expand funding of grants and sponsored programs.