

**WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY  
STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE  
AT YEAR FOUR**

**SEPTEMBER 2016**

William Paterson University has completed its fourth year under the guidance of *Strategic Plan 2012-2022*, and the University continues to progress toward the goals of the plan. As we move into the mid-cycle of the plan, we note that some elements of the plan have been fully completed, others continue in process, and yet others need additional attention. As is also the case with any long-term planning document, there have been events and changes that were not specifically noted for in the plan, but have made an impact on the University. As part of our review process, a review committee, *Committee 2022*, was established to conduct an annual review of the five goals to determine progress that has been made on each goal and to note where progress is lacking. This committee continues its work, and offers this report on the University's implementation of the plan.

**Goal 1: Offer Programs of the Highest Quality**

The University continued its support of high quality academic programs with an emphasis on curricular growth and assessment. Ongoing curricular review for UCC continued in 2015-16 through the work of the UCC Council, with the addition of Review Panel Training in Spring 2016 for both new and experienced UCC reviewers. Assessment activities also continued, including a review of the data in Fall 2015 from the WI assessment, assessment implementation plans and schedules for Ways of Knowing categories, and spring 2016 assessment of COSH programs that meet UCC program outcomes in quantitative analysis and scientific principles and methods. Syllabi review and assessment activities also began in June 2016, as did development of assessment implementation plans for TI courses. The UCC director served as co-chair of the PRR Committee, and that work took time away from planning and carrying out professional development programs in 2015-16.

Curricular development and redesign for specific academic programs also continued in 2015-16. At the undergraduate level, a significant redesign was completed for the Health Sciences program, resulting in a program that will allow students with an interest in a variety of applied health disciplines to complete the pre-requisites for various programs and then move into those programs or stay in the more general Health Sciences track. A newly redesigned BA degree in Communication Disorders was also approved, which will allow students to complete a BA and then apply for the MA program here or at other institutions. The MA program in Communication Disorders will now be a standalone MA, rather than a joint BA/MA program. Anthropology also completed a redesign of its degree programs, designed to provide more of an applied focus for students. Final approval at the university level was also completed for the redesign of the MBA program. The BS in Computer Information Technology received final state approval. There were a number of newly developed minors approved this last year as well. Work was begun in 2015-

16, with final approval planned for 2016-17, for a BS degree in Actuarial Science and an MA in Chemistry with a focus on Materials Science. Work is underway for significant curricular redesigns of initial teacher licensure programs, as well as the development of an Urban Science degree from Geography. Much work remains to be done in the review and analysis of graduate programs, however, as there are a number of graduate programs with declining or stagnant enrollment. There is also a need for more clarity concerning the Program Review process, so that departments engaged in this process have a clear understanding as to what the process requires and what outcomes may follow the program review.

The PsyD program enrolled its first class in 2015-16. The university will focus on growing both the enrollment and the quality of the existing doctoral programs in Nursing and Psychology. The University will not be exploring additional doctoral programs beyond these for the next few years.

Commitment to faculty quality also continued this past year. In 2015-16, there were 20 tenure track searches to fill vacant positions. No new tenure track lines were created by the university, but two existing lines were reallocated from one program to another based on needs of the departments. The university is planning to hold at 408 full-time tenure track lines for 2016-17, an increase from 380 lines just 6 years ago. As enrollment grows and new programs are developed, the university will assess the need for additional lines.

Faculty development programs continued in 2015-16, primarily led by the Center for Teaching Excellence as well as the Center for Teaching and Learning with Technology. CTE continued its leadership in new faculty orientation, running a workshop at the start of fall 2015, and continuing its new faculty mentor program. In addition, CTE continued to offer both group and individualized development programs and workshops. CTLT also continued to offer faculty development workshops, with an emphasis on using technology to assist learning in face to face, hybrid and online classrooms. CTLT initiated support and development for Quality Matters in 2015-16, a national program designed to evaluate the quality of online course development and instruction.

In 2015-16, there were 1,242 Assigned Release Time (ART) credits awarded. These credits are in addition to the 6 credits each year of ART that is provided to all new tenure track faculty in their first two years. The university also continued to support the summer RTI program. In terms of recognition, in 2015-16 the University revamped Faculty Research Day and implemented Explorations 2016, a week long (and then some) demonstration and celebration of the research, scholarship and creative culture of the university including faculty research and student research. Initial feedback shows this was a promising activity and the university plans to continue and look to ways to expand in 2016-17.

## **Goal 2: Achieve Student Success by Increasing Matriculation, Retention and Graduation**

Led by the Student Success Team, a number of activities took place in 2015-16. Welcome week events were offered at the start of fall and spring semester to help acclimate new students to campus. A redesign was completed for First Year Experience (now called Pioneer Success Seminar) to help connect admission, recruitment, orientation and student success efforts. New

Student Orientation was revised to move academic advising to Day 1. Degree Works was fully implemented for all new students, with all undergraduate students in the system by fall 16. Ongoing student support and intervention activities took place, including increased use of peer leaders in first year seminars, increased use of supplemental instruction in gateway courses, and enhanced cohort management for students at 90 credits and new cohort management for students at 60-70 credits. This past spring the university also approved the purchase of Starfish, a digital suite of tools which will allow for a more organized and coherent cohort management process, enhancements to early alert, and development of predictive analytics to provide information to continue to improve student success.

Supplemental instruction was expanded to additional courses, with 20 sections in fall 15 and 19 sections in Spring 16. Academic Development partnered with the College of Education on additional "boot camps" for Praxis preparation. The Nursing Department implemented additional tutoring and academic support for NCLEX test preparation as part of its efforts to address the need to improve NCLEX test scores for first-time test takers. Discussion continued on the concept of learning communities, but no action was taken in 2015-16.

Enrollment growth, improved retention and increases in the four and six year graduate rate continue to be vital to the growth of the University. In terms of retention for new entering first year students, in 2015-16 we did not make the progress for which we had planned. Retention rates continued their pattern of fluctuation, slightly up one year and then slightly down the next. The retention rate for returning first year students dropped to 74.6%, a decline from the 76.6% rate the previous year, and closer to the 2013 rate of 74.8%. Additional efforts need to take place to have a consistent improvement in retention toward our goal of a minimum 80% retention rate. The four-year graduation rate, however, showed a significant increase, going from 21.2% for the graduating class of 2014 to 26.6% for the graduating class of 2015. We still have progress to make as we move toward a goal of having a graduation rate at least level to our peers, in the mid-30s or higher. The six-year graduation rate took an unexpected dip from 51% to 48.7%, and the university is analyzing the data to determine the cause of the decline.

Recruitment and admission activities continue to work on bringing in a strong undergraduate and graduate class (though new enrollment cannot allow us to make our overall enrollment goals without a continued increase in retention rates). A new Undergraduate Admissions director was hired, and the emphasis of Undergraduate Admissions will be to improve our yield rate, doing a better job converting applications into enrollments. There was also added emphasis on transfer admissions, as we remain very much a transfer-heavy university. Both new and transfer admissions will need to work hard to overcome demographic challenges as the number of high school graduates in the region continues to decline, and community colleges are also seeing continued decline in enrollments. A new international student recruitment plan was developed in 2015-16, and will see more full implementation this year.

Graduate enrollment also continues to be an area of uneven growth. The MBA program experienced significant enrollment increases in 2015-16, and is on target for continued increases this year, and programs in Communication Disorders, Nursing and Education also continued with strong enrollments. However, many other graduate programs continued a pattern of low or

declining enrollment, and it will be essential that we work on strategically growing our graduate programs and graduate enrollment.

### **Goal 3: Provide Students with Exceptional Opportunities Beyond the Classroom**

The University continued its efforts to ensure that students receive an excellent education inside and outside of the classroom in 2015-16. As noted earlier, we expanded our work in student research and scholarship with the implementation of Explorations 2016. This program took existing student-faculty research activities (Honors thesis work and other undergraduate research activities) and aligned them with faculty research, scholarship and creative activities, strengthening the link between faculty and students. Another major activity was the implementation of the University's Civic Engagement plan, which will better connect co- and extra-curricular student activities with classroom learning, with a specific focus on UCC 5 civic engagement courses.

Students continued to have opportunities for experiential learning. In Spring 2015, 42% of WPU graduating seniors had at least one credit-earning internship or clinical experience during their WPU career. Not-for-credit paid internship opportunities - 425 in 2015-2016 - are posted in the Career Development managed job/internship portal "Trailblazers" but we do not have a reliable way to document all placements as the providers do not always respond to requests for follow-up information. It is reasonable to estimate that over 50% of WPU students had some form of internship or clinical placement upon graduation in 2015. Based on our structure and national benchmarks, 60% appears to be a reasonable goal for the percentage of students who have at least one experiential learning opportunity prior to graduation.

Two alternate spring break programs were held - one curricular based and one co-curricular based. In addition to UCC Area 5 courses, numerous courses and/or programs have civic components (Public Health, for example), which we are working harder to quantify. Campus Activities, Service & Leadership (CASL) offered or co-sponsored 44 individual civic engagement activities with a total of 2234 student participants. A Civic Engagement Badge program was launched, with over 2000 students already in the system with at least one qualifying activity. This will help students and the University to track student progress towards achievement of their overall civic engagement goals. In conjunction with NJ Campus Compact, WPU was awarded a Vista volunteer who is working with faculty and staff as part of our Passaic County United for Prevention program. The university continued to support study-abroad programs and the Office of International Students and Scholars completed the implementation of *Terra Dotta*, a system for managing study abroad applications, risk-management, training and support.

Traditional job fairs have been largely replaced by College and program-based job fairs and networking events, allowing for more interaction between students and potential mentors and employers. Five such Career Development-sponsored or co-sponsored events were held in 2015-2016, with high attendance at each. WPU Alumni were well-represented in all of these events. The Pesce Family Mentoring Institute ended the year with 91 mentor/mentee matches; 67% of mentors were alumni.

In 2011, a Corporate Strategy Team was established (consisting of representation from Career Development, School of Continuing and Professional Education (SCPE), External Affairs, Alumni Relations, Development (Cotsakos College of Business rep), and the Institutional Advancement Researcher). This committee meets 2-3 times per year to review corporate outreach and improve and develop relationships with corporations that will lead to career placement and internships, SCPE opportunities, and philanthropy. The committee is currently reviewing the standing policy and procedures for engagement. Over 300 area employers participated in career development activities during

2015-2016 including multiple Career & Internships fairs, networking events, the Pesce Family Mentoring Institute and the Employer Advisory Board. 844 employers posted full-time opportunities and 326 employers posted internships on Trailblazer, the Center for Career Development's on-line job and internship link.

#### **Goal 4: Enhance the Sense of Community Beyond the University**

Usage of social media has expanded dramatically in recent years to engage the campus community and other friends/followers while building a sense of pride. While we do not have specific numbers for students, our University Facebook platform has produced a 42% increase in engagements, Twitter has resulted in a 20% increase in retweets and Twitter has produced an 18% increase in "favorites" during the current year, compared to the previous year. Facebook likes have increased by 7%, Twitter followers by 39% and Instagram followers by 60%. Many additional social media platforms are used successfully by Alumni Affairs and other individual University programs and departments to engage students and others.

In 2015-16, WP alumni were invited to participate in 13 webinars. Webinars addressed career development, personal improvement, and educational enrichment topics and attracted a total of 410 alumni participants. Alumni Relations continued to keep on trend with the development of social media platforms targeted at younger alumni audiences (Twitter, Instagram) and implemented a new level of engagement metrics to further gauge effectiveness. This year, new Facebook measurements included "engaged users", "organic reach" and "organic impressions." Twitter metrics also expanded to include "retweets" and "favorites." When compared directly to 2014-15 figures, social media engagement increased by a total of 4,977 or 22%. Young alumni "Social Media Ambassadors" are currently being recruited to assist with WP social media promotion in the upcoming program year.

Also in 2015-16, the alumni relations team provided 50 event opportunities for WP alumni which engaged a goal-breaking total of 1668 alumni, 35% of whom were first time event attendees. The alumni relations team continues to collaborate with career development, performing arts, and athletics to offer programs and events including career networking, musical performances, and alumni athletic games. The 2015 Homecoming, spearheaded by an alumni relations/student development team, achieved University-wide participation. Last year's Homecoming weekend attracted an estimated 2,000 alumni, students, and community members to campus for a wide variety of recreational, athletic, and educational events.

#### **Goal 5: Establish the University as a Model of Outstanding Affordable Public Higher Education**

For the last 6 years, tuition and fee increases have remained below 2%, and the difference in tuition between us and our nearby competitor public universities continues to decrease. The University has maintained its position in attaining the financial ratio goals in the Dashboard Indicators.

The Advancement Division remains focused on increasing donor scholarship support. The funding available to students has grown from \$414K in 2010 to \$1.1 million in 2016. In addition, we have entered into the silent phase of a \$10 million Scholarship Campaign with the

goal to add to the scholarship endowment. The adjusted institutional scholarship model helped yield the largest new entering first year class in five years.

Funding from donors has been secured to provide research stipends to students in the College of Science and Health. In addition, travel abroad opportunities, conference participation, and research presentation opportunities for students in all of the Colleges have been provided through donor funding either designated specifically or through each of the Colleges Funds for WP. In addition, each of the College Advisory Boards is focused on enhancing employment/internship opportunities for our students

Several new projects that are recommendations out of the Facilities Master Plans have been completed or initiated. University Hall is complete and work is well underway for the renovation of the Hunziker Buildings. The new Soccer Field was completed this summer. Design is underway for the new residence halls as well as renovations are being completed in several of the existing ones. The rolling 3 Year small Capital Project Plan has been once again approved and many of these small projects are completed on an annual basis.

The new University Hall has all smart classrooms, small group study spaces and laboratories. They are all equipped with the most current technology available to enhance the learning environment. All the classrooms and group study rooms will also be equipped with the same level of technology. Once the Hunziker renovation project is complete we will have added 14 new classrooms to the campus inventory. Worked is also being completed to improve the acoustics in the Shea music practice rooms.

University Hall is expected to be LEED Gold certified. We installed 5 electric vehicle charging stations. We are replacing exterior and interior lighting with LED bulbs. We are upgrading numerous building HVAC systems and controls to be more energy efficient, comfortable and to operate at lower costs. This past year we did a building by building assessment and will be executing the recommendations over the next several years. Since 2001 while the campus buildings' square footage increased by 30% we have decreased consumption of electricity by 10% and natural gas by 50%.

Architects have been hired and we expect the schematic designs to be ready this fall for two new residence halls. Due to some wetland issues the project has been delayed. However, we expect the project to be back on track with a delay of only one year for the opening of the first building. The lack of P3 legislation will require us to seek alternative financing options.

The name change to School of Continuing and Professional Education (SCPE) reflects a strategic focus on innovative programming for adult professionals seeking credentials beyond traditional credit-bearing degree programs and precollege youth seeking academic enrichment. SCPE now features a distinctive portfolio of over 300 non-credit courses to address employers' needs in this region's key industry sectors. Post-baccalaureate education and non-degree programs with certification options are offered at convenient times through in-person, hybrid, and online formats for working professionals and dislocated workers at all levels. Online not-for-credit course development was expedited through expansion of partnerships with new curriculum developers and creation of the School's own branded courses. SCPE now provides additional

transformational learning opportunities for academic and career success through course advisement, job readiness coaching, technology and social media help, mentoring, and externships. Key areas for curriculum growth have included computer information technology, advanced business skills (including Six Sigma, Supply Chain Management), digital arts, and courses for healthcare practitioners.

**Summary:** Strategic Plan 2012-2022 is moving into its middle stages, which provides an opportunity to reflect on projects completed, areas of progress, and areas needing additional attention in the years to come. Many of the specific goals listed in the original plan have been completed: We have two doctoral programs in place; we have a strategic plan for IT, Enrollment Management, Alumni and Facilities; we have developed and are in the second year of a Civic Engagement Plan; we have expanded and continue to emphasize experiential learning opportunities; we have built University Hall, completed renovations on Raubinger and Wightman, and are in the midst of major renovations of Hunziker Wing and Hunziker Hall; and we have instituted new professional development and recognition programs through WP P.R.I.D.E.

We have also reached milestones that were not specifically part of the Strategic Plan, but build on associated strengths: We are officially designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI); we have increased enrollment of diverse students to the point that we have no one student ethnicity that is a majority; and we have become a national presence in developing diverse educators and educational professionals through our Holmes Scholar program and our leadership with the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

At the same time, there remain areas of the Strategic Plan that require continued attention and emphasis. Our retention and graduation rates need to improve and we need to enhance our international efforts both in terms of more student enrollment as well as strategic partnerships with international colleges and universities. Our curriculum and academic offerings, especially at the graduate level, need attention to ensure that we are offering academically rigorous programs that address the strategic goals of the University.

As we acknowledge our progress and attend to the areas that need to be addressed, we will continue to implement and evaluate our performance in meeting the goals of *Strategic Plan 2012-2022*.

This report was submitted by Committee 2022 on September 16, 2016.

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