



A Vision With Purpose

The Strategic Plan for Warner Pacific University

2024-2029



ON CRAFTING A VISION WITH PURPOSE

The first glimmer of a vision for Warner Pacific University began nearly a century ago.

Planted by the Church of God Ministries Movement of Anderson, Indiana, WPU began as Pacific Bible College in Spokane, Washington in the year 1937, providing two female students with degrees as the totality of its first graduating class. In 1940, the college moved to its present location in the urban heart of Portland, Oregon. In 1957 it changed its name to Warner Pacific College, and in 2018, became Warner Pacific University to better reflect a depth of Christ-centered programs that launch students into career paths ranging from education to nursing to business to social work to ministry and more. Warner Pacific also became the first university in Oregon to be recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a Minority Serving Institution.

Today, from our vantage in 2024, Warner Pacific continues to serve an evolving paradigm. Our array of degrees has blossomed to more master's level programming, online modalities and adult degree completion options, and graduates hold careers in hospitals, classrooms, and offices, in addition to churches. We welcomed our 8th president, Dr. Brian L. Johnson, who represents our first African American leader as well as an experienced university past-president and noted scholar of 17th Century American Literature. We weathered the COVID-19 pandemic and emerged to become a critical convener of community groups, from supporting educational groups, to accommodating business and nonprofit organizations, to regularly hosting six congregations on the weekends who do not have church homes. Most astoundingly of all, we find ourselves in the position of being named the most ethnically diverse institution in the State of Oregon, with more than 65% of our students identifying as People of Color. Moreover, we are honored to be the only Christian college in the Pacific Northwest to hold designations as both a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), and as an Asian American, Native American, Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI). We are also recognized as serving more than three times the percentage of Black / African American students as are residents of the City of Portland.

Yet however far forward the Lord leads us in our walk of service, an important clarity of purpose links our past to our present: Christ-centeredness is the enduring heart of what it means to truly deliver quality higher education that uplifts ALL people, and to care for the calling as much as the credential. Our outward expressions may have evolved over the years, but reflective of our Northwest roots, the Lord has consistently led Warner Pacific toward the role of "Pioneer" regardless of the terrain.

This strategic plan has been deeply and prayerfully considered, understanding that currently WPU faces unprecedented challenges as much as abundant opportunities. In many ways, we are at a crossroads. We craft this vision forward acknowledging enrollment sustainability as central to our success, and that serving a robust study body is ever-dependent on providing responsive, quality instruction that best serves our community. The road ahead is not easy...but we trust that the Lord will continue to guide us in how best to use this beautiful, verdant hillside of Mt. Tabor as a source for connecting students to the love of Christ, and to the ability to discover their calling no matter where they first began.

We are calling this "A Vision With Purpose" for two reasons: first, the "With Purpose" phrase reflects our new brand, and the encapsulating intent behind our "WP" logo. Second, just as we work to provide students with avenues to build lives with purpose, so too do we endeavor to hold ourselves to a vision of accountability – to continue building a *university* with purpose.

Clearly, resourcing the vision outlined in this plan will challenge us. Our current ways of operating will need to shift, and our aspirations will require new levels of support from our civic and sacred communities. We therefore ask for your prayers over this plan, and that God may lead all of us to use our gifts in service to all who seek quality, Christ-centered higher education at Warner Pacific University.



MISSION STATEMENT:

Warner Pacific is a Christ-centered, urban, liberal arts university dedicated to providing students from diverse backgrounds an education that prepares them to engage actively in a constantly changing world.

VISION STATEMENT:

Mission-driven leaders who change the world.

VALUES:

- *We learn in an inclusive community.*
- *We innovate toward experiential learning and academic relevance.*
- *We engage our spiritual journey with Christ at the center.*
- *We serve and care for our city and world.*
- *We cultivate curiosity, creativity, and purpose.*





THANK YOU

This plan is the result of nine months of collaboration from Warner Pacific employees at every level and from every functional area, whether in a formal role on the committee, or during various input and review stages. It recognizes the university's proud history as one of four Church of God affiliated institutions, and its foundation as a Christ-Centered, Minority Serving undergraduate and graduate institution. It acknowledges the university is facing serious, challenging pivot points in several key areas, and it imagines a new, stronger future that empowers equitable student success and lives of purpose for all graduates.

Special thanks to:

Strategic Planning Committee Members:

- Dr. Evans Akpo, Dean of Graduate, Professional & Online Programs
- Dr. Stella Armstrong, Senior Professional Advisor
- Lyne Bacon, Executive Assistant to the President
- Derek Bradford, Multimedia Specialist
- Mary Clayton, Development Officer – Advancement Services & Stewardship
- John Coules, Director of Human Resources and Title IX Coordinator
- Araceli Cruz, Assistant Vice President of Student Success & Engagement
- Dr. Darilis Garcia, Vice President of Enrollment and Student Success & Engagement
- Matt Gregg, Director of Athletics
- Dr. Gladys Jadagu, Assistant Professor of Business
- Benjamin Leavitt, Assistant Director of Academic Success & Accessibility and Title V Activity Director
- Dr. Cecelia Monto, Vice President of Academic Affairs & Dean of Faculty
- Dr. Vandana Nandakumar, Director of Accreditation and Planning
- Lozenzo Peterson, University Chaplain and Director of Campus Ministries
- Yolanda Roseby, Dean of Admissions
- Dr. David Terrell, Professor Emeritus of Physical Science
- Dr. Cassie Trentaz, Professor of Theology, Ethics, and Church History
- Dr. Brad Tripp, Professor of Biology
- Doug Wade, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer
- Dr. Marlo Waters, Registrar
- Dr. Steve Waters, Professor of Mathematics
- Andrew Wynings, Associate Vice President of Advancement



Board Representative:

Mike Moreland, Chair of the WPU Board of Trustees, 2012 WPU Graduate / Management and Organizational Leadership Master's Program

Professional Coach:

Dr. Ron Mahurin, Design Group International

Strategic Planning Committee Chair:

Jennifer Boehmer, Chief of Staff and Senior Vice President for University Relations, Advancement & Strategic Communications

President:

Dr. Brian L. Johnson, 8th President of Warner Pacific University



INSTITUTIONAL SWOT ANALYSIS:

The Strategic Planning Committee assessed strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats through five different university lenses: missional alignment, academic excellence, enrollment strength, resource and reputation position, and campus environment. The following is a look at a “roll up” of these lenses, to comprise our total university-wide SWOT from our vantage at this particular moment in time.

University Strengths:

- Our Christian mission is inclusive and welcoming, and ties us to a Holy Purpose.
- Student ethnic diversity is stronger here than any other college in Oregon.
- We are recognized as one of the top universities in the state for increasing social mobility for students.
- We offer strong existing accessible programs and dedicated faculty.
- WPU’s historic, urban geographic location offers a green oasis within the heart of a vibrant, accessible city.
- We have many community partners, from civic to sacred, that rely on our campus as an important meeting place.
- We are led by a visionary, experienced president who is also a celebrated scholar.

University Opportunities:

- Our Title V, \$3 Million grant is a historic first for Oregon, and presents a clear forward direction, validation, and investment for building strategies to become a leader as a Minority Serving Institution.
- Our mission as a Christ-Centered university, which is focused on particularly supporting a diverse student population, is totally unique in the Northwest. This is a story we have not taken the full opportunity to tell.
- We have developed a compelling new brand and message platform entitled “With Purpose” that is ready for rollout.
- The university has invested in formal exploration of a number of possible construction projects which could become viable areas for raising philanthropic support.
- There is significant untapped opportunity to strengthen partnerships with Community Colleges and with Christian High Schools.
- With data investment, we can pursue many more private and federal grants.
- The city’s interest in investing in this part of Portland / Division Street gives us a prime platform for future partnerships.
- Given our unique mission, we have the opportunity to take action in establishing a clear vision for how WPU is solving the community’s most pressing problems.

University Weaknesses:

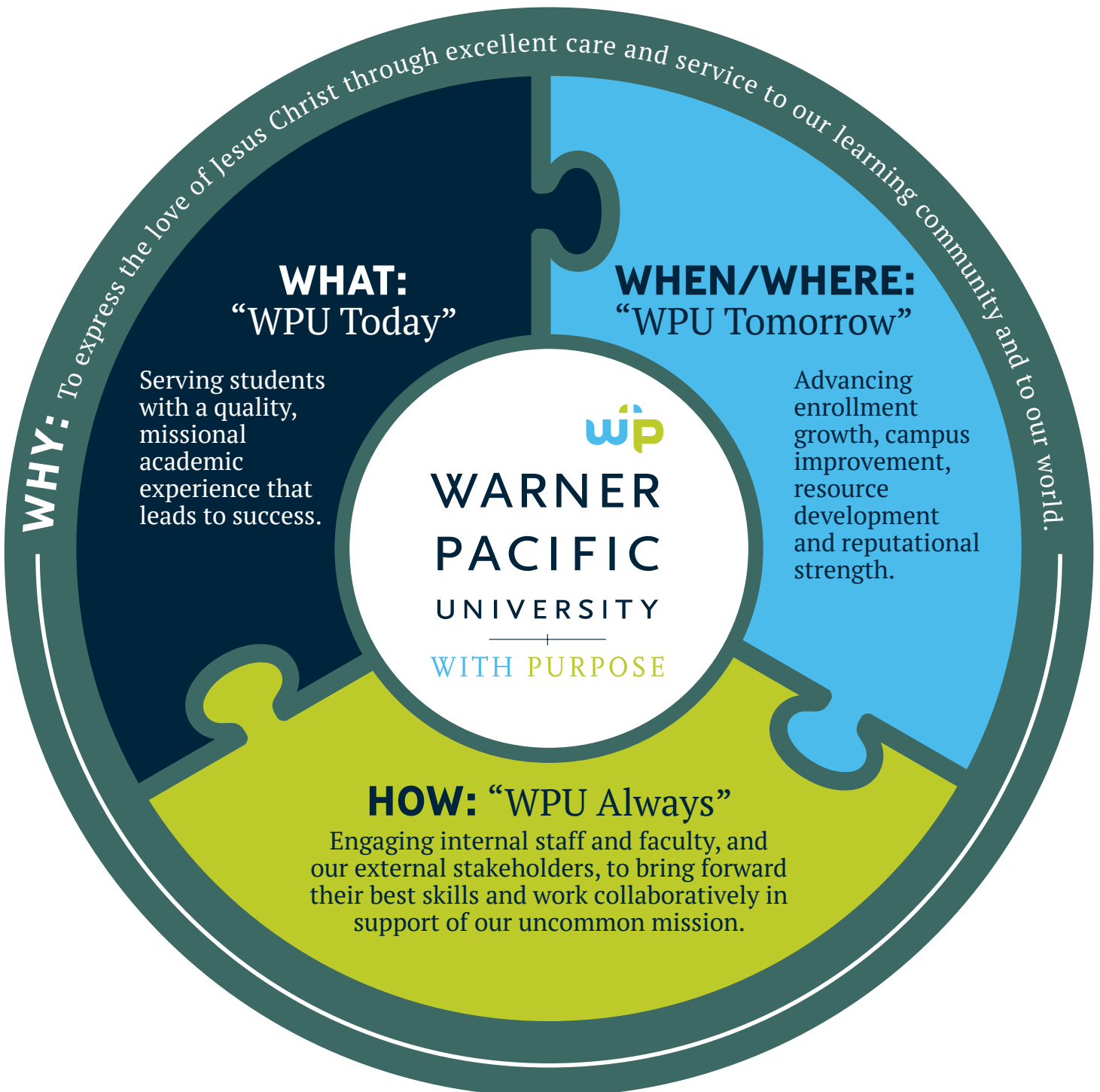
- Enrollment and fundraising are on an 8+ year decline.
- There exists a historic disinvestment in marketing and community outreach.
- Campus facilities (especially dorms) are tired and compromise our ability to attract new students.
- Uncertainty about budget resources makes it difficult to commit to a plan.
- We lack on-campus facilities that align with our top programs and activities – such as no on-campus athletic field or nursing program facility.
- Staff turnover has created stops and starts, lack of institutional memory, and disruption of external relationships.
- Many operational and systematic challenges that produce barriers for accessing and creating data reports, including student rosters as well as real-time budget reports for budget managers to use in order to monitor departmental expenses.
- There is significant role confusion, lack of clarity and lack of resources around operational and technical functions.

University Threats:

- Nationwide college enrollment continues to decline among private universities, especially smaller faith-based universities.
- Without a strong claim around our identity, and a strong investment in communications, our public draws its own conclusions. Some of these conclusions are damaging.
- Ongoing tensions exist between inventing new programs and buildings, and fixing what we currently have – we need a clear direction based on achievable goals and we need time to rebuild what we have, including operational systems.
- Competition is rising among colleges offering similar programs, including many more nursing programs coming onboard.
- Though we encourage other institutions to support traditionally underprivileged populations, our compelling distinctive as the only HSI in Oregon is likely to come under threat as many other higher ed institutions are close to receiving an HSI designation.

Strategic Plan Framework

Based on the university's SWOT analysis, and sub-analyses, the WPU Board of Trustees chose to provide the following framework for our strategic plan.



WPU Today

*Through the lens of **SERVING** our students.*



WPU Today

Through the lens of **SERVING** our students.

Objective 1: Enhance Academic Excellence

Reinforce the WPU academic experience to prepare students to lead purposeful lives through a core set of high-quality majors / offerings, faculty expertise, experiential learning and service, and connection to Christian faith.

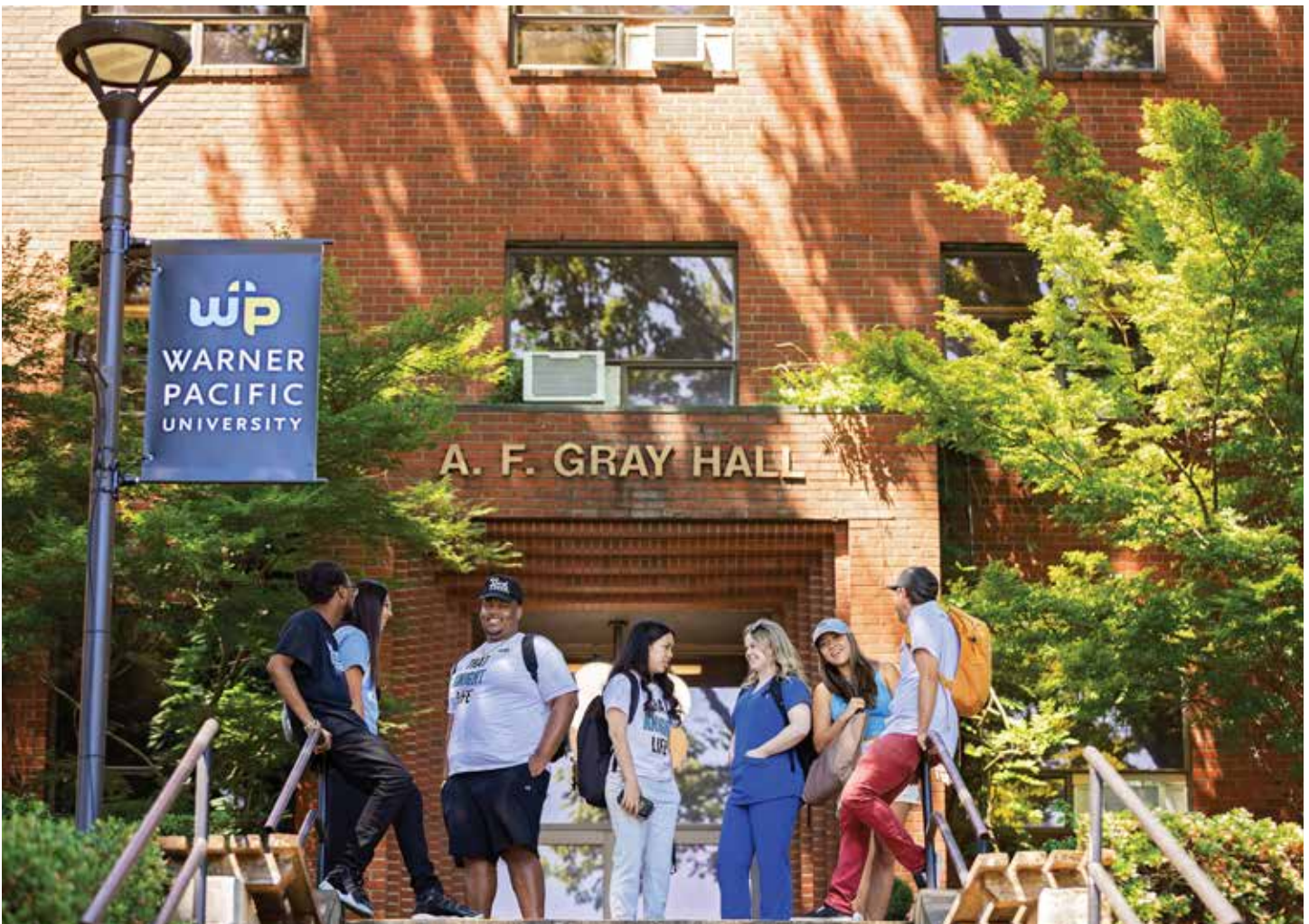
1.1 Review and realign programs and curriculum offerings to focus on building key programs to attract and serve students, aligning courses within those programs for efficiency, and reducing the number of low-enrolled courses overall.

1.2 Strategically align faculty assignments and credentials in a manner that maximizes faculty expertise and sets new targets for matching programs with credentialed faculty by subject area.

1.3 Grow, retool and evaluate PGS offerings and program modalities to best respond to the changing needs of adult learners, making sure courses are fully updated and aligned with current practices and delivery modes.

1.4 Increase intentional Christ-centered service and reflection opportunities within course curriculum to enhance the academic experience, strengthen personal commitment to service, and provide career confirmation.

1.5 Institute methods to assess student success post-graduation to ensure WPU is best serving students and the community with quality pathways.



WPU Today

Through the lens of *SERVING* our students.

Objective 2: Support the Student Experience

Create a “Your Purpose Pathway” student life experience that includes matching every new WPU student with access to mentorship, tutoring, affinity peer groups, and/or access to a career-related internship.

2.1 Rebuild the student life experience and affinity groups within the post-pandemic environment, utilizing a model that works for our student population (including commuter students, online students, and adult learners).

2.2 Implement enhanced professional tutoring services as well as new software for tutoring appointments so that the services are readily accessible to students.

2.3 Develop strategic career services as part of the “Your Purpose Pathway” so that each student can clearly envision the connection between their current studies and their future career.

2.4 Build additional opportunities for spiritual mentoring and faith growth outside of the classroom as part of the “Your Purpose Pathway” using a model that aligns with the needs of our student body (could include options such as personal mentoring, small group chapels, or faith-based affinity groups).

Objective 3: Build Cultural Responsiveness

Build an intentional, culturally responsive learning environment that reflects our Minority Serving status including bilingual material, professional development, student activities, and community resources.

3.1 Continue to develop culturally affirming acknowledgements, activities and participatory campus experiences to honor and highlight our diverse communities; work in tandem with affinity groups to accomplish this goal.

3.2 Intentionally build additional multi-lingual experiences on campus to fully honor and leverage the heritage languages of our students (bilingual chapel, family resources in other languages, and other opportunities).

3.3 Provide DEI professional development opportunities for faculty and staff to promote responsive methods of pedagogy and service that reflect the love of Christ.

3.4 Increase focus on closing the achievement gaps for Minority student populations on measures including retention rates, Dean’s List achievement rates, and Probation/Dismissal rates.



WPU Today

Through the lens of **SERVING** our students.

Objective 4: Enhance the Persistence Pipeline

Establish support systems along the academic pipeline that increase passage rates, retention rates, and graduation rates.

4.1 Develop a network of navigators/support staff who work collaboratively with students to address barriers, develop solutions, and have regular pro-active check-ins with students to support their retention and timely progress towards graduation.

4.2 Improve ease of access to information by centralizing student communication and resources. Identify a single centralized electronic resource hub for students and build all resources and links into this hub; identify a standard method of communication with students and utilize this method consistently across campus.

4.3 Further develop financial aid strategies and funds to support students who want to remain at WPU but are facing financial barriers to continued enrollment.

4.4 Improve student retention and graduation rates by increasing IPEDS outcomes. Increase the IPEDS retention rate* to consistently at 80% or above annually and the New Student Fall-to-Fall Retention Rates (internal measure that includes both freshmen and transfer) consistently at 80% or above annually. Increase the IPEDS graduation rate* from 43% to 52%.

**Please note that IPEDS retention and graduation rates are focused on cohorts of first-time freshmen, which excludes a significant proportion of Traditional students and virtually all PGS students. Therefore it is an incomplete measure for understanding the WPU student experience. However, it is still an important measure to track because it is used as a benchmark within the higher education landscape.*



WPU Tomorrow

Through the lens of GROWING our institution.



WPU Tomorrow

Through the lens of *GROWING* our institution.

Objective 5: Shape the Academy for Enrollment Growth

Determine top academic programs, majors, or areas for expanded growth including adding new graduate-level degrees, community college transfer agreements, online programming, and community partnership support based on emerging career trends.

5.1 Complete external market assessment to better forecast new program offerings and modalities that WPU is best equipped to launch or expand.

5.2 Develop new community college transfer agreements and partnerships within targeted program majors and for overall transfer for baccalaureate completion.

5.3 Explore partnership opportunities among the four Church of God Universities to increase efficiencies, share resources, grow market share, and expand curriculum offerings.

Objective 6: Expand Marketing and Outreach

Implement a comprehensive “With Purpose” marketing and outreach plan that emphasizes WPU’s distinctive offerings and experiences and supports / attracts the WPU student profile.

6.1 Establish “With Purpose” as the core expression of our institutional identity to serve as an overall shorthand for the unique WPU Christ-centered value proposition – which is to ensure students of all backgrounds are able to pursue a purposeful life.

6.2 Develop and invest in a new external marketing plan to target potential audiences for enrollment, build support for fundraising and investment, and generate community awareness and partnership.

6.3 Overhaul and redesign the WPU Website to better express our uniqueness, attract more students, ensure accurate and updated information, measure effectiveness, and increase usability among students, staff and community.

6.4 Realign Strategic Enrollment Plan to focus on affinity with Christian, Latino / other targeted minority, and first-generation audiences to intentionally focus on WPU’s missional direction of service.

6.5 Expand athletic program to include baseball to open new recruitment path.



WPU Tomorrow

Through the lens of *GROWING* our institution.

Objective 7: Launch Key Reputational Community Initiatives

Launch new reputational initiatives that illustrate WPU's "With Purpose" mission to the wider community and grow awareness of our importance to Greater Portland, the State of Oregon and the Northwest.

7.1 Implement a university-wide Faith-in-Action Program that creates opportunities for both students and employees to engage in community service, building empathetic leadership skills while demonstrating the love of Christ. Initiative includes tracking and supporting a wide range of channels including curricular, volunteer, chapel-led, student-led, employee-led and more.

7.2 Open an expanded Center for Academic Support and Achievement (CASA) to house resources for all WPU students, but centering culturally responsive services. Lay the groundwork for this center to become a leading resource hub and model for Portland organizations who also seek to lift up traditionally underrepresented people through education.

7.3 Reframe and expand a new Faculty Lecture Series to be more visible to the public, and to demonstrate the expertise of our faculty – specifically combined with discussion of the thoughtful integration of faith and higher learning.



Objective 8: Expand Resource Development

Launch a set of major Fund Development initiatives that increases awareness of WPU's unique mission as well as inspires and diversifies our revenue across donor and community support.

8.1 Embark on first-ever philanthropic Comprehensive Campaign that (a) sets a significant new multi-year goal for increasing financial support to WPU, (b) engages and develops donors and increases awareness of our mission, and (c) provides resources for accomplishing the work of the 3 major pillars defined by the Board of Trustees and detailed in this Strategic Plan. Comprehensive Campaign will include both individual and organizational outreach (i.e. Private Foundation) efforts.

8.2 Aggressively pursue HSI and AANAPISI-related state and federal major grants to support our mission and to leverage our current status as the sole university MSI in the State of Oregon.

8.3 Improve connection with Church of God giving congregations and increase the overall number of churches who support us with regular donations.

8.4 Increase overall donor base and build general scholarship support as foundational to a strengthened WPU annual fund.

8.5 Develop signature storytelling and information about the impact of giving at WPU and expand a culture of philanthropy.

WPU Tomorrow

Through the lens of *GROWING* our institution.

Objective 9: Support the Campus Improvement Plan

Further our campus master plan that prioritizes deferred maintenance, plans for equipment/technology needs, leverages underutilized spaces, and determines key new growth projects for construction that align with our student success goals.

9.1 Move Nursing Program to newly retrofitted on-campus location to expand capacity, grow enrollment and reduce expenses.

9.2 Renovate the Library to serve as institution's new CASA (Center for Academic and Student Achievement) and to become a physical hub for all students to receive support in their college journeys.

9.3 Establish plan for improving and/or reallocating residence halls and offerings on campus to better attract new students and respond to shifting demographic of adult learners.

9.4 Establish plan for improving and expanding athletic spaces to better attract and retain student-athletes, and to grow our athletic program overall.

9.5 Build new perimeter border and beautify entrance to campus to better welcome students and visitors, and to better establish our footprint along Division Street.

9.6 Identify campus improvements to dedicated faith spaces such as Schlatter Chapel and McGuire Auditorium to better support ministry programs and services on campus.

9.7 Establish and consistently communicate campus master plan to include other facility and grounds improvements in order to keep learning community apprised of projects in the works and enlist support.



WPU Always

Through the lens of UNIFYING our missional community.



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Through the lens of UNIFYING our missional community.

Objective 10: Recruit and Retain High-Quality Diverse Faculty and Staff

Put intentional systems in place that better attract and retain a high-quality diverse faculty and staff who are committed to our mission and serve all our students with distinction through teaching, scholarship, service and community engagement.

10.1 Intentionally increase WPU presence in locations/organizations/communities that open new avenues for attracting quality diverse employees. Post jobs and actively recruit employees from with an eye to add presence in new locations/sites/communities that will specifically address recruiting diverse employees.

10.2 Benchmark compensation and benefits across the institution and with similar institutions to establish consistent, attractive, equitable, and right-sized employee compensation system for WPU.

10.3 Establish and share the special hallmarks of a WPU employee experience to include opportunities and expectations around such aspects as Christian faith, cultural learning, community service, chapel involvement, student support, athletic program support, professional development, community engagement and more to further create the conditions for WPU to increase retention and satisfaction of employees. Intentionally develop shared understanding and culture of “With Purpose” identity.



WPU Always

Through the lens of UNIFYING our missional community.

Objective 11: Support Employee Development & Board Engagement

Establish a WPU onboarding, evaluation, education, and engagement system of programming that supports employees and Board members, and continuously advances WPU's mission.

11.1 Develop a new strategic system for onboarding staff and faculty that includes institutional acclimation and education, professional development and community building during the employee's first year at WPU. Include value-added practices such as assigned peer mentors during the first year of service.

11.2 Engage in purposeful staffing assessment, succession and realignment where needed to match WPU's evolving needs, resources, and aspirations for growth. Support employee onboarding/offboarding efforts and establish change-management norms.

11.3 Design and implement expanded institutional communication efforts to increase retention and engagement of employees and Board members. Create regular, ongoing respective channels for opportunities and organizational changes, celebrations of successes and forums for discussing challenges, and forums for employees/Board to provide feedback across the university with the intention of growing our missional community culture.



Objective 12: Foster Missional Education & Community Collaboration

Educate and invite the internal and external community to participate in our signature brand story. Purposefully communicate WPU's role in lifting up diversity as a key tenant in our Christ-centered expression, and our longstanding commitment to serving this community.

12.1 Create a strategic partnership plan that amplifies our reputation and collaboration with churches, nonprofits, foundations, businesses, schools, and other entities that align with our missional vision.

12.2 Identify by department/area 1-3 key opportunities for community collaboration that support WPU goals and match to existing relationships in comprehensive map and/or identify strategic gap areas for new development.

12.3 Form an advisory "signature brand story" committee or ad hoc group of trusted people to give regular feedback regarding our external facing communications. Specify the trustworthiness and compelling nature of the story we're telling about ourselves.



TIMELINE

The following is an overview of our Strategic Planning Process, taking place over Academic Year 2023-2024.

- **August 15, 2023** – All-Campus Meeting – Kickoff announcement for Strategic Planning Process and faculty retreat
- **September 7** – Convene Strategic Planning Committee for Initial Kick-off meeting
- **September 12** – Strategic Planning SWOT Captains meeting
- **September 25** – Full Committee meeting #2
- **September 30** – Complete Current State Assessment/SWOT
- **October 5** – Board Engagement on SWOT analysis and Mission and Vision
 - Board action around restated Mission and Vision
 - Board feedback on Strategic Imperatives and what SWOT has indicated
 - New Board Strategic Planning Committee meeting convenes
- **November 16** – Full Committee meeting #3
- **November 27** – Goals due to chair
- **November 30** – Full Committee meeting #4
- **December 13** – Full Committee meeting #5
- **By December 13** – Initial review of Strategic Imperatives and goals completed by the Strategic Planning Committee
- **January - February** – Strategic Planning Committee refines SMART Goals
- **February 2** – Mid-term Board Meeting – Progress Report presented; receive feedback
- **February 21** – Full Committee meeting #6
- **February 21** – Review feedback from Board; review comprehensive campaign draft
- **March 7** – Full Committee meeting #7
- **March 7** – Review refined campaign draft which includes feedback from committee, EC & President
- **March 8 – 20** – Feedback from larger community; in-person discussion invitation on March 20
- **March 20** – Employee luncheon and open forum for discussing Strategic Plan draft
- **April 1** – Final Plan presented to Executive Team and Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees
- **April 11-12** – Board Review and approval of Strategic Plan
- **April 12** – Board of Trustees votes to officially adopt Plan
- **May 9, 2024** – End of Academic Year employee gathering – Announcement of new plan (including implementation and building plans, i.e. assignment of objective ownership, and process for reporting and assessment).
- **2024–2029** – Living the Plan



WARNER
PACIFIC
UNIVERSITY
—
WITH PURPOSE

The Warner Pacific University “With Purpose” Manifesto

We believe purpose exists within all of us. Our charge. Mission. And calling.

Warner Pacific’s clarity of purpose as a Christ-centered university is the heart of our enduring strength. For nearly 90 years, across changes in our institution and in the world around us, the university has educated world-ready graduates — people of character, credentials, and competence. We believe every student deserves an opportunity to earn a high-quality degree that offers a clear path to civic engagement, spiritual enrichment, economic security, and success.

As the most diverse Christian university in the Pacific Northwest, we offer a vibrant, cosmopolitan environment for students from all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Here, students with drive and potential challenge themselves, learn, and discover their vocation. Here, faith and knowledge go hand in hand. Our welcoming spirit of family fortifies students along their journey and connects them in service to the broader community. With close faculty partners, they gain the skills to develop into wise, compassionate, ethical leaders. Our students come to know their careers in concert with their callings — with the gospel written on their hearts.

Here, we welcome all students to navigate their life pursuits... *With Purpose.*



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