# AGENDA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>RESPONSIBLE</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Administrative Business</strong></td>
<td>Maryanne Hammond</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Call to Order</td>
<td>Maryanne Hammond</td>
<td>A. Informational and vote required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Human Resources Committee Report</strong></td>
<td>Maryanne Hammond</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. 2020 - 2021 annual self evaluation*</td>
<td>Maryanne Hammond</td>
<td>A. Informational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. COVID 19 Response Assessment Report, from the Strategic Planning Review Committee (SPRC)*</td>
<td>Maryanne Hammond</td>
<td>B. Informational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. 2020 -2021 WSU Campus Climate Committee Report*</td>
<td>Maryanne Hammond</td>
<td>D. Informational</td>
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<tr>
<td>E. 2020-2021 WSU Bias Incident Response Team (BIRT) Report*</td>
<td>Maryanne Hammond</td>
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<tr>
<td>G. Standard &amp; Poor’s Global Rating – March 12, 2021*</td>
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<td>G. Informational</td>
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<td><strong>3. Administrative Updates</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>A. 360 Comprehensive Evaluation of the President</td>
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<td>A. Informational and vote required</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Other Business</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4. Adjournment</strong></td>
<td>Maryanne Hammond</td>
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*Attachments
I write for the purpose of submitting my 2020 - 2021 Self Evaluation. The information below is presented in the agreed-upon format, is directly tied to my current Presidential goals and represents a summary of my performance since my last review of June 2020. Additionally, to assist the Board with its review, I have either embedded as appendices or attached the following reports:

Appendix 1: ALANA Student Success
Appendix 2: 2020-2021 Worcester State University Civic Engagement Report
Attachments:

- COVID 19 Response Assessment Report, from the Strategic Planning Review Committee (SPRC);
- The 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, “Beyond 15: Lead, Succeed, Engage”
- 2020 -2021 WSU Campus Climate Committee Report
- 2020-2021 WSU Bias Incident Response Team (BIRT) Report
- 2020-2021 WSU Equal Opportunity & Affirmative Action Advisory Committee Report
- Standard & Poor’s Global Rating – March 12, 2021

The reports are included to provide greater detail to the highlights below as relates to the pandemic, and in the key areas of equity, community outreach and planning over the past academic year.

Given the scope of the pandemic’s impact on every WSU function this past year, it is difficult to divorce COVID-related responses completely from the activities undertaken in support of each evaluation measure, so you will undoubtedly find that there is some overlap of the measures with the final measure related specifically to COVID-19.

1. **Retention and Student Success** (Numeric rating 4)

There can be no doubt that the greatest impact on student success this past year was the pandemic. Regarding retention and six-year graduation figures, I am pleased to report that both remained very strong this year, which bodes well for the future, as follows:

- Maintained 1-Year Overall Freshmen Retention Rate at 79.7%, which is close to the University’s highest-ever rate historically.
- Increased 1-Year African-American Freshmen Retention Rate to 82.8%.
- Increased 1-Year First-Generation Student Retention Rate to a University high of 77.5%.
- Increased 6-Year Overall Freshmen Graduation Rate to a University high of 58.6%.
- Increased 6-Year Latinx Freshmen Graduation Rate to 47.8%.
- Maintained 4-Year Overall Freshmen Graduation Rate at 46.4%, which is close to the University’s highest ever.
- Increased 4-Year African-American Freshmen Graduation Rate to a University high of 38.8%.
- Increased 4-Year Latinx Freshmen Graduation Rate to 32.3%.
Our 7% decline in overall student enrollment from Fall 2019, pre-pandemic, to Fall 2021, would have been more dramatic if not for measures we implemented as the pandemic hit to keep our current students enrolled and on a path to graduation.

Highlights of the retention measures, many of which were newly conceived of and implemented due to the pandemic:

- Completed 4,392 outreach communications to current students as part of a campaign to support students during the fall of 2020, the first full semester of the pandemic.
- Continued the Success Coaching program, to connect 797 new students with 40 on-campus, volunteer faculty or staff members to provide transitional support in their first term.
- Utilized external grant funds and internal university funds to address the outstanding balances of some of students with financial impediments to their success.
- Speedily processed $4.2M in payments to WSU students from Federal Coronavirus funds ($2.1M CARES and $2.1M CRRSAA HEERF). This work continues for some supplemental payments.
- Conducted numerous texting campaigns designed to provide support to existing students with the new AdmitHub texting system, including two campaigns geared towards Fall 2020 persistence and two campaigns geared towards Spring 2021 persistence.
- Offered the university’s first Lancer Learning course, a free summer course and wrap-around support designed specifically for incoming first-year students. This program resulted in 244 Fall 2020 new students completing the course and will occur again for Fall 2021 students.
- Assured alignment between University divisions to effectively communicate Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 course offerings amidst the pandemic, to improve information that students utilized to make enrollment decisions.

Challenges/Opportunities:

- While the campus celebrated achieving the 58.6% graduation rate milestone, we remained dedicated towards our new goal – a 62% six-year graduation rate by 2021. We anticipate our final data will show that the overall graduation rate has increased to approximately 60%. The biggest challenge has always been, and will continue to be, getting the entire campus engaged and focused on this objective.
- The 6-Year African-American Freshmen Graduation Rate decreased from 60% to 50% this year. This is a small cohort of students; therefore, a small change can have a dramatic effect on the rate. 50% represents the university’s third highest 6-Year African-American Freshmen Graduation Rate in the university’s history (all within the last 4 years).
- The 1-Year Latinx Freshmen Retention Rate decreased from 70.2% to 62.5% this year. More needs to be done to support our Latinx students, as one of the few traditional-age demographic groups that is expected to grow in future years.
- The pandemic significantly affected the university’s enrollment, with an overall 7.0% decrease in Fall 2020 undergraduate students, a 12.2% decrease in Fall 2020 graduate students, and a 15.3% decrease in enrolled new Fall 2020 freshmen and transfer students. Early indications for Fall 2021 are of some enrollment rebound; however, this will be a persistence and graduation gap in our enrollment that represents an ongoing hole, which we must address over the coming years.
- Becker College closure was unfortunate, but provided an opportunity for Worcester State to fill an enrollment hole, especially by adding Women’s Ice Hockey to our Athletics program and by providing a seamless transfer pathway for Becker College nursing students.
- With the finalizing of the strategic plan to guide the University over the next five years, we also must make sure our work is directly connected to the State’s Equity Agenda and, more
importantly, that no WSU student is left behind (See Appendix 1 for ALANA student success information).

2. Academic Management and Leadership (Numeric rating 5)

Even in the midst of the pandemic, I am pleased we were able to move forward aggressively with the Roadmap for Advancing Student Excellence, or RASE Plan (WSU login required), which was developed based upon the findings of the WSU Positioning Study. With campus feedback from Spring 2019 fully incorporated into our implementation plan, we were poised to integrate those objectives into the strategic plan for 2020-2025 as it was being developed, so that assessment of the new strategic plan will also measure RASE progress.

This year, we finalized development of the new strategic plan, titled “Beyond 150: Lead, Succeed, Engage.” Following Board of Trustees approval June 2020, the plan was approved by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education in October. “Beyond 150” puts equity on everyone’s agenda, as equity goals are embedded within each component of the plan. This is consistent with the trustees’ approach of infusing equity goals into each committee’s work, and the approach was supported by the BHE, which has established the Equity Agenda as its sole priority.

Highlights include:

- MSCA bargaining, with our Provost as a negotiator, achieved a one-year extension and health and safety agreement – in place so that we were able to begin the semester on a cooperative footing.
- RASE Plan went ‘live’ for incoming students; LASC (Liberal Arts and Sciences Curriculum) adjustments necessitated by the plan have been approved through governance.
- Diversity Across the Curriculum was approved.
- Multiple new minors were approved through governance.
- Education’s fully online accelerated Master’s Programs produced its first graduates this spring; Nursing is preparing for a fully online program launch in Summer of 2021.
- Political Science and Theater undergraduate majors approved by the DHE for Fall 2021 implementation.
- World Languages is preparing its first fully online Spanish Master’s Degree and will outreach for the new credential to native speakers first.
- Accreditation visits occurred and reports were issued for programs in Education and Occupational Therapy.
- Rapid response by numerous departments ensured teach-out plan options to Becker College students, most notably in Nursing, but also in many other majors of interest to Becker College students supplanted by the closure of that institution in the city of Worcester.
- The Second Annual Dean’s Lecture by Dr. Margaret Kerr in Fall of 2021 was well attended by alumni in the virtual environment; she also received a financial award.
- The Occupational Therapy doctorate (OTD) proposal was appraised by external reviewers and adjusted for final form for presentation to the DHE.
- A research series for faculty was led by the Center for Teaching and Learning and Fellow in Research Dr. Doug Kowalewski, who has returned to campus after an NSF fellowship in D.C. The series covered grant searches, the application process, and post-grant procedures.
- The Interdisciplinary Department was created, to launch in Fall of 2021.
Challenges/Opportunities:

- Return to a mostly in-person campus in Fall 2021, flexing back to in-person learning modalities for most faculty.
- Online learning into the future: maximize opportunity of the COVID experience, to increase the flexibility of course offerings as well as maximize revenues to the University.
- Hiring of a full-time, permanent office of Grants and Sponsored Research who will lead a cohesive campus-wide strategy to support faculty and student research.

3. Assessment (Numeric rating 4)

This year we launched the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE, formerly NEASC) Self Study, a university-wide review of our institution, which initiates a thorough review process, conducted every ten years, by that accrediting body. In prior reviews, NEASC indicated a need for WSU to collect more data and measure progress more consistently. In part, that is why I ensured the 2015-2020 strategic plan was annually assessed by a Strategic Plan Review Committee (SPRC), to help me review divisional goals as well as cross-campus goals. Made up of faculty, staff and students, the group this year looked solely at the COVID-19 response, meeting with the COVID-19 Response Team leaders and divisional leaders to assess how well we, as I’ve often said, “built the plane while flying it.” That final report is included with this packet.

New to our 2020-2025 strategic plan, “Beyond 150,” are a series of performance indicators developed primarily by Dr. Sarah Strout, assistant vice president for assessment and planning. This approach was lauded by the Department of Higher Education in approving the plan, and I believe it will help to foster a “culture of assessment” at Worcester State.

We will be examining progress the campus has made on these standards since 2012.

Highlights include:

- Began the NECHE Self Study process for our comprehensive NECHE site visit in Fall of 2022. Nine committees with efforts supporting each of the NECHE Standards have formed and a steering committee composed of the chairs of each standard group is led by Dr. Noah Dion and Dr. Emily Soltano. The Self Study will focus on description, assessment and projection of our performance on each of NECHE’s nine standards for accreditation (Read more here: https://www.neche.org/resources/standards-for-accreditation/). Data collection to inform this process is underway.
- Students have been surveyed about their academic experience both semesters, feedback was shared with faculty, and adjustments were made to the information students receive about each course prior to registration.
- The Safe Return process itself was assessed by the Strategic Planning Review Committee.
- Began the installation, training, and use of the University’s new data warehouse to support data-driven decision making, to keep the university community better informed on matters of enrollment, among other topics, and to meet DHE expectations for data submission and transparency. The Student Success Modules will be completed this year and the Finance module is on deck.
- In addition to several surveys conducted in order to inform our COVID-19 Response efforts, noted in the COVID section of this evaluation, we conducted the following surveys:
- NECHE Accreditation Survey for Students
- NECHE Accreditation Survey for Faculty
- NECHE Accreditation Survey for Staff
- Athletics Diversity Survey
- Campus Climate Survey

• A Copley Raff, Inc. assessment of grants and sponsored projects structure led to the creation of a new structure, which was initiated this year.

Challenges/Opportunities:

• Begin structured implementation of the 2020-2025 WSU Strategic Plan, “Beyond 150.”
• Conduct NECHE Self Study

4. Infrastructure (Numeric rating 4)

We took advantage of the de-populated condition of our campus to complete deferred maintenance projects, and, while we paused our May Street project in order to cover COVID-related budget shortfalls, we were able to invest about $5 million in campus capital improvements. (Facilities, maintenance, and capital expenditures necessitated by COVID protocols are covered below, in the COVID section.)

Highlights include:

• Recognized by DCAMM for the University’s work on all critical repair’s projects (Spring 2021)
• Replaced Ghosh roof $1.1M
• Completed parking lot and roadway reconstruction $1.2M
• Completed refurbishment of 1/2 of Ghosh lab fume hoods $1.2M
• Completed replacement of Wasylean chiller $250K
• Completed state-funded small repair projects > $1.0M

Challenges/Opportunities:

• Creation of a comprehensive Sustainability Plan.
• Finalizing development of funding strategies to implement May Street renovations and campus classroom technology work.

5. Fiscal Management and Budgeting (Numeric rating 5)

The University continues to be a financially healthy organization. With strong reserves, solid leadership from Vice President Kathleen Eichelroth, stable enrollment, and a good market position, Worcester State continues to be a viable, thriving institution. While there is a high level of uncertainty regarding the duration and extent of the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak, I believe that WSU has taken prudent steps to ensure the safety of its students, faculty, and staff, while also supporting financial stability.

Highlights include:

• Developed a COVID-19 - Safe Return - budget response and management strategy.
• Administered HEFFF funds - $24 million total - as part federal COVID relief.
• We were able to reserve $1.2 million dollars to support future capital investment.
• We balanced the University budget and had another successful, clean audit for both the University and the Foundation.
• We maintained the University's “A” bond rating with Standard & Poor’s – March 2021 (attached).

Challenges/Opportunities include:

• Developing a cost/benefit grid to assess the true cost of all academic programs.
• Developing a financing plan for the renovations of the May Street building.
• Starting July 1st develop a set of strategies and process to close the $4 million + budget gap created by COVID.

6. Communication (Numeric rating 4)

It was clear that Communications and Marketing during the pandemic would be an integral part of the university's success, or failure, as we navigated the pandemic. We created a dedicated Public Health Information webpage for worcester.edu where all COVID-19 information is located and communicated via this site to the campus community (students, faculty and staff) on a regular basis and especially when updates have been made. In June, 2020 the Public Health Info webpage was archived and users were redirected to the Safe Return to Campus. This site also includes the COVID-19 dashboard to post statistics related to testing of the campus community.

Highlights include:

• Safe Return to Campus Page Stats
• Created a WSU Public Health Information & Safe Return Plan webpages
  o 35,800+ page views, with the average time on page in the 3m 30s timeframe which translates to:
  o Fall 2020 30,700+ page views,
  o Spring 2021 ~5,100 (a drop of 83%)
  o Creation of branded Safe Return to Campus signage.
  o Creation of inspiration signage (lawn signs) welcoming students and staff back to campus Fall 2020.
  o Dissemination of a weekly Covid-19 briefing with the campus community. The Zoom event provided updates on the health of the campus community along with other policy or Covid-19 regulation updates. FAQs from each briefing were posted Safe Return webpage.
  o Disseminated regular updates with the campus community concerning Safe Return to Campus Fall 2020. This was held over a series of weeks and by specific by topic (budget, enrollment/retention, advancement/communications,
  o Creation of a first-year student parent’s email list (with 500 names) to share updates parents concerning Safe Return to Campus Fall 2020.
  o Dissemination of a special Campus Conversation with parents to discuss Safe Return to Campus Fall 2020.
  o Creation of a special faculty listserv that auto-shares student communications.
• Creation of a virtual commencement ceremony (undergraduate and graduate) to replace the in-person ceremony typically held at the DCU Center. A drive-thru campus event was added to the virtual ceremony to create a personal commencement experience for each graduate.

• Commencement Page Statistics

**Commencement-related "Page views" on the website**

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<th>Page</th>
<th>Page views</th>
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<td>/2021-nursing-pinning-ceremony</td>
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**Activity during video launches**

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<tr>
<th>Video</th>
<th>Views</th>
<th>Peak Audience</th>
<th>Average View Duration</th>
<th>Watch via Embed vs on YouTube</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Pinning</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3m 7s</td>
<td>100% : 0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony</td>
<td>553</td>
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<td>17m 15s</td>
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<td>822</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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Device usage

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<tr>
<th>Video</th>
<th>Cellphone</th>
<th>Computer</th>
<th>Tablet</th>
<th>TV</th>
<th>Game Console</th>
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<td>262</td>
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Challenges/Opportunities:

- Continue timely COVID-19 response messaging.
- Implement the creation of a new WSU webpage.
- We seek more exposure in all forms of media – social, web, print, etc.

7. Administrative Management and Leadership (Numeric rating 4)

My leadership style is one that I would call participatory: it is my goal to involve my colleagues directly in the decisions that affect this institution on a daily basis. No longer will choices be made solely using a top-down approach. Decisions will be crafted in any direction necessary to achieve successful outcomes. During the past year, those involved broader actions and decisions – examples: expansion of the Cabinet composition with the addition of two faculty members, more regularized meetings with students, academic department Chairs and Union Leadership – all have been aided in building campus-wide relationships and achieving better overall decision making. All the while reminding myself and other senior leaders that those involved will be held accountable for their work. Additionally, I have set an expectation that all members of the senior leadership will engage in annual professional development activities.

Highlights include:

- Created the COVID-19 Response Team (now known as the WSU Safe Return Team) to play a significant role in setting direction for WSU’s pandemic emergency response strategy.
- We provided several professional development trainings for campus leadership, including annual campus retreats for Cabinet and Vice Presidents groups, and a Board of Trustee retreat.
- A university-sponsored overnight trip (this is pending review by policy committee).
Challenges/Opportunities include:

- Continuing to orientate Board of Trustees – especially, newly appointed members.
- Continuing to develop a team that is supportive of each other and the mission of the institution.

8. Decision Making and Problem Solving (Numeric rating 5)

The rapidly shifting guidelines and circumstances surrounding the pandemic meant rapid decision-making was necessary and that rapidly communicating those decisions was essential. Given all the uncertainties surrounding COVID-19, it also meant that the decisions I made could potentially harm students, faculty and staff and/or impact the financial viability of our University. That we remained fully open the entire academic year, successfully operated a full-scale surveillance testing program that identified emerging clusters of COVID-19 and kept them contained, and partnered to offer a vaccine clinic on our campus, all while continuing a full-scale academic operation, is a credit not just to responsible decision-making at the top, but also to every faculty and staff member who achieved this goal with me. I noted in my evaluation last year that, “the challenge moving forward is considering ways to continue to empower my colleagues so that good decisions can be made at the appropriate levels.” I believe that through the COVID Response Team structure, created last summer under Chief of Staff Carl Herrin’s leadership, we did accomplish just that this year.

Highlights include:

- Rapid decision was made about how to return to classes last fall, that we would allow a significant proportion of students to live on campus, and that we would offer classes in a hybrid format, with some percentage happening on campus/in person.
- We made the decision to establish and launch an on-campus surveillance testing program quickly to enable the above.
- Budgeting decision-making required increased consultation with the Chair of the Trustees and the executive committee, especially last summer and into the fall.
- The flexible COVID Response Team structure we established by April of 2020 allowed us to address costs and to factor in unprecedented, one-time relief sources. Parsing the year's expenditures -- initially by month, and then quarterly allowed for timely and prudent full board decision-making.
- By separating traditional operational costs (and revenue) from pandemic response -- called Safe Return Budget – we were prepared to appropriately handle the influx of state and federal assistance.
- Problem-solving occurred with frequency and speed, in part because I received input from the entire Safe Return Team each Thursday, and from Safe Return Team leaders every Monday.

Challenges/Opportunities:

- Carry forward lessons learned about making timely grounded decisions and involving more staff members in making and carrying out those decision. Apply these lessons moving forward with strategic planning goals, for example
• How to keep morale high/avoid burnout from those who served as decision-makers as well as implementers on an all-hours basis over the past 14 months.

9. Fundraising (Numeric rating 4)

Fundraising remotely certainly was a challenge this past year, as in-person approaches are best for encouraging leadership-level gifts. I am pleased to report, however, that Worcester State’s giving community responded to our students need for financial support during the pandemic. Scholarship dollars continue to be a significant factor in our retention efforts as students who receive even one scholarship graduate at a significantly higher rate than those who do not. The performance of our endowment fund - which topped $40 million this year – is an area of excellence, and seeded other funding. The Worcester State Foundation, to date this fiscal year, has provided $1,070,601 for University priorities.

Highlights include:

• $2,557,994 dollars raised (cash and pledges) from 2,789 donors (41.6% alumni donors- 34.4% of alumni donors are new or recovered alumni supporters).
• The number of President’s Circle donors ($1,000- $9,999.99 annual gifts) has increased 6.5% over April 2020 total.
• Members of our Founder’s Society ($25,000+ annual gifts) has seen a nearly 30% increase over April 2020.
• Due to the strength of our endowment fund, we received a Commonwealth endowment match of $277,278 as a matching gift from the state.
• An Experiential Learning Stipend Fund for students was created with a $50,000 investment from the Worcester State Foundation (more info in the COVID section, below).
• Chandler’s Challenge, the 2021 Days of Giving, successfully raised over $46,000 from nearly 1,000 donors.
• In lieu of in-person events for alumni, donors, friends and students, University Advancement held 42 events with 1,200 (not unique) virtual attendees.
• University Advancement produced far more student videos this year, delivering 2,671 of them to thank, and continue to seek funds from, our donors. We found those to be effective.

Major gift highlights (7/1/20-4/30/21)

• $175,906 gift from the estate of Dorothy F. McLoughlin ‘54 to the named Endowed Scholarship.
• $142,786 gift from the estate of William J. Mullin to the Eileen and William Mullin Scholarship.
• $113,538 from the estate of Marguerite St. Amand ’73 to the Ronald F. St. Amand Biology Scholarship.
• $100,000 anonymous alumna gift to create endowed funds for Athletics and Visual & Performing Arts departments.
• $87,500 from Imoigele P. Aisiku, M.D., ’92 in support of the STEM Center named for him and its initiatives.
• $70,000 gift from the estate of Edna P. Spencer to the Olivia Rochelle Spencer Memorial Scholarship.
• $50,000 gift from Dr. GB and Alexandria ‘85 Singh to support the expansion of the Singh Simulation Center.
• $50,000 gift from Fred Pula to the Marilyn Miller Pula Memorial Scholarship Fund.
• $50,000 gift from Gene and Julianne DeFeudis to the Gene J. DeFeudis Family Endowed Scholarship ($20,000) and the Student Emergency Fund ($30,000).
• $30,520 gift from Gregg ‘86 and Pamela Rosen ‘87 to create the Rosen Cancer Awareness Support Fund.
• $30,000 pledge from Michael McAuliffe to create the McAuliffe Family Educational Scholarship in memory of Elizabeth McAuliffe ’77.
• $30,000 pledge from Barry Stell to establish the Robert J. Stell Memorial Scholarship for transfer students from QCC to WSU.
• $25,000 gift from Deirdre Olson O’Connor ’71 to create the Deirdre Olson O’Connor Scholarship.
• $25,000 gift from the estate of Marilyn M. Pula to the Mary Cosgrove Dolphin Academic Achievement Award.
• $20,000 pledge from Dr. B. Dale Magee to create the Magee Family Scholarship for First Generation Students.
• $20,000 gift from the estate of Norine M. Florian ’57 to the Worcester State Fund.

**Major grants highlights (7/1/20-4/30/21)**

• To LEI, highlights totaling roughly $291,500:
  ○ $97,362 from Nellie Mae Education Foundation
  ○ $82,500 from the Worcester Together Fund
  ○ $80,000 from Lloyd G. Balfour Foundation
  ○ $21,622 from Archipelago Strategies Group
  ○ $10,000 from the Ruth H. and Warren A. Ellsworth Foundation
• $71,820 from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for Computer Collaborative.
• $60,000 from Digital Federal Credit Union to the Digital Federal Credit Union Initiatives Fund.
• $60,000 from Massachusetts Department of Education.
• $56,448 from Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, GEER Remote Dual Enrollment.
• $44,500 from Worcester’s Department of Public Health for REACH (Racial & Ethnic Approaches to Community Health) Grant.
• $10,000 from TJX Foundation for Scholarship Support.

**Direct Student Support Highlights** (and see others in the COVID section, below)

• The Worcester State Foundation will award over 425 scholarships in FY21.
• Like last year, scholarship, award and internship support is expected to exceed $800,000.
• Nearly $10,000 was donated to support our on-campus student food pantry, Thea’s Pantry.
• More than 14% of our scholarship and academic award donations this year have been newly formed scholarships/awards, totaling more than $161,000 in cash and pledges.

**Challenges/Opportunities include:**

• Learning from best practices on remote engagement.
• Revamping alumni/donor trips to strategically align with priorities.

**10.Equity work/Campus Climate (Numeric rating 4)**

Internal campus climate and the promotion of the University’s goal towards creating a welcoming environment continued as a priority, despite the largely remote environment. I fully embraced the Board of Higher Education’s adoption of the Equity Agenda as its first priority for public higher education, as it dovetails well with the Five Points of Action Toward a More Inclusive Campus Climate that I put forward in 2016. The four Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) groups that grew out of those points – the
Campus Climate Committee (CCC – year-end report attached), Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Advisory Committee, LGBTQ+ Advisory Committee, and the Bias Incidence Response Team (BIRT), continued their work this year, albeit with minimal reports to the BIRT team, likely because of the largely remote pandemic environment.

At the same time, the national climate – which included numerous instances of police violence against unarmed people of color, a divisive presidential election featuring scapegoating of certain groups, and an insurrection at the U.S. Capitol Building that highlighted the rise of white supremacist hate groups, all in the context of the COVID pandemic, no doubt contributed to the rise in mental health needs among the students most connected to our campus. We addressed such climate concerns with 1) presidential statements support for underrepresented groups; 2) providing flexible and reliable counseling services that met students’ needs in the remote environment; and 3) conducting an outside equity audit of the university police department. We also ramped up anti-bias trainings.

Highlights include:

- **DEI committees/groups**
  - LGBTQ+ Advisory Committee conducted the first Pride Index Assessment.
  - Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Advisory Committee reported that 20% percent of WSU’s workforce identifies as ALANA (African, LatinX, Asian, Native American).
  - CCC implemented WSU’s first annual quantitative climate survey and shared with academic department chairs its review of Student Success data.

- **Promoting cultural fluency/competency, cross-racial interactions, student engagement and well being**
  - The Board of Trustees, under the leadership of Trustee Mosley, amended its bylaws to incorporate Equity and Inclusion (DEI) into all committees and DEI reports are included on the regular Board calendar.
  - Continuing to implement Diversity Across the Curriculum (DAC). The new Interdisciplinary Studies Department (ISD) Chair to oversee this process will begin in July.
  - Racial Equity Conversations launched September 2020.
  - Faculty led multiple opportunities for students to virtually meet up and exchange thoughts around issues of race, politics, current events, police reform, and violence against underrepresented groups including Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

- **DEI-related trainings and support sessions**
  - Trustee Mosley and the President’s Office participated in Equity First: Achieving Racial Justice in MA Public Higher Education
  - Participated in Promoting Good’s racial equity workshop
  - Senior staff and COVID leadership attended Leader Care crisis support and coaching provided Hamish Blackman et al, of Breakthrough Collaboration
  - Partnered to have Clark University provide to our employees a Diversity Inclusion Certificate Program
  - In Fall of 2020, provided racial healing affinity groups sessions for approximately 50 students and 50 faculty/staff. Twelve students continued on in the spring.
  - “Cafecito” launched, providing drop-in self-care and networking for ALANA/BIPOC employees.
o Student intake “EVERFI” product was expanded to include a DEI module, which 808 students completed.

- Promoting DEI values internally and in wider communities (and also see list in “External Leadership” category, below)
  o Vaccine Equity- Collaborated with clinic partners and Worcester DPH and community groups to promote equitable access to the COVID-19 vaccine.
  o Elevated Stacey Luster, J.D., who now serves as WSU’s general counsel and assistant to the president for Employment and Equal Opportunity. She has helped raise the profile of WSU and promote our DEI-values to the wider community by leading or hosting a number of gatherings (virtually this past year) including Black Families Together and the Black Excellence Academy, an afterschool academic and cultural enrichment program for 50 students in grades 1-6.
  o And by providing diverse leadership for the State University system, via participation on the current MSCA bargaining team, the Race Equity and Justice Institute, the Statewide Chief Diversity Officers and the State University General Counsel Network.

- Even in the midst of the pandemic, and with strict limitations on new hires, we were able to improve on the diversity of our faculty, from 21.6% last year to 23.9% this year, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Faculty Demographics</th>
<th>As of Spring 2020</th>
<th>As of Spring 2021**</th>
<th>Current</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/ Alaska Native</td>
<td>1 0</td>
<td>1 1</td>
<td>1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>15  6</td>
<td>21  15</td>
<td>21  15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/ African American</td>
<td>3  4</td>
<td>7  3</td>
<td>7  3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/ Latino</td>
<td>7  9</td>
<td>16  8</td>
<td>11  9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Pac Island</td>
<td>1  1</td>
<td>1  1</td>
<td>1  1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Specified</td>
<td>2  1</td>
<td>3  2</td>
<td>3  2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>94  70</td>
<td>164 94</td>
<td>154 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>122 91</td>
<td>213 120</td>
<td>205 185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Minority Faculty</td>
<td><strong>21.57%</strong></td>
<td><strong>23.90%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Includes FT Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professors working as of Spring 2021, including in a visiting capacity, regardless of status in Fall 2021.

Challenges/Opportunities include:

- Increasing collaboration and education among the DEI committees.
- Establish a new tradition, under leadership of Trustee Johnson, for an annual Unity Walk, to launch September 9, 2021.
- Implementation of Diversity Across the Curriculum and ensuring diversity courses meet new student learning outcomes and pass governance.
- Exploring incentives for hiring diverse faculty and whether there is a need to expand funding for DEI initiatives.
- Increasing emphasis on data and transparency, especially for student outcomes by race, by major.
- Monitoring continued progress on the RENZ audit (police equity) and implementing reforms.
11. External Relationships/Leadership in the Community (Numeric rating 5)

During my tenth year on the job, I continued to develop external relationships in the virtual environment, and it remained a significant portion of my job. I find it valuable to listen to stakeholders and community representatives as well as to trumpeting Worcester State’s stories to the external world.

Service learning and community engagement – including internships and research experiences, as well as volunteerism -- remain mission-critical functions for Worcester State. Classified by the Carnegie Foundation as a community-engaged campus, 35-40 percent of students volunteer every year, and well more than a hundred students run more than 45 organizations. Leadership training is provided for them. Please find a report on our community engagement attached (Appendix X).

Highlights include:

- Years of relationship-building with state and federal legislators resulted in the following achievements for WSU this year:
  - $400,000 for adjustments to the formula awarding state university appropriations per campus, which is likely to be annualized.
  - Acceptance by Congressman Jim McGovern as one of his ten district-wide community projects, seeking $985,401 for a WSU community project around Early College
  - The nine state universities Council of President, as well as members of my executive cabinet and myself were instrumental in assuring that the Massachusetts State College Building Authority (MSCBA) deferred a bond payment due on our residence halls for the past year. This significant financial abeyance aided us in meeting our budget for this year.

- Partnerships with Higher Education Consortium of Massachusetts institutions resulted in ease of partnering to assist WSU during the pandemic. Especially notable is the support from UMass Medical School staff and leadership to underpin our expanded health services and the COVID-19 testing center. Its division of Commonwealth Medicine, led by Trustee Colombo, partnered with us and Saint Vincent Hospital to offer the vaccine clinic on campus. We were able to quickly strike agreements with Becker College to assume their women’s hockey team and a large portion of their nursing students.

- On behalf of Mayor Joseph Petty, chaired a teach pipeline working group decided to make recommendations as to how best to diversify the teaching ranking within the Worcester Public Schools. Was able to get all ten HECCMA schools involved in the project.

- I continue to serve on the boards of Saint Vincent Hospital, the Wilbraham & Monson Academy, the Greater Worcester Community Foundation, the Worcester Chamber of Commerce, and completed my service as chair of the Campus Compact of Southern New England. DHE Commissioner Santiago asked me to serve again as a state university representative to the BHE’s cash management review process working directly with the consultant EY Parthenon.

- With promotion of general counsel Stacey Luster to her current position, we expanded our engagement to include the Chamber of Commerce’s Diverse Professional Roundtable and the Board of Directors of Mechanics Hall.

Challenges/Opportunities include:

- Re-establish, post COVID, in-person connections with organizations and individuals.
- Raise visibility of WSU inside and outside of Central Massachusetts market.
• Develop and maintain Latino Education Institute presence in other markets in Massachusetts (Springfield, Lawrence and Boston).
• Balance community needs against limited resources of WSU.

12. COVID-19 Challenges Met (Numeric rating, 5, see also the attached SPRC Report)

The academic enterprise continued uninterrupted the entire year, in the midst of a pandemic, keeping students on track to graduation.

Highlights include:

• A full Spring semester was completed without any changes to course modalities, while Fall of 2020 was completed with one brief pivot to all-remote learning due to COVID infection numbers just after Thanksgiving.
  o The Spring 2021 Academic Calendar was altered in order to address pandemic-related concerns.
  o 300 faculty attended at least one training provided through Quality Matters related to online/remote learning.
  o Academic ceremonies, the Celebration of Scholarship and Creativity, the Academic Achievement Awards, and the 2021 Commencements were converted to virtual formats.
  o During the summer of 2020 and throughout the academic year, the Center for Teaching and Learning provided sessions on students, retention, advising, and instructional technology.

• Campus health and safety was maintained, in order to provide the above, and to provide a home to about 900 students, or 50.4%, of our residence hall capacity – the third highest rate of the nine Massachusetts State Universities. The residence halls remained opened for the entire academic year while other campuses closed early in the fall semester due to COVID.

• A WSU COVID-19 Testing Center was created from scratch and, beginning August 2020, provided campus-wide surveillance testing from Wasylean Hall, while Health Services provided case management.
  o Administered more COVID-19 tests than any other MA State University for AY 20-21.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2020</th>
<th>Winter Session</th>
<th>Spring Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23,148 total tests administered</td>
<td>0.58% Positivity Rate</td>
<td>635 total tests administered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23,013 total tests administered</td>
<td>0.63% Positivity Rate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Positive Cases</td>
<td>Fall 122 students 17 employees</td>
<td>Spring 126 students 15 employees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

  o Student Affairs staff volunteered 2,846 hours during the year in the testing center.
Surveillance testing along with campus contact tracing, isolation/quarantine housing, and health and safety protocols prevented any large-scale outbreaks on campus.

200 students were supported by multiple offices across campus while staying in residential quarantine/isolation housing.

Our long-term relationship with UMass Medical School Graduate School of Nursing to provide staffing for the Health Services Office was an essential component in contact tracing and support of the campus testing process. The medical staff was increased by 60 hours per week to manage contact tracing, positive cases, and work directly with local and state departments of public and the community tracing collaborative.

The CoVerified Campus app was added as part of the University’s overall approach to keeping the community healthy during the year, and it has been updated so that the campus community can upload their COVID-19 vaccination records.

- Infrastructure/IT needs escalated and were largely met, including:
  - Converted all campus common and instructional spaces to a 6' social distancing standard.
  - To meet state and federal, and for some, Worcester Board of Health guidelines:
    - Created and implemented daily cleaning and sanitizing protocols.
    - Created and implemented cleaning and sanitizing protocols for campus spaces post-positive test result for an occupant of that space.
    - Created and implemented changes to HVAC system operations.
  - Created and implemented building paths of travel and ingress/egress routes.
  - Procured appropriate PPE and cleaning/sanitizing equipment and materials.
  - Classrooms were outfitted with hover cameras at the end of the Summer 2020.
  - Zoom enhancements continued this year, along with policy recommendations from IT on an ongoing basis and responsivity to security threats.
  - Regular provision of IT security updates to faculty, students and staff in the remote environment.

- Student mental health needs required changes, including:
  - Assessed periodically via student surveys.
  - Fewer students sought counseling services; same number of total visits.
  - Counseling services adapted with telehealth options as well as in-person.
  - 753 students completed a mental well-being module that was added to EVERFI.

- No layoffs due to prudent fiscal management, health and safety protocols and sound Safe Return to Campus Plan.
  - The above allowed for us to capture residence hall revenue and maintain robust enrollment numbers, thus we were able to balance our budget without a reduction in force.

- Student financial support aided retention, including:
  - Timely processing of federal COVID stimulus acts direct support for students--
- WSU awarded $1,896,300 in direct CARES Act HEERF I payments and $215,117 in supplemental CARES Act HEERF I payments to 3,815 students.
- WSU awarded $1,766,900 in direct CRRSAA HEERF II payments to 5,392 students. WSU is currently awarding the remaining $344,517 in supplemental CRRSAA HEERF II payments to a yet-to-be-determined number of students.
- The total amount of CARES Act and CRRSAA funds that will be spent when WSU is done awarding CRRSAA HEERF II funds will be $4,222,834.
- The total number of students who will be awarded CARES Act and CRRSAA funds is not yet known, but it will exceed 9,207 duplicated students.
  - In collaboration with COVID-19 associated External Relations Committee, the Experiential Learning Stipend Fund (ELSF) was created with a $50,000 investment from the Worcester State Foundation. During the 2020-2021 academic year, 100 students participating in credit-bearing, unpaid experiential learning experiences and received $500 stipends from the ELSF.
  - Since the university’s abrupt move to all-remote learning and working as of March 20, 2020, $163,778 was raised for the Student Emergency Fund, including two generous challenge matches from Gene and Julianne DeFeudis. As of mid-May of this year, the fund had awarded $106,257 to 205 students.
- Enrollment decline was in line with other State Universities, so we seized opportunities to aid recruitment and transfer opportunities.
- Partnered to offer a vaccination clinic.
  - While the primary reason to host the clinic was community service, there was undoubtedly a substantial visibility bump that we predict will translate into applications.
  - The foot traffic total in the vaccine clinic far exceeded the number of shots administered, which was 85,000 by mid-May and foot traffic and word of mouth about the condition of our campus is a demonstrated way to drive recruitment for WSU.
- Data collection/analysis included:
  - Student Academic Experiences Survey (Fall and Spring)
  - COVID-19 Response Survey (entire campus)
  - COVID-19 Vaccine Survey (entire campus)
  - COVID-19 Response Assessment Report (attached)
Appendix 1 – ALANA Student Success

Degree-Seeking First-Time, First-Year Students

Longitudinal Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino (of any Race)</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>566</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more Races</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race or Ethnicity Unknown</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Resident Alien</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>909</td>
<td>891</td>
<td>886</td>
<td>807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALANA Total</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALANA Percentage</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note 1: ALANA excludes White, Non-Resident Alien and Unknown
Note 2: ALANA percentage is calculated by dividing ALANA over the sum of ALANA and White

Fall 2020 Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

Note: ALANA percentage is calculated by dividing ALANA over the sum of ALANA and White

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## Retention and Graduation Rates

### African-American First-Time, Full-Time, First-Year, Degree-Seeking Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entering Class</th>
<th>Initial</th>
<th>6th Year Adjusted</th>
<th>8th Year Adjusted</th>
<th>After 1st Year</th>
<th>After 2nd Year</th>
<th>After 3rd Year</th>
<th>Within 4 Years</th>
<th>Within 6 Years</th>
<th>Within 8 Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>24.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>83.3</td>
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<td>16.7</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>62.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>50.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>60.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>42</td>
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<td></td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>49</td>
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<td></td>
<td>81.6</td>
<td>67.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>49</td>
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<td>73.5</td>
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<td>2018</td>
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<td>75.4</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>2019</td>
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<td>82.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Adjusted cohort excludes deceased students and students who left the institution due to military reasons up to the completion year. 6th year adjustment is used for the 6th year completion rate. 8th year adjustment is used for 8th year completion rate.

### Latinx First-Time, Full-Time, First-Year, Degree-Seeking Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entering Class</th>
<th>Initial</th>
<th>6th Year Adjusted</th>
<th>8th Year Adjusted</th>
<th>After 1st Year</th>
<th>After 2nd Year</th>
<th>After 3rd Year</th>
<th>Within 4 Years</th>
<th>Within 6 Years</th>
<th>Within 8 Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>84.8</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>51.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>69.2</td>
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<td>60.0</td>
<td>29.2</td>
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<td>2012</td>
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<td>76</td>
<td>78.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>68.8</td>
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<td>32.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>76</td>
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Note: Adjusted cohort excludes deceased students and students who left the institution due to military reasons up to the completion year. 6th year adjustment is used for the 6th year completion rate. 8th year adjustment is used for 8th year completion rate.
Impact of COVID-19: Civic Engagement, Student Placements and Clinical Practicums

Concerns related to student safety, limited resources, and the strain on educational organizations posed limitations and unique challenges for our university in all regards. The above numbers are down from the previous year, when we reported 1869 students engaged at 268 sites completing 161,255 hours of engaged learning. That said, challenges prevented by Covid were addressed in myriad ways, by increasing technologically assisted engagement, such as zoom debates, virtual simulation, clinical labs, and independent online learning modules.

All of the areas tracked here below may be grouped – in general – around the educational concept (pedagogy) of experiential learning. Internships, volunteerism, clinicals, practicums, and service learning remain meaningful to professors, students and community partners.

- Civic Learning: In keeping with the DHE’s assessment of Civic Learning and Engagement, WSU is in its third year tracking courses as CL (civic learning). As in years past, 496 course sections were coded as CL, with (mostly digital) 8518 seats filled for a total of 25,712 credit hours that foster a civic ethos across the campus and educational culture.

Roughly 30% of our classes each year are coded as some form of Civic Learning.

- Internships: According to our Office of Institutional Research, 243 students were enrolled in 806 credit hours of internships for 2019-2020.

  Internship projects are registered in 11 of our 21 departments.

Total internship hours: 30,618

- Experiential Learning / Service Learning. As we continue to develop methods for coding and institutionalizing Service Learning and Civic Engagement, OT, Communications, Urban Studies, Sociology, Biology, and Business Departments continue to run courses where service is a central student outcome. Notable: This academic year, the Worcester State Foundation began to award $500
stipends for Experiential Learning. In each term, more than 100 students applied for 50, $500 stipends. These awards were evenly divided between the two schools within Worcester State.

Combined with Jumpstart and the class offering of the Urban Action Institute, Experiential Learning / Service Learning accounted for 28 SL projects involving 150 students contributed 18,900 service hours to various community partners.

Volunteerism: ENACTUS and Jumpstart continued with their volunteer efforts. The university also ran a food distribution program with The United Way and the Woo Sox and Ocean State Job Lot in January, and our faculty, staff and students populated our regional vaccination clinic through the spring. Jumpstart featured 31 student volunteers providing 300 hours over the course of the year. Notable also Vaccine Clinic (180 hrs x’s 48 students= 8,640 hours)

In all, BCCE reports 12 Projects involving 101 students and 20,369 hours of volunteer, civic engagement.

- Nursing Clinical Placements: 206 students (undergrads), 21 clinical sites, 27,284 hours (including expected summer hours).

- CSD, Education Practicums:
  
  Education, Totals: 171 students, 21,717 hours of community engaged learning.

  CSD: 46 students in Internships providing 8249 hours of service.

Clinical and practicum hours totaled roughly 57,000.

The Binienda Center keeps a complete list of our community partners and placement sites. If you have an interest, please contact Dr. Wagner at: mwagner2@worcester.edu or visit: https://www.worcester.edu/Binienda-Center-for-Civic-Engagement
COVID-19 Response
Assessment Report

Strategic Plan Review Committee
Strategic Plan Review Committee

Jeremy Andreatta
Associate Professor of Chemistry

Jodi Briggs-Pickett
Executive Director of University Advancement

Marilyn Cleary
Assistant Dean for Graduate and Continuing Education

Andrew Jackson
Undergraduate Student
Criminal Justice and Political Science

Thomas Kelley
Director of Retention

Stacey Luster
General Counselor and Assistant to the President for Employment and Equal Opportunity

Syamak Moattari
Associate Professor of Health Sciences

Stephen Morreale
Professor and Chair of Criminal Justice

Maia Shalev
Graduate Student
Biotechnology

Sarah Strout
Ex Officio Chair
Assistant Vice President for Assessment and Planning
Introduction

Worcester State University’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020, when President Maloney gathered a group of individuals from areas of the campus related to the operation of the University during the pandemic. It was unclear whether the campus would close, and if so, for how long.

Once it became clear that the situation would be long term, and potentially extend into the Fall Semester, the President convened nine working groups to develop the Safe Return Plan.

These groups included 145 faculty and staff, and focused on areas such as academics contingency plans, communication, student recruitment and retention, external relations, federal stimulus coordination, use of facilities, mental health and well-being, and wrap-around student support.

In the Fall 2020 semester these groups were condensed into six: Academic Planning, Budget and Human Resources, Communications, Health, Safety and Student Life, Resources and Fundraising, and Student Academic Support and Retention and a seventh group, Assessment, was added.

In the summer of 2020, the Strategic Plan Review Committee, led by the Assistant Vice President for Assessment and Planning, was charged with assessing the University’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and issuing recommendations for moving forward.

The committee, composed of faculty, staff, and students reviewed materials from each of the Safe Return working groups and met with leadership throughout the spring of 2021.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a disruptive force that amplified historical inequalities, revealed inefficient and outdated systems and processes, and solidified the essential role of technology at Worcester State. However, it also showed the resiliency, determination, and innovation the Worcester State community is capable of when faced with a new challenge.
Many of the initiatives implemented during the pandemic were successful. While there are numerous accomplishments from each of the Safe Return working groups, we have highlighted university-wide accomplishments that had a notable impact.

**Accomplishments**

**Collaboration and Inclusion**

- Over [145 faculty and staff](#) volunteered for the Safe Return working groups.
- Faculty and staff took on extra responsibilities.
- Departments developed collaborations to best serve our students.
- Use of Zoom increased participation in events and meetings (i.e., out-of-state alumni could take part in Alumni Board meetings).
- Students, faculty, and staff were surveyed multiple times for feedback.

**Community Support**

- Over **$140,000 was raised** for the Student Emergency Fund to support students with financial hardships.
- Collaborated with community partners such as working with Worcester Together to provide temporary housing for medical frontline workers to protect their families from potential exposure to the virus.
- More than **$15,000 was raised** for the Experiential Learning Fund to support students during unpaid internships and other experiential learning opportunities.
- Maintained social services for the community such as food pantries during pandemic.
Communication

- Increased the amount of information available on the website and sent via email.
- Transparent infection and quarantine data made available via the testing dashboard.
- Offered **weekly campus conversations**, presentations on survey results, financial information, and student mental health.

### Academic Quality

- Increased the amount of information available on the website and sent via email.
- Transparent infection and quarantine data made available via the testing dashboard.
- Offered **weekly campus conversations**, presentations on survey results, financial information, and student mental health.

Rapid and Adaptive Response

- Transition to remote learning took place in a matter of weeks.
- Plans were made to shift to completely remote learning if cases increased.
- Increased testing to include commuter students as a response to feedback from surveys.
- Coordinated a Vaccine Hesitancy Panel discussion in response to results from the COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy survey.

Prudent Fiscal Management

- Our policy to hold money in reserves helped to offset the fiscal impacts of the pandemic including minimizing lay-offs and avoiding furloughs.
- Change from making all funds available at the beginning of the year to a semester basis allowed for better budgetary planning given the unknown financial situation.

### Academic Quality

- Preserved the academic quality and rigor of courses and programs while being flexible and sensitive to students’ needs.
- The majority of student comments on surveys reiterated the support, efforts, and assistance faculty provided during this unprecedented situation.
- The library maintained academic support for students and provided spaces for students to study, take exams, and attend remote classes.
- Academic enrichment events such as lectures, discussions, and presentations were offered throughout the pandemic.
COVID-19 Monitoring and Prevention

- Created and ran a large-scale testing center by adapting pre-existing operations and re-assigning Student Affairs personnel. Over **20,000 tests** have been administered.
- Personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies, barriers, and signage minimized the risk of contagion on campus.
- Partnered with St. Vincent’s Hospital to provide a vaccine clinic for the community. More than **50,000 vaccines** have been administered.

Campus Operations and Life

- The facilities staff went above and beyond to ensure that campus operations could be at least partially open in the 2020-2021 academic year.
- All in-person events were vetted by the Campus Usage Committee and were required to follow protocols in line with federal and state requirements.
- New capacities for **every single space** on campus was determined and new layouts to maintain social distancing were implemented in every space that would be utilized.
- Residence halls were open in limited capacity for students who wanted to live on campus, and areas were set aside for students requiring isolation.
- Student activities continued responsibly during the pandemic. For example, orientation was offered for incoming students both in-person and virtually, the Wellness Center was available for use and virtual recreation was offered, and events were held virtually.
Focused on Holistic Student Support

- Faculty and staff volunteers reached out to every single Worcester State undergraduate student.
- Developed the Lancer Learner course to help new students with the transition to college. **200 students** successfully completed the course.
- Continued mental health support for students by Counseling Center, including telehealth options.
- Increased the use of technologies to assist students with disabilities that benefit all students (universal design).
- Extended pass/fail options for students after transitioning to remote learning.
- Over **200 laptops and Wi-Fi hot spots** were purchased to loan to students.

Leveraged Technology to Improve Processes

- Created virtual open houses, campus tours, and accepted student events that allowed admissions to continue to recruit prospective students. **450 students** attended at least one event.
- Video conferencing used for guest lectures and collaborations between our classes and international students.
- Virtual events allowed for more inclusive participation, for example, the virtual Celebration of Scholarship and Creativity allowed more people to participate over a longer period. **685 people** have viewed the event.
- Provided digital forms and electronic payments to replace paper.
- Used video conferencing to allow for synchronous online classes.
Many processes became more efficient and accessible, for example: virtual advising, digital forms, and collaboration with tools like google docs and sheets.

Faculty and staff were able to maintain productivity while working hybrid and remotely.

Support for Faculty and Staff

- Extended spring break to give faculty more time to transition courses to remote modalities.
- Extensive professional development provided by the Center for Teaching and Learning to assist with the transition. Over **300 faculty** participated in at least one session.
- Used services from Quality Matters, a leader in online / hybrid pedagogy to provide professional development for faculty.
- Provided supplies for remote work in a simple and timely manner.
- Offered staff resources for mental health, stress, and working remotely through webinars, articles, and the Employee Assistance Program.

Maintained Productivity and Efficiency

- Many processes became more efficient and accessible, for example: virtual advising, digital forms, and collaboration with tools like google docs and sheets.
- Faculty and staff were able to maintain productivity while working hybrid and remotely.
The COVID-19 pandemic came with many challenges, both expected and unexpected, that affected all aspects of campus life. The most significant challenges are listed below.

**Access to and Comfort with Technology**
- Many students did not have the technology and internet access needed for remote learning. **20% of students** reported limited access to technology or internet.
- Faculty and staff had varying levels of comfort and familiarity with technology.

**Increased Stress, Anxiety, and Social Isolation**
- Over **80% of students, faculty, and staff** reported being overwhelmed by the amount of work/schoolwork they had.
- After a prolonged period of this 'new normal' many people experienced 'COVID fatigue,' causing an increase in depression, anxiety, exhaustion, cognitive declines, a lower threshold for annoyance, and physical symptoms.

**Building Culture with New Employees**
- New faculty and staff likely had limited interaction with the campus and campus community in-person which makes it harder to build rapport and culture.
Maintaining Enrollment and Retention

• The pandemic affected students financially, academically, and socially, causing many students, especially those from historically underserved and underrepresented groups to have to leave or delay entry into higher education. There was a 7% decrease in enrollment overall.

• Many first-year students choose Worcester State for the experience of living on campus, and with the pandemic, the concern about the safety of living on campus, and whether it would even be allowed, caused many students to choose not to live on campus this year.

• The traditional admission cycle and processes was interrupted by the pandemic.

A Rapid and Constantly Changing Situation

• The situation declined rapidly, causing the University to only have weeks to plan and implement the transition to remote learning and operations.

• The guidelines from the CDC, federal, and state governments were constantly changing, resulting in a need for constant adaptation to plans.

Adapting Facilities for Safe Return

• Procuring equipment and supplies became difficult as demand was high but supply was limited.

• New cleaning protocols and additional training and duties required Facilities staff to take on a significant amount of additional work.

• New capacity levels for every office and classroom had to be determined, the physical layout adapted, and additional barriers (such as plexiglass) installed to meet social distance requirements.
Opportunities for Improvement

Over the course of the pandemic, some areas for improvement were revealed and are addressed in our recommendations. These include considerations for University communication, course consistency, and campus wi-fi.

**Communication**

- The traditional hierarchical model of information flow was not effective or efficient. In many cases, complete information did not reach the person responsible for implementing the changes.
- Survey results revealed that constituents were more concerned with information being available in a timely manner to aid decision-making than accuracy or certainty.
- Survey results also showed constituents wanted to be kept apprised of the decision-making process.
- Important messages were often embedded in walls of text, both on the website and in emails, causing people to miss the important part of the message.

**Lack of Course Consistency**

- Over 95% of students reported difficulties in navigating course content or transitioning between classes due to inconsistent use of learning management systems.
- The level of engagement across courses was also inconsistent, with some students reporting no engagement from the professor at all, to other students reporting faculty going out of their way to communicate with students in multiple ways.
- The increase of blended courses revealed an ambiguous definition of what a blended course entails, so students were unable to make an informed decision about whether a blended course was appropriate for them.

**Wi-Fi Service on Campus**

- The reliance on Zoom for classes and meetings revealed that the Wi-Fi service on campus is unacceptable.
- Many faculty and staff have found that they have better Wi-Fi at home, even in remote locations, than on campus.
There were many lessons learned from the COVID pandemic for higher education in general and Worcester State in particular. We highlight the most important lessons and also address them in our recommendations.

Communication Should be Transparent and Accessible.
During the pandemic the importance of transparent communication was made clear. The Worcester State community was hungry for information and praised the increase of communication and the availability of leadership. A transparent and accessible communication strategy addresses the inefficiencies in the current communication flow and increases ownership and responsibility among all constituents.

Investment in Technology is Essential.
The pandemic revealed that our ability to support faculty, staff, and students’ technology needs was inadequate and many technologies were not up to date, not available widely, or not enough faculty and staff had been trained in how to use them. Technology is an integral part of teaching and learning, even for in-person classes. Students will be expected to be able to use technologies such as video conferencing and collaboration tools in the workforce moving forward, and we need to adjust our pedagogy and content to reflect that.

Students Need Holistic Support.
The pandemic amplified existing disparities for our students and affirmed our commitment to providing holistic support, including academic, financial, emotional and social support to our students.
**The Evolution of Practices is Necessary.**
Many of the policies, processes, and practices used by Worcester State for decades were revealed to be outdated and inefficient. The pandemic revealed that much of the University’s work can be done remotely without affecting productivity or efficiency. Especially in offices with limited student contact, productivity was maintained or increased when staff were able to work uninterrupted.

**Worcester State is Resilient, Innovative, and Compassionate.**
The Worcester State community went out of its way to support each other. Over 100 faculty and staff volunteered to reach out to every single undergraduate student, more than $100,000 was raised for the Student Emergency Fund, and over 145 faculty and staff volunteered to participate in the COVID-19 working groups.
Recommendations

Based on conversations with the leaders of the Safe Return Teams as well as discussions among the Strategic Planning Review Committee, we recommend the following post-pandemic actions to enhance the delivery of services, both academic and administrative to constituents at WSU. Each of these recommendations are tied to the WSU Strategic Plan.

ACADEMICS

Clarify the definitions for course modalities.

Strategy 1.1: Promote University-wide innovation in curricular program offerings and expand options and accessible modalities for courses offered and course completion.

Strategy 2.3: Embrace student-centeredness as a guiding principle for faculty and staff and adopt holistic student support as a University-wide imperative.

Strategy 2.4: Ensure all students, including non-traditional students and distance learners, have full and equitable access to the academic resources, support services, and technology they need.

Continue to offer flexible course modalities.

Strategy 1.1: Promote University-wide innovation in curricular program offerings and expand options and accessible modalities for courses offerings and course completion.

Strategy 2.3: Embrace student-centeredness as a guiding principle for faculty and staff, and adopt holistic student support as a University-wide imperative.

Strategy 2.4: Ensure all students, including non-traditional students and distance learners, have full and equitable access to the academic resources, support services, and technology they need.

Strategy 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups.
Promote consistent navigation for Blackboard courses.

**Strategy 2.3:** Embrace student-centeredness as a guiding principle for faculty and staff, and adopt holistic student support as a University-wide imperative.

**Strategy 2.4:** Ensure all students, including non-traditional students and distance learners, have full and equitable access to the academic resources, support services, and technology they need.

Create additional Instructional Designer positions for both technical and pedagogical assistance.

**Strategy 1.1:** Promote University-wide innovation in curricular program offerings and expand options and accessible modalities for courses offerings and course completion.

**Strategy 1.2:** Support and celebrate excellent teaching, and expand opportunities for broadening pedagogical expertise through both internal and external professional development.

**Strategy 5.3:** Continue to equip and encourage all faculty and staff to address the diverse and evolving needs of a changing student body.

Continue to provide faculty professional development for remote learning.

**Strategy 1.1:** Promote University-wide innovation in curricular program offerings and expand options and accessible modalities for courses offerings and course completion.

**Strategy 1.2:** Support and celebrate excellent teaching, and expand opportunities for broadening pedagogical expertise through both internal and external professional development.

**Strategy 5.3:** Continue to equip and encourage all faculty and staff to address the diverse and evolving needs of a changing student body.
Embrace new innovations and be cautious of falling back on ‘normal operations’ that might not be as effective.

Strategy 5.4: Promote greater unity, communication, and sense of institutional pride across campus.

Strategy 6.4: Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity.

Strategy 5.2: Recruit, retain and reward high quality and diverse faculty and staff committed to educating and supporting a diverse student body.

Leverage technology to facilitate processes including electronic checks, electronic forms, and virtual meetings.

Strategy 6.4: Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity.

Strategy 5.2: Recruit, retain and reward high quality and diverse faculty and staff committed to educating and supporting a diverse student body.

Create a remote work plan to improve quality of life and alleviate parking and space concerns.

Strategy 5.2: Recruit, retain and reward high quality and diverse faculty and staff committed to educating and supporting a diverse student body.

Strategy 5.4: Promote greater unity, communication, and sense of institutional pride across campus.

Strategy 6.4: Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity.

Strategy 6.6: As a campus community, commit to developing and implementing programs and policies that address the growing challenges of climate change as they affect the campus, the region, and the world.
Explore staffing and skills gaps and misalignments in positions revealed during the pandemic.

Strategy 5.2: Recruit, retain and reward high quality and diverse faculty and staff committed to educating and supporting a diverse student body.

Strategy 5.5: Foster a culture of assessment and data-based decision making.

Strategy 6.4: Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity.

Strategy 6.5: Develop and implement redundant systems and staffing capacities to protect essential business operations from disruption due to unanticipated events.

Create opportunities to build and maintain culture and morale with new and existing employees.

Strategy 5.2: Recruit, retain and reward high quality and diverse faculty and staff committed to educating and supporting a diverse student body.

Strategy 5.4: Promote greater unity, communication, and sense of institutional pride across campus.

Provide funding for virtual professional development in lieu of in-person events.

Strategy 5.2: Recruit, retain and reward high quality and diverse faculty and staff committed to educating and supporting a diverse student body.

Strategy 6.4: Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity.

Recognize and reward the additional work faculty and staff have done during the pandemic.

Strategy 5.2: Recruit, retain and reward high quality and diverse faculty and staff committed to educating and supporting a diverse student body.

Strategy 5.4: Promote greater unity, communication, and sense of institutional pride across campus.

Be sensitive to the adjustment period for faculty, staff, and students resuming on-campus operations.

Strategy 5.2: Recruit, retain and reward high quality and diverse faculty and staff committed to educating and supporting a diverse student body.

Strategy 5.4: Promote greater unity, communication, and sense of institutional pride across campus.
COMMUNICATION AND DECISION-MAKING

Improve the accessibility and clarity of the Worcester State website.

**Strategy 5.4:** Promote greater unity, communication, and sense of institutional pride across campus.

**Strategy 6.4:** Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity.

Adapt communication flow considering challenges revealed during the pandemic.

**Strategy 5.4:** Promote greater unity, communication, and sense of institutional pride across campus.

**Strategy 6.4:** Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity.

Develop a crisis communication plan.

**Strategy 5.4:** Promote greater unity, communication, and sense of institutional pride across campus.

**Strategy 6.4:** Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity.

Maintain transparent communication of decisions, decision-making process, survey results, and data.

**Strategy 5.4:** Promote greater unity, communication, and sense of institutional pride across campus.

**Strategy 5.5:** Foster a culture of assessment and data-based decision making.

**Strategy 6.4:** Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity.

Continue to offer consistent access to leadership (not necessarily the President) for information and questions.

**Strategy 5.4:** Promote greater unity, communication, and sense of institutional pride across campus.

**Strategy 6.4:** Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity.

Continue to collect information on student, faculty, and staff success and satisfaction to aid in decision-making.

**Strategy 5.4:** Promote greater unity, communication, and sense of institutional pride across campus.

**Strategy 5.5:** Foster a culture of assessment and data-based decision making.
FINANCES AND FINANCIAL AID

Continue to manage budget wisely, keeping funds in reserves for emergencies.

Focus on enrollment and housing to make up shortfalls, specifically graduate, adult learner, and ALANA prospective students.

**Strategy 5.6:** Institutionalize policies, practices, and procedures that prepare members of the WSU community to respond nimbly, collaboratively, and effectively to unanticipated crises.

**Strategy 6.1:** Develop new and sustain existing sources of revenue.

**Strategy 3.6:** Invest resources necessary to grow enrollment in graduate and online programs.

**Strategy 5.6:** Institutionalize policies, practices, and procedures that prepare members of the WSU community to respond nimbly, collaboratively, and effectively to unanticipated crises.

**Strategy 6.1:** Develop new and sustain existing sources of revenue.

Use the momentum from the pandemic to raise funds for student assistance.

**Strategy 2.4:** Ensure all students, including non-traditional students and distance learners, have full and equitable access to the academic resources, support services, and technology they need.

**Strategy 6.2:** Expand philanthropic support and grow the endowment.
STUDENT SUPPORT AND SUCCESS

Continue to offer the Lancer Learning course.

Strategy 2.1: Increase overall retention and graduation rates and close achievement gaps.

Strategy 2.3: Embrace student-centeredness as a guiding principle for faculty and staff, and adopt holistic student support as a University-wide imperative.

Strategy 2.4: Ensure all students, including non-traditional students and distance learners, have full and equitable access to the academic resources, support services, and technology they need.

Strategy 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups.

Strategy 5.4: Promote greater unity, communication, and sense of institutional pride across campus.

Continue retention outreach for targeted at-risk populations.

Strategy 2.1: Increase overall retention and graduation rates and close achievement gaps.

Strategy 2.3: Embrace student-centeredness as a guiding principle for faculty and staff, and adopt holistic student support as a University-wide imperative.

Strategy 2.4: Ensure all students, including non-traditional students and distance learners, have full and equitable access to the academic resources, support services, and technology they need.

Strategy 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups.

Strategy 5.4: Promote greater unity, communication, and sense of institutional pride across campus.
Continue to offer virtual advising for students.

**Strategy 2.1:** Increase overall retention and graduation rates and close achievement gaps.

**Strategy 2.3:** Embrace student-centeredness as a guiding principle for faculty and staff, and adopt holistic student support as a University-wide imperative.

**Strategy 2.4:** Ensure all students, including non-traditional students and distance learners, have full and equitable access to the academic resources, support services, and technology they need.

**Strategy 2.5:** Adopt a mentoring model of advising and ensure faculty and staff are appropriately trained to deliver effective support to a more diverse student body.

**Strategy 5.1:** Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups.

Continue to provide telehealth options for counseling.

**Strategy 2.3:** Embrace student-centeredness as a guiding principle for faculty and staff, and adopt holistic student support as a University-wide imperative.

**Strategy 2.4:** Ensure all students, including non-traditional students and distance learners, have full and equitable access to the academic resources, support services, and technology they need.

**Strategy 5.1:** Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups.

Continue access for student services outside of ‘traditional’ work schedule and virtually.

**Strategy 2.3:** Embrace student-centeredness as a guiding principle for faculty and staff, and adopt holistic student support as a University-wide imperative.

**Strategy 2.4:** Ensure all students, including non-traditional students and distance learners, have full and equitable access to the academic resources, support services, and technology they need.

**Strategy 5.1:** Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups.
Maintain universal design principles that benefit students with disabilities as well as other students.

**Strategy 2.3:** Embrace student-centeredness as a guiding principle for faculty and staff, and adopt holistic student support as a University-wide imperative.

**Strategy 2.4:** Ensure all students, including non-traditional students and distance learners, have full and equitable access to the academic resources, support services, and technology they need.

Identify and remedy learning gaps immediately for new students.

**Strategy 2.1:** Increase overall retention and graduation rates and close achievement gaps.

**Strategy 2.3:** Embrace student-centeredness as a guiding principle for faculty and staff, and adopt holistic student support as a University-wide imperative.

**Strategy 2.4:** Ensure all students, including non-traditional students and distance learners, have full and equitable access to the academic resources, support services, and technology they need.

**Strategy 5.1:** Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups.

**Strategy 5.3:** Continue to equip and encourage all faculty and staff to address the diverse and evolving needs of a changing student body.

Provide resiliency training for students and professional development for faculty and staff on how to support students.

**Strategy 2.1:** Increase overall retention and graduation rates and close achievement gaps.

**Strategy 2.3:** Embrace student-centeredness as a guiding principle for faculty and staff, and adopt holistic student support as a University-wide imperative.

**Strategy 2.4:** Ensure all students, including non-traditional students and distance learners, have full and equitable access to the academic resources, support services, and technology they need.

**Strategy 5.1:** Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups.

**Strategy 5.3:** Continue to equip and encourage all faculty and staff to address the diverse and evolving needs of a changing student body.
Prioritize investment in technology and staff to support technology.

**Strategy 2.4:** Ensure all students, including non-traditional students and distance learners, have full and equitable access to the academic resources, support services, and technology they need.

**Strategy 5.6:** Institutionalize policies, practices, and procedures that prepare members of the WSU community to respond nimbly, collaboratively, and effectively to unanticipated crises.

**Strategy 6.3:** Ensure technology, facilities, and systems are adequate to support operational needs and strategic goals.

**Strategy 6.5:** Develop and implement redundant systems and staffing capacities to protect essential business operations from disruption due to unanticipated events.

Improve Wi-Fi on campus.

**Strategy 2.4:** Ensure all students, including non-traditional students and distance learners, have full and equitable access to the academic resources, support services, and technology they need.

Enforce laptop policy and expand laptop and internet access loans for students.

**Strategy 2.4:** Ensure all students, including non-traditional students and distance learners, have full and equitable access to the academic resources, support services, and technology they need.

**Strategy 5.6:** Institutionalize policies, practices, and procedures that prepare members of the WSU community to respond nimbly, collaboratively, and effectively to unanticipated crises.

**Strategy 6.3:** Ensure technology, facilities, and systems are adequate to support operational needs and strategic goals.

**Strategy 6.5:** Develop and implement redundant systems and staffing capacities to protect essential business operations from disruption due to unanticipated events.

Improve Wi-Fi on campus.
Conclusion

This report represents a series of documentary reviews, discussions, and interviews with Worcester State stakeholders including the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Chief Financial Officer and Vice President of Administration and Finance, the Vice President of University Advancement, the Vice President of Enrollment Management, the Dean of Students and Chief Student Affairs Officer, the President’s Chief of Staff, the Director of Facilities, the Director of Human Resources, and the Associate Dean for Health and Wellness.

There are certainly things that were well executed, giving the unknowns and shifting circumstances. There were also areas for improvement and opportunities to capitalize on the response to the crisis. Many of the adopted practices can and should be institutionalized moving forward.
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Message from the President

As we close out this challenging semester, we find ourselves initiating a new strategic plan—encompassing the next five years—in the midst of a global pandemic. It is heartening to look past the disruption of this unsettling time and know that Worcester State is well prepared to thrive in the post-pandemic future.

What gives me this confidence? The plan itself and how it was developed. It builds upon the previous five-year plan, was inclusively and thoughtfully conceived, and establishes quantitative measures for success. In reviewing the 2015-2020 plan, our core values were re-affirmed. Adhering to that plan enabled significant progress in retention and graduation rates, stronger academic programming and faculty investment, and engagement of students both inside and outside the classroom – all of which assured our fiscal health.

While building upon that foundation, this plan incorporates lessons learned during the rapid pivot to all-remote learning last spring and infuses—through every goal and strategy—our commitment to equity, so that all areas of our community can embrace it as their own responsibility.

More than 1,000 different voices were heard from in the plan’s development, through surveys, forums, and meetings, and 125 faculty, staff, and students participated regularly in working groups. I am extremely grateful to the Strategic Planning Steering Committee for its persistence and for finalizing this plan on time, even while “going remote” last spring. Steering Committee co-chairs, Dr. Julie Frechette of the Communication Department and Dr. Edgar Moros of the Intensive English Language Institute, provided leadership, with guidance from Dr. Sarah Strout, assistant vice president for assessment and planning, and consultant Linda Campanella. Their considerable effort and expertise were essential ingredients in constructing a blueprint that was adopted by our campus and supported by both the Worcester State University Board of Trustees and the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education.

Our goals are appropriately ambitious, and I believe we will meet them. We will periodically assess our progress via a review committee to ensure that we do. This roadmap takes us past our 150th anniversary, and we will honor our history by continuing to provide a relevant, empowering higher education opportunity for the students who need it most, regardless of the challenges the future may hold.

Barry M. Maloney
President
Worcester State University champions academic excellence in a diverse, student-centered environment that fosters scholarship, creativity, and global awareness. A Worcester State education equips students with knowledge and skills necessary for lives of professional accomplishment, engaged citizenship, and intellectual growth.
As a public institution, Worcester State University embraces the belief that widespread access to high-quality educational opportunities is the cornerstone of a democratic society. Members of the Worcester State community share the following core values:

- **Academic Excellence**
  We are committed to providing opportunities to excel in a close-knit learning environment characterized by distinguished faculty, excellent teaching, and creative linkages between classroom learning and real-world experiences.

- **Engaged Citizenship**
  We are committed to promoting community service, social justice, the democratic process, environmental sustainability, and global awareness to prepare students to be active and informed citizens.

- **Open Exchange of Ideas**
  We are committed to inviting and considering the most expansive range of perspectives in teaching and learning, in scholarly and creative work, and in the governance of a complex, diverse institution.

- **Diversity and Inclusiveness**
  We are committed to being an inclusive community in which our diversity enhances learning for all and in which people from all cultures and backgrounds have the opportunity to participate fully and succeed.

- **Civility and Integrity**
  We are committed to respecting the dignity of all members of our community and to demonstrating this commitment in our interactions, decisions, and structures.
The Strategic Planning Steering Committee (SPSC), chaired by Dr. Julie Frechette and Dr. Edgar Moros, was comprised of faculty and staff representative of all areas of campus.

SPSC met with Commissioner of Higher Education Dr. Carlos Santiago and Associate Commissioner for Strategic Planning and Public Program Approvals Dr. Winnie Hagan in November 2019.

Throughout the planning process, students, faculty, and staff were engaged through surveys, open forums, and meetings. In addition, the campus was regularly updated on progress.

SPRC developed a vision and framework for the plan, choosing to have equity infused throughout all aspects of the plan, rather than as a stand-alone goal.

Strategic Planning Working Groups were formed to develop strategies for each of the goals and recommend initiatives.
A draft of the strategic plan was submitted to the Board of Higher Education in June 2020.

Metrics for the plan were developed, and later, benchmarks and targets were added.

The plan was examined to ensure that equity was infused in all goals. Highlighted strategies and initiatives relating to equity were compiled.

During the final stages of planning, the COVID-19 pandemic started. The plan was edited to address concerns relating to COVID-19. Highlighted strategies and initiatives were compiled.

The final draft of the strategic plan was submitted to the Board of Higher Education in September 2020. The plan was approved in October 2020.
Strategic Planning Steering Committee

Linda Campanella
Planning Consultant
(SOS Consulting Group LLC)

Dr. Sarah Strout
(ex-officio)
Assistant Vice President for Assessment and Planning

CO-CHAIRS
Dr. Julie Frechette
Professor
Communication

Dr. Edgar Moros
Director, Intensive English Language Institute

COMMITTEE MEMBERS
Dr. Susan Mitroka Batsford
Associate Professor
Chemistry Department

Dr. Thomas Conroy
Associate Professor
Urban Studies Department

Mary Dillon
Clerk IV
Occupational Therapy

Thomas Kelley
Director, Retention

Dr. Linda Larrivee
Dean, School of Education, Health, and Natural Sciences

Stacey Luster
General Counselor/Assistant to the President for EEO

John Meany
Associate Director, Athletics

Michael Mills
Alumni Association representative

Dr. Stephen Morreale
Professor
Criminal Justice Department

Katey Palumbo
Director
International Programs

Dr. Russ Pottle
Dean, School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Dr. Emily Soltano
Professor
Psychology Department

Dr. Tanya Trudell
Instructor
Occupational Therapy

David Tuttle
Board of Trustees representative

Professor Adam Zahler
Professor
Visual & Performing Arts

Worcester State University
INCLUSIVE PROCESS

Throughout the strategic planning process, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee ensured that all members of the Worcester State University community were included. In addition to more than 1,000 voices captured through surveys, forums, and meetings, more than 100 faculty, staff, and students participated in working groups to develop strategies and initiatives for each goal (working group membership can be found on pages 34-36). During the process, updates and drafts were shared with the campus community on a regular basis, and feedback was incorporated into the plan.

SURVEYS AND QUALITATIVE DATA
• Academic Kick Off Prompt Cards for Faculty and Staff
• Visioning Questionnaire for Executive Cabinet and Board of Trustees
• Verb Prompt Survey for Faculty and Staff
• Administrative Functional Department Assessment for Executive Cabinet
• Academic Program Evaluations
• Faculty Survey
• Staff Survey
• Undergraduate Student Survey
• Graduate Student Survey
• Alumni Survey

MEETINGS
• Advisory Committee for Equal Opportunity, Diversity and Affirmative Action
• All University Committee
• Alumni Association Advisory Board
• Bias Incidence Response Team
• Board of Trustees
• Cabinet
• Campus Climate Committee
• Chairs Council
• Executive Cabinet
• Foundation Board
• Graduate Program Coordinators
• Leadership Council
• Presidential Student Ambassadors
• Student Government Association

PRESENTATIONS AND FORUMS
• Faculty Presentations
• Staff Presentations
• Faculty Forums
• Staff Forums
• Campus Update I
• Campus Update II
• Working Group Kick-off Event
WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY will be a vibrant, student-centered community of learning dedicated to preparing students of all backgrounds to succeed and lead in their professions, in their communities, and wherever they seek to leave their mark on the world.
Worcester State will be recognized as a community of learning whose doors are open to all and whose impact on those who venture through its doors is transformational.

Worcester State will be known as the university where students finish what they start.

Worcester State will be known as a place where students emerge from their experience ready to lead— as individuals whose leadership potential has been identified, nourished, and demonstrated.

Worcester State will deliver on its promise to provide students a full and rich educational experience in any learning environment— whether on-campus and in-person or virtual and remote through distance learning.

Worcester State will be a research hub where scholarly creativity is being channeled in new, exciting, and potentially important directions.

Worcester State will be one of the best-run state universities in New England—efficient and lean, but investing adequately in the people, programs, physical spaces, and technological infrastructure to ensure Worcester State will be able to fulfill its mission and achieve its goals as a leading state university in the region.

Worcester State will be a place where all members of the diverse Worcester State community—faculty, staff, and students—will feel included and valued, and will hold themselves and each other accountable for upholding the University’s core values.

Worcester State will be financially stable and well positioned for long-term organizational sustainability as it marks its 150th anniversary in 2024.

Worcester State will have a smaller carbon footprint and be setting an example of responsible environmental stewardship.
The framework, developed by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, incorporates equity throughout the six main goals of the strategic plan. All aspects of Worcester State University, from academics and student support to resources and infrastructure, have been developed through an equity lens.

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**EQUITY** 
The Strategic Planning Working Groups, chaired by Strategic Planning Steering Committee members and comprised of more than 100 faculty, staff, and students, were tasked with developing strategies and recommending initiatives for each goal, infusing equity into each goal.
GOAL 1 Academic Excellence and Distinction

Offer high-quality undergraduate and graduate programs that develop the intellectual and personal potential of every student, and prepare the next generation of leaders, innovators, and scholars

STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES

STRATEGY 1.1
Promote University-wide innovation in curricular program offerings, and expand options and accessible modalities for course offerings and course completion

• Develop and offer more online and blended courses
• Make Wintersession 100 percent online and expand the term
• Secure necessary external approvals for majors in Art, Political Science, and Theater
• Seek support and pursue approvals to offer an Occupational Therapy doctorate
• Implement the Major-Plus requirement as reflected in the RASE plan
• Develop interdisciplinary concentrations into minors and create a department of interdisciplinary studies
• Create additional 4+ programs
• Develop an accelerated degree completion program for non-traditional students
• Increase the number of degrees that can be attained completely online or during the evening

STRATEGY 1.2
Support and celebrate excellent teaching, and expand opportunities for broadening pedagogical expertise through both internal and external professional development

• Ensure resources allocated to the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) are adequate to support University-wide priorities relating to academic excellence and distinction
• Create an instructional design position in the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)
• Establish and promote common expectations and evidence-based best practices for the online course experience
• Encourage everyone teaching online to be “certified” by some vetting process (e.g., Quality Matters)
• Increase access and resources to learn about universal design for course materials
• Create a web page for faculty to share ideas for syllabi, teaching, scholarly work, research ideas, etc.

STRATEGY 1.3
Leverage the University's location to create distinctive academic and leadership opportunities

• Create greater opportunities for summer Intensive English Language Institute programs (including a formalized summer residential program)
• Provide educational opportunities deemed to be of strategic value to the region based on employment trends
• Enhance career exploration, internships, and professional opportunities by connecting students with alumni networks, employers and academic departments
STRATEGY 1.4
Offer a vibrant and rigorous general education curriculum that supports the liberal arts in a 21st-century context
• Provide a comprehensive review and needs assessment of the current Liberal Arts and Science Curriculum (LASC) to determine strengths, weaknesses, and revisions
• Put in place a process to annually review LASC goals and outcomes as reflected in student learning outcomes, program reviews, digital portfolio work, and graduation rates
• Establish a set of targeted areas related to digital literacy for students to gain proficiency
• Create a ‘Leadership Across the Curriculum’ general education requirement
• Create and offer an online track for all LASC classes
• Create a 3-credit diversity course requirement

STRATEGY 1.5
Enhance support for scholarly and creative work that is applied, innovative, interdisciplinary, and inclusive of marginalized traditions
• Establish a fully functioning Office of Grants and Sponsored Research
• Expand funding opportunities for research and scholarships across departments and programs
• Strengthen and publicize opportunities for faculty research

STRATEGY 1.6
Create a more vibrant intellectual life on campus and fortify a culture of high academic standards
• Create a university portfolio initiative that documents and enhances student learning gains and unique skills for all students
• Invest resources as necessary to establish the Library as the center of academic pursuits at Worcester State
• Ensure that opportunities for experiential learning are available to all students
• Continue to increase study abroad participation rates by identifying institutional and external funding sources to support faculty-led programs
• Create and facilitate access to a more vibrant intellectual life on campus
GOAL 2 Student Support and Success
Provide all students a transformative, holistic educational experience with a path to timely degree completion and solid preparation for advanced academic studies or career success

STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES

STRATEGY 2.1
Increase overall retention and graduation rates and close achievement gaps
• Reimagine and adapt Worcester State’s scheduling model for classes to enhance student-friendliness and increase efficiency
• Continue to support current practices such as CLEP testing based on students’ assets, sample bilingual/multilingual skills
• Invest in and utilize institutional financial aid intended to encourage student persistence and retention
• Offer optional online placement testing in Spanish to incoming students
• Create a transfer-friendly environment by collaborating with academic departments, to develop a more streamlined process for evaluating international credentials for transfer course equivalencies and designate a transfer specialist in each academic department

STRATEGY 2.2
Promote student leadership development opportunities proactively, inclusively, and equitably
• Enhance leadership skills programming that challenge and encourage students to become empowered, inclusive, and knowledgeable community and global leaders
• Adopt a wide-ranging, inclusive definition of leadership for Worcester State that includes an understanding of equity and the importance of valuing diversity
• Promote student leadership development opportunities
• Encourage the approval of a co-curricular transcript (as outlined in the RASE Plan)
• Identify unmet needs in the area of student leadership development and develop programs to meet those needs

STRATEGY 2.3
Embrace student-centeredness as a guiding principle for faculty and staff, and adopt holistic student support as a University-wide imperative
• Increase awareness and accessibility of resources aligned with the eight domains of student wellness (emotional, social, physical, occupational, financial, intellectual, environmental, and spiritual resources)

STRATEGY 2.4
Ensure all students, including non-traditional students and distance learners, have full and equitable access to the academic resources, support services, and technology they need
• Communicate campus commitment and dedicate resources to addressing student emotional and mental well-being, particularly relating to traumatized and disenfranchised populations
• Expand First-Year Experience services as needed based on RASE Plan recommendations to meet needs of a changing student body
• Increase the number of full-time faculty involved with First-Year Seminar
• Create a centralized location for students to get information regarding all services available on campus (financial aid, registration, health care, etc.)

• Take necessary steps to increase student support services beyond the traditional 9-to-5 workday
• Work toward making all University spaces ADA-compliant, and provide assistive technology and processes that make it easier for all students, employees, and guests to experience our campus
• Expand and enhance the support graduate students receive from the Library and Student Affairs
• Ensure all students have access to the technology and learning tools necessary for academic success
• Recommit to the requirement that all undergraduate students have a laptop that meets University standards and program requirements, and strive to ensure that students have reasonably operative internet access when away from campus
• Develop non-traditional and creative ways to address non-tuition-related financial challenges impeding students’ ability to thrive
• Ensure adequate and appropriate resources and supports are available to degree-seeking and degree-completing non-traditional-age adult learners
• Promote institutional compliance with student educational accommodations across learning platforms and modalities
• Implement and assess the success of virtual information sessions for prospective and admitted students
• Create and deploy an online campus tour with video, making sure to highlight areas of campus that would be important for prospective students from under-represented groups

STRATEGY 2.5
Adopt a mentoring model of advising and ensure faculty and staff are appropriately trained to deliver effective support to a more diverse student body
• Promote a culture in which advising is a year-round process
• Provide financial support and promote opportunities for informal advising interactions between faculty and students
• Provide support for appropriate levels of advising in high-enrolled majors
• Revisit the graduate coordinator model and ensure support offices throughout campus to provide graduate student-specific services
• Measure the success of “Meet a Faculty Member” programs for yield purposes
• Implement virtual financial aid sessions with Q&A for accepted and current students
• Identify and remove barriers impeding full and equitable student access to services and resources, including for non-traditional students
• Find ways to make textbooks, open educational resources, or other content available to students with little or no cost.

STRATEGY 2.6
Create a more robust campus life that fully engages all students, and promote a sense of connection and community within WSU’s distance-learning environment
• Expand extracurricular and recreational programming to enhance campus life for all students
• Create a working group to address needs of Worcester State’s international student population
• Establish more opportunities for graduate students to network with each other and feel a sense of connection to the wider WSU community
• Enhance supports to improve the sense of belonging of transfer and commuter students
• Enhance supports to improve the sense of belonging of first generation students
• Offer additional Transfer Orientation dates to increase greater access to this key program for all incoming transfer students.
• Strengthen and expand the Transfer Success Coach program in collaboration with the Retention Office.
• Develop and implement a mandatory 1-credit New Transfer Seminar
STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES

GOAL 3  Marketing and Enrollment
Be attractive and accessible to an increasingly diverse population of students within an increasingly competitive recruitment environment

STRATEGY 3.1
Raise regional and national visibility and garner recognition for academic excellence, value, and impact

• Align traditional advertising with online program advertising to strengthen overall marketing effectiveness
• Implement a comprehensive strategy for attracting and enrolling non-traditional-age students seeking to begin or resume their undergraduate studies or preparing to change career pathways
• Re-platform and enhance content on the website to serve more effectively as a marketing and recruitment tool
• Ensure the website effectively engages diverse audiences by providing personalized marketing content and meeting up-to-date technological demands
• Increase Worcester State’s visibility regionally and nationally in fields where faculty play leadership roles by supporting research and travel
• Develop materials that highlight Worcester State’s role within higher education
• Create culture of faculty, staff, and students being “branded” at off campus events

STRATEGY 3.2
More effectively differentiate WSU from its peers, drawing particular attention to advantages associated with its location

• Boldly promote the RASE Plan
• Expand and support interdisciplinary teaching
• Identify our “signature programs” setting us apart from other competitors
• Position Worcester State as “Worcester’s University”
• Continue to ensure branding consistency in marketing materials

STRATEGY 3.3
Increase the diversity of the faculty and staff to better reflect the WSU student body and applicant pool

• Increase diversity in academic and administrative departments that affect the recruitment, retention, and leadership development of students from under-represented and marginalized groups
• Implement a strategic recruitment and retention strategy for under-represented and marginalized faculty and staff
STRATEGY 3.4
Expand presence in the local secondary education and community college sectors
- Continue to implement and support Early College and dual enrollment programs
- Implement programs that bring greater numbers of prospective and accepted students to campus, targeting underrepresented groups in particular
- Offer seminars to high school students on the application process here at Worcester State
- Create a faculty speaking program at high schools
- Develop program partnerships between Worcester State departments and high school programs
- Develop a young alumni program as liaisons for their high school alma maters

STRATEGY 3.5
Position and promote WSU as a first-choice university for students from traditionally under-represented groups
- Provide comprehensive academic support in first-year experience either by expanding Summer Bridge or creating a ‘Fall Cluster’ for first-generation students and students from under-represented groups
- Create accelerated blended/online degree completion programs for non-traditional students
- Create a marketing campaign that showcases a robust offering of educational experiences for a racially diverse undergraduate applicant pool
- Ensure marketing and recruitment materials are translated into foreign languages prevalent in Worcester State’s local population, and highlight the breadth of opportunity and support at Worcester State for students of diverse backgrounds

STRATEGY 3.6
Invest resources necessary to grow enrollment in graduate and online programs
- Seek additional funding to support increased graduate assistantship opportunities
- Offer a ‘Life Work Portfolio’ program for non-traditional age adult learners who may wish to petition for credit for learning achieved outside the traditional classroom
- Improve the registration process and advising for graduate students
- Evaluate whether staffing for graduate admissions and recruitment is adequate to support the attainment of enrollment goals
- Develop and implement an aggressive marketing campaign in support of graduate and continuing education enrollment goals, particularly growth of the graduate program
- Invest in online course development by creating an instructional design faculty fellow and by providing a stipend, course-release, or first right-of-refusal to incentivize the creation of courses
GOAL 4  Community Engagement and Public Good

Have an impact beyond campus through leading-edge scholarship and creative activities, civic engagement, and mutually beneficial partnerships with local, regional, and global communities

STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES

STRATEGY 4.1
Expand and deepen connections between the community and WSU’s academic departments, centers, and institutes
• Expand the utilization of external advisory bodies
• Partner with the community to promote international dialogues and experiences
• Provide opportunities and partnerships that support our higher education equity agenda in the Worcester community

STRATEGY 4.2
Foster ongoing interaction between members of the University community and members of the Worcester community
• Implement a Volunteer Day for employees to contribute to Worcester and local areas in a visible way
• Maintain an open, neighborly campus environment
• Offer annual bus tours of Worcester for all new staff and faculty as well as members of Leadership Council
• Better promote existing community partnerships and outreach activities
• Connect the Worcester State community to affinity groups in the city of Worcester and Greater Central Massachusetts

STRATEGY 4.3
Expand relationships with businesses in Worcester and beyond to expand the pipeline for internships, practica, co-ops, and post-graduate employment options
• Expand connection, engagement, and networking opportunities, as well as ongoing career support, for alumni
• Support efforts to establish Worcester as a vibrant location for students to study and play, faculty and staff to work and live, and graduates to stay and serve
• Intentionally have faculty and staff be present at Five Chambers events
• Provide students opportunities to attend Chamber events
STRATEGY 4.4
Establish WSU as a research and policy hub where faculty, staff, and students actively engage in developing solutions to meet regional challenges
• Establish a ‘Community Collaborative’ within Academic Affairs to support community-focused academic endeavors that connect faculty and students with the Worcester-area community to address challenges inter-disciplinarily and collaboratively
• Promote faculty and staff publications and accomplishments
• Develop a catalog of faculty and staff expertise
GOAL 5  People and Culture
Nurture an inclusive campus culture that promotes a shared commitment to excellence, innovation, collaboration, and accountability

STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES

STRATEGY 5.1
Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups
• Provide dedicated support structures and services for LGTBTQ+ students
• Expand affinity-based connections across the campus community
• Promote campus-wide cultural fluency, anchored in Worcester State’s core values, to foster greater understanding and inclusion of the diverse cultures represented in the Worcester State community

STRATEGY 5.2
Recruit, retain and reward high-quality and diverse faculty and staff committed to educating and supporting a diverse student body
• Implement a more systematic and intentional method of inviting, securing, and hosting visiting international scholars and faculty
• Offer competitive compensation and contemporary employment options for faculty and staff
• Increase professional development and career growth opportunities for staff
• Improve onboarding for new employees
• Create a formal mentoring program for faculty and staff, offering high-quality, discipline-specific training from peers
• Make a financial commitment to hiring more full-time faculty members
• Explore the idea of establishing a “teaching post-doc” program to attract new Ph.Ds (or others with terminal degrees) who aspire to teach
• Develop a policy to reimburse for costs associated with the maintenance of professional credentials

STRATEGY 5.3
Continue to equip and encourage all faculty and staff to address the diverse and evolving needs of a changing student body
• Offer multiple levels of staff and faculty training, from beginner to advanced, on issues relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion
• Create a diversity certificate program for faculty, staff, and students
• Ensure that guidelines relating to accessibility are addressed in instructional modalities that might be delivered via virtual formats
• Provide professional development for faculty on the implementation of inclusive teaching strategies

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STRATEGY 5.4
Promote greater unity, communication and sense of institutional pride across campus

- Acquire and deploy communication technology for the purposes of improving awareness of campus activities, improving advising communication, and improving web presence for students and advisors
- Significantly enhance internal communication to promote transparency, information sharing, and cross-divisional collegiality
- Introduce new optional social activities that bring faculty and staff together and strengthen sense of community
- Expand internal, cross-divisional awareness of the key roles, value-adding activities, and accomplishments of departments, offices, centers, and individual contributors across campus
- Coordinate across campus departments to strategically communicate student, faculty, and staff accomplishments
- Create new awards to recognize faculty and staff accomplishments and milestones

STRATEGY 5.5
Foster a culture of assessment and data-based decision making

- Implement a data warehouse
- Develop divisional and departmental strategic plans that integrate with the University Strategic Plan
- Coordinate the annual collection of data centrally through the Assessment and Planning office
- Utilize Colleague for all data entry and storage
- Develop data entry procedures for each office to reduce errors in data

STRATEGY 5.6
Institutionalize policies, practices, and procedures that prepare members of the WSU community to respond nimbly, collaboratively, and effectively to unanticipated crises

- Ensure that each administrative unit has suitable contingency plans in place, and for which appropriate training is regularly delivered, that will permit key business functions to be maintained while the University’s regular operations might otherwise be interrupted
- Engage in succession planning for key positions across the organization
- Develop and regularly reassess emergency preparedness plans for buildings and communications
GOAL 6 Resources and Infrastructure

Develop sustainable revenue streams adequate to support the University’s academic mission and institutional priorities, and invest in physical infrastructure and technology with a commitment to financial and environmental sustainability

STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES

STRATEGY 6.1
Develop new and sustain existing sources of revenue
• Develop more non-credit courses and programs to be taught through the Center for Business and Industry by Worcester State faculty and staff
• Invest in graduate and continuing education marketing and staffing levels appropriately to increase initiatives that generate incremental revenue
• Create a program to provide a stipend or release time for departments to investigate and develop new streams of revenue
• Better communicate the value of public higher education at the state and federal levels to lobby for increased funding for public higher education
• Encourage an entrepreneurial culture in which short-term losses that will create long-term gains are strategically developed
• Utilize campus during off-times for programs that will pay to use our space
• Evaluate conference and events staffing levels so that the Director can generate revenue in lieu of managing events

STRATEGY 6.2
Expand philanthropic support and grow the endowment
• Broaden and increase the base of alumni donors
• Increase unrestricted endowment to 20-25 percent of total endowment value
• Raise funds to increase financial aid and scholarship support available to qualifying students
• Establish a dedicated emergency response fund—beyond the reserves
• Survey current and potential donors as to areas they are interested in and connect with departments related to those areas
• Develop donations to assist students with living expenses that will allow them to graduate on time
• Increase unrestricted endowment dollars by communicating with donors the importance and benefits of unrestricted endowment

STRATEGY 6.3
Ensure technology, facilities, and systems are adequate to support operational needs and strategic goals
• Develop plans for classroom technology, furnishings, and fixtures that maximize flexibility to meet diverse teaching and learning needs in active learning spaces
• Develop a process to decrease redundant technology purchases by requiring new technology to be approved by the Administrative Technology Committee
• Evaluate the organizational structure of information technology services and assess the need for additional resources and/or staffing
• Develop a comprehensive plan to address future development of the May Street building
• Work with the Massachusetts Department of Capital Asset Management to develop a comprehensive plan to address program needs and infrastructure improvements to the Learning Resource Center and the Student Center
• Work with the Massachusetts State College Building Authority to develop a comprehensive plan to address the infrastructure deficiencies of Chandler Village, while continuing to meet student demands for residential housing
• Address accelerated end-of-useful-life and higher deferred maintenance costs due to heavy use of physical assets by both Worcester State and non-Worcester State constituencies
• Include technology upgrades and maintenance in budget

STRATEGY 6.4
Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity
• Create a more transparent budgeting process that evaluates existing funding levels and requires administrative and academic departments to develop multi-year budgets
• Move more administrative forms and functions online
• Reevaluate our workplace model and establish a remote work plan with an expectation that as many as a quarter of full-time administrative staff may not need to be physically present every day
• Conduct an equity audit
• Assess current space utilization and re-allocate space in a purposeful manner to meet current and future demands

STRATEGY 6.5
Develop and implement redundant systems and staffing capacities to protect essential business operations from disruption due to unanticipated events
• Recommit to ensuring redundant systems and staffing capacities to protect essential business operations from disruption due to unanticipated events
• Invest appropriate resources and training to automate business functions across the campus, consistent with contemporary best practices within higher education

STRATEGY 6.6
As a campus community, commit to developing and implementing programs and policies that address the growing challenges of climate change as they affect the campus, the region, and the world
• Revise the Climate Action Plan with definitive steps to achieve carbon footprint reduction
• Join organizations related to climate change efforts in higher education to learn about best practices
• Evaluate net-zero or near-net-zero building for any new building projects
• Plan for replacement fleet vehicles to be fully electric or hybrid vehicles
• Increase the number of buildings that have options to off-set electricity
• Work with the city and state to increase the frequency of buses for Worcester State
**STRATEGIC PLAN METRICS**

**ASSESSING THE PROGRESS AND SUCCESS**

*Worcester State University* is committed to a culture of assessment and data-based decision making, as highlighted in *Strategy 5.5*. To this end, the Strategic Planning Steering committee has developed metrics to assess the progress and success of the strategic plan. Many of the metrics will assess multiple goals and strategies. The following tables indicate which goals each of the metrics will be used to assess. Data will be collected annually, and adjustments made to the plan accordingly.
## METRICS

A vibrant, student-centered community of learning dedicated to preparing students of all backgrounds to succeed and lead

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>EQUITY</th>
<th>GOAL 1</th>
<th>GOAL 2</th>
<th>GOAL 3</th>
<th>GOAL 4</th>
<th>GOAL 5</th>
<th>GOAL 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of new programs (majors, minors, concentrations, certificates etc.)</td>
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<td>Number of programs catering to non-traditional-age learner preferences (evening, online, blended)</td>
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<td>Number of master’s pathway programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of dual enrollment and early college courses</td>
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<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
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<td>✔️</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of students graduating with a double major or major+minor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of students from historically underrepresented groups graduating with a double major or major+minor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of professional development opportunities for faculty related to pedagogy</td>
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<td>Percentage of courses with experiential learning</td>
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<td>Percentage of students with internships, practica, fieldwork, service learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of students involved in study away</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of students from historically underrepresented groups involved in study away</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
A community of learning whose doors are open to all and whose impact on those who venture through its doors is transformational

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>METRICS</th>
<th>EQUITY</th>
<th>GOAL 1</th>
<th>GOAL 2</th>
<th>GOAL 3</th>
<th>GOAL 4</th>
<th>GOAL 5</th>
<th>GOAL 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate enrollment: African American</td>
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<td>Undergraduate enrollment: Latinx</td>
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<td>Graduate enrollment: African American</td>
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<td>Number of students in Intensive English Languish Institute program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of faculty from historically underrepresented and marginalized groups</td>
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<td>Number of professional development opportunities relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion</td>
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<td>Number of gender-neutral bathrooms</td>
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## METRICS

The university where students finish what they start

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>EQUITY</th>
<th>GOAL 1</th>
<th>GOAL 2</th>
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<th>GOAL 4</th>
<th>GOAL 5</th>
<th>GOAL 6</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate first-time, full-time cohort retention</td>
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<td>Undergraduate first-time, full-time cohort retention: African American</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undergraduate first-time, full-time cohort retention: Latinx</td>
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<td>6-year undergraduate first-time, full-time cohort graduation rate</td>
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<td>6-year undergraduate first-time, full-time cohort graduation rate: African American</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-year undergraduate first-time, full-time cohort graduation rate: Latinx</td>
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<td>4-year undergraduate transfer graduation rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-year undergraduate transfer graduation rate: African American</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-year undergraduate transfer graduation rate: Latinx</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of undergraduate students completing gateway courses in first year</td>
<td>✔️ ✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of African-American undergraduate students completing gateway courses in first year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of Latinx undergraduate students completing gateway courses in first year</td>
<td>✔️ ✔️</td>
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continued
The university where students finish what they start

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>METRICS</th>
<th>EQUITY</th>
<th>GOAL 1</th>
<th>GOAL 2</th>
<th>GOAL 3</th>
<th>GOAL 4</th>
<th>GOAL 5</th>
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<td>Number of students granted prior learning experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undergraduate student satisfaction of advising</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of faculty using Starfish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Starfish actions (kudos, referrals, flags)</td>
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<td>Number of advising professional development opportunities for faculty and staff</td>
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<td>Number of mental health counselors</td>
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<td>Number of hours available for mental health counseling</td>
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<td>Number of student support departments offering services outside of business hours</td>
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<td>Sense of belonging among students from historically underrepresented and marginalized groups</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sense of belonging among commuter, transfer, graduate, and non-traditional-aged students</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>A place where students emerge from their experience ready to lead</td>
<td>EQUITY</td>
<td>GOAL 1</td>
<td>GOAL 2</td>
<td>GOAL 3</td>
<td>GOAL 4</td>
<td>GOAL 5</td>
<td>GOAL 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of career development/advanced studies workshops for students</td>
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<td>Number of networking opportunities for students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of students entering the workforce or advanced studies within one year of graduation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of leadership opportunities for students</td>
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<td>✔️</td>
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<td>✔️</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of students from historically underrepresented and marginalized groups involved in leadership roles</td>
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<td>✔️</td>
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<td>Number of Honors Program students who graduate with honors</td>
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<td>Number of events for alumni</td>
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<td>Number of alumni involved in community partnerships</td>
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</table>
### METRICS

A commitment to a full and rich educational experience in any learning environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>METRIC</th>
<th>GOAL 1</th>
<th>GOAL 2</th>
<th>GOAL 3</th>
<th>GOAL 4</th>
<th>GOAL 5</th>
<th>GOAL 6</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of faculty with Quality Matters certification</td>
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<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of faculty who have taken at least one Quality Matters course</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students enrolled in courses using Open Education Resources</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of professional development opportunities for faculty relating to distance education</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of students with access to reliable internet and devices</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of forms and processes available online</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of student support offices with remote options</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of undergraduate blended courses</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of undergraduate online courses</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology Services staff FTE</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
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</table>
## METRICS

A public institution that takes its public mission seriously

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>EQUITY</th>
<th>GOAL 1</th>
<th>GOAL 2</th>
<th>GOAL 3</th>
<th>GOAL 4</th>
<th>GOAL 5</th>
<th>GOAL 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of grants with faculty involvement</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of grants awarded</td>
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<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of grant money received</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of faculty and student publications, presentations, and posters</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students participating in the Celebration of Scholarship and Creativity</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students working with faculty on scholarly and creative pursuits</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of partnerships with local schools, hospitals, businesses, and non-profit organizations</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of faculty and staff engaged with community partnerships</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students enrolled in civic engagement courses</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of students from historically underrepresented and marginalized groups enrolled in civic engagement courses</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of events open to the public</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of advisory boards that include community members</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
### METRICS

**One of the best-run state universities in New England**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>EQUITY</th>
<th>GOAL 1</th>
<th>GOAL 2</th>
<th>GOAL 3</th>
<th>GOAL 4</th>
<th>GOAL 5</th>
<th>GOAL 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of unmet financial aid: direct costs</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of students with unmet financial aid: direct costs</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students receiving scholarships</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of students from historically underrepresented groups awarded merit scholarships</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average amount of merit scholarships</td>
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<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of graduate assistantships</td>
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<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of awards/recognition for employees</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retention rate of full-time staff</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention rate of full-time staff from historically underrepresented groups</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of full-time staff working remotely</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of departments with cross-training</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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</table>

32 Worcester State University
## Financially stable and well positioned for long-term organizational sustainability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>EQUITY</th>
<th>GOAL 1</th>
<th>GOAL 2</th>
<th>GOAL 3</th>
<th>GOAL 4</th>
<th>GOAL 5</th>
<th>GOAL 6</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total undergraduate enrollment</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total graduate enrollment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of events that bring potential students to campus</td>
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<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue generated by outside events</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue generated by DGCE</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of marketing budget for DGCE programs</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of non-credit CBI courses taught in-house</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall endowment</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted foundation dollars</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of alumni making annual donations</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of employee donations</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbon footprint</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of electric vehicles in fleet</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of LEED certified buildings</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of buildings with electricity off-setting equipment</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of parking spaces that are ADA-compliant</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACADEMIC DISTINCTION

Julie Frechette
Communication
SPSC Chair

Susan Mitroka-Batsford
Chemistry
SPSC Member

Zahra Aryan
Student

Mariana Calle
Health Sciences
Faculty

Carol Chester
Student

Christopher Chronopoulos
Student

Ali Elsayyad
Student

Megan Elizabeth Foley
Student

Charles Fox
Psychology, Faculty

Adrian Gage
Residence Life, Staff

Sara Grady
Graduate & Continuing Education, Staff

Leah Guzman
Intensive English Language Institute Staff

Suze Jean-Charles
Human Resources Staff

Susanna Meyer
Communication Sciences & Disorders Faculty

Russ Pottle
Humanities & Social Sciences SPSC Member

Joseph Quattrucci
Chemistry, Faculty

Maia Shalev
Student

Leah Swain
Student

STUDENT SUCCESS

Adam Zahler
Visual & Performing Arts, SPSC Chair

Thomas Kelley
Retention SPSC Member

Linda Larrivee
Education, Health, & Natural Sciences SPSC Member

Elena Arranz Alonso
Graduate & Continuing Education, Staff

Kwaku Asare
Student

Laura Caswell
Information Technology Services Staff

Julie Chaffee
Registrar, Staff

Meghna Dilip
Chemistry, Faculty

Demitrius Evans
Residence Life, Staff

Maria Fung
Mathematics, Faculty

Theresa Khoury
Nursing, Faculty

Beatrice Korman
Student

William Paul Nadeau
Student

Eileen B. Perez
Mathematics, Faculty

Sarah Potrikus
Student Involvement & Leadership, Staff

Adam Shaughnessy
Academic Success Center, Staff

Adrian Robledo
Student

Elizabeth Ruiz
Student
ENROLLMENT
Katey Palumbo
International Programs, SPSC Chair
Tanya Trudell
Occupational Therapy, SPSC Member

Jillian Anderson
Career Services, Staff
Amanda Corine
Nursing, Faculty
Joe Dicarlo
Admissions, Staff
Telesse Forbes
Graduate & Continuing Education, Staff
Kwame Gayle
Student
Jennifer Hood-DeGrenier
Biology, Faculty
Kevin Kane
Urban Studies, Adjunct Faculty
Robert Kolesnik
Earth, Environment, & Physics, Adjunct Faculty
Ben McElroy
Transfer Admissions Staff
Laura Murphy
Health & Wellness Staff
Johanie Rodriguez
Human Resources Staff
Enrique Sanchez
Student

PUBLIC GOOD
Tom Conroy
Urban Studies, SPSC Chair
David Tuttle
Board of Trustees, SPSC Member

Lyndsey Broxton
Student
Paula Bylaska-Davies
Nursing, Faculty
Lori Dawson
Psychology, Faculty
Elyzabeth Frontaan
Student
Colby Harvish
Residence Life, Staff
Joanne Jaber Gauvin
Urban Action Institute Staff
Madison Leviton
Student
Mary Jo Marion
Urban Affairs, Staff
Andrea Martin, Ph.D.
English Adjunct Faculty
Susan Monaghan
Education, Faculty
Amanda Pollicelli
Student
Nicole Rosa
Psychology, Faculty
Karen Shaley, Student
Michael Shamgochian
Business Administration & Economics, Faculty
Calvi Vaccarello, Student

PEOPLE
Stacey Luster
Human Resources & Diversity, SPSC Chair
Steven Morreale
Criminal Justice, SPSC Member

Whitney Bailey
Student
Tavin Bromell
Student
Robert Brooks
Criminal Justice, Faculty
Marilyn Cleary
Graduate & Continuing Education, Staff
Claudia Oliveira De Paiva
Student
Andrea Dever
Donor Relations, Staff
Noah Dion
Academic Affairs, Staff
Kirsh Donis
Admissions, Staff
Susan Moore
Human Resources, Staff
Michelle Page
Nursing, Faculty
Talita Rodovalho
Counseling, Staff
Marcela Uribe-Jennings
Multicultural Affairs Staff
Alexiss Vautour-Link
Student

CULTURE
Edgar Moros
Intensive English Language Institute SPSC Chair
Emily Soltano
Psychology SPSC Member

Ezequiel Ayala
Payroll, Staff
Aimee Delaney
Criminal Justice Faculty
Catherine Goodwin
Intensive English Language Institute Faculty
Josh Katz
Community Standards Staff
Fran Manocchio
Accessibility Services Staff
Kristie McNamara
Student Involvement & Leadership, Staff
Julia McNeil
Nursing, Faculty
Harry Mishkin
Student
Hilda Ramirez
Latino Education Institute, Staff
Paige Szczypien
Student
Karen Tessmer
Athletics, Staff
REPUTATION

John Meany
Athletics, SPSC Chair

Mary Dillon
Occupational Therapy
SPSC Member

Mark Beaudry
Criminal Justice
Faculty

Dean Bowen
Wellness Center, Staff

Susan Burtchell
Student

Tania Delehanty
Communications & Marketing, Staff

Peter Fenucchio
Facilities, Staff

Maria Gariepy
Diversity, Inclusion and EO, Staff

Ashley King
University Advancement, Staff

Michael Mudd
Athletics, Staff

Kristen Nelson
Residence Life, Staff

Jeremiah Riordan
Center for Business & Industry, Staff

Henry Theriault
Academic Affairs, Staff

Michaela White
Student

RESOURCES

Michael Mills
Alumni Association
SPSC Chair

Sarah Strout
Assessment and Planning
SPSC Member

Jason Anderson
Athletics, Staff

Steve Banderra
Facilities, Staff

Karina Barseguian
Chemistry Adjunct Faculty

Matt Bejune
Library, Staff

Jodi Briggs-Pickett
University Advancement, Staff

Madeline Campbell
Distance and Global Education, Staff

Charles Fox
Psychology, Faculty

Douglas Kowalewski
Earth, Environment, & Physics, Faculty

Jeff LeBrun
Information Technology Services Staff

Mike McKenna
Conference and Events, Staff

Sandy Olson
Facilities, Staff

Kris O'Reilly
Communications & Marketing, Staff

Brandi Silver
Psychology, Faculty

Jonathan Walker
Internal Controls & Risk Assessment, Staff
“When you name something as sexist or as racist you are making that thing more tangible so that it can be more easily communicated to others. But for those who do not have a sense of the racism or sexism you are talking about, to bring them up is to bring them into existence.

It might then be assumed that the problem would go away if you would just stop talking about it or if you went away.”

- Sarah Ahmed

The following recommendations, compiled by the members of the Campus Climate Committee’s implementation and data subcommittees, emerge from a combination of our analysis of survey data, special reports compiled by IR, the Renz equity audit, information from the Department of Higher Education, experience at Worcester State University, and combined expertise in the areas of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (see 2020 report for DEI definitions). These recommendations are made based on multiple sources, including data from the 2020 and 2021 campus climate surveys and with the open acknowledgment that the campus climate has not improved significantly, and in some ways has worsened.

Worcester and indeed Worcester State is not impervious to the national climate on race, the growing white supremacy movement and countering calls for social justice and liberation. As a committee we are frustrated at the slow pace of change on our campus. We grow weary about serving on committees and initiatives that bring mostly incremental change. This is a moment of inflection for the university.
These recommendations are made with the hope that they are a step towards building trust on campus and continuing the process Towards a More Inclusive Climate, through which the university both live up to its mission and meet the lofty goals set out by the new strategic plan. For the sake of clarity, not priority, we have organized the recommendations into three general areas.

**Area 1: Increase transparency and accountability.**

1. All university divisions and departments should make annual assessments of their support for diversity and equity on campus. These reports should be public to increase transparency. This should include:
   a. Sharing Racial Equity and Justice Institute (REJI) disaggregated data provided by IR with department chairs and faculty directly and using it to identify and address disproportionate outcomes for ALANA students within programs.
   b. Conducting new staff and faculty searches with an emphasis on diversifying the university (see hiring recommendation below).
      i. Departments should establish benchmarks for diversity.
      ii. A special procedure should be triggered when departments fail to make progress over multiple years. This could include expanding the search committee to include members of the CCC.
   c. Academic Affairs should provide targeted funding and closely monitor departments and programs to address individual disparities in student outcomes among ALANA students.
   d. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan:
      i. STRATEGY 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups
      ii. STRATEGY 5.2: Recruit, retain and reward high-quality and diverse faculty and staff committed to educating and supporting a diverse student body
      iii. STRATEGY 5.5: Foster a culture of assessment and data-based decision making

2. The University Administration should provide a detailed presentation of the university’s budget to faculty, staff and students on an annual basis. Specifically, information should be provided regarding how financial decisions are made to prioritize and support diversity, equity and inclusion at Worcester State University.
   a. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan:
      i. STRATEGY 5.4: Promote greater unity, communication and sense of institutional pride across campus
      ii. STRATEGY 5.5: Foster a culture of assessment and data-based decision making
      iii. STRATEGY 6.4: Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity
3. We are alarmed at the number of intimidation and bullying incidents occurring on our campus reported by students, staff, and faculty in the survey. In response, the committee recommends the following:
   a. Review BIRT recommendations for practices so that it better captures and addresses bias incidents occurring on our campus.
   b. The focus groups conducted as part of equity audit should query why incidents are not reported or made known to the general campus.
   c. Confirm that WSU is following all reporting requirements related to hate crimes in Massachusetts.
   d. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan:
      i. STRATEGY 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups
      ii. STRATEGY 5.2: Recruit, retain and reward high-quality and diverse faculty and staff committed to educating and supporting a diverse student body
      iii. STRATEGY 5.4: Promote greater unity, communication and sense of institutional pride across campus
      iv. STRATEGY 5.3: Continue to equip and encourage all faculty and staff to address the diverse and evolving needs of a changing student body
      v. STRATEGY 5.5: Foster a culture of assessment and data-based decision making

4. The recommendations from the 2019-2020 report be revisited and expanded by publicizing the full membership of each university committee once constituted by the President’s Office to show progress on:
   a. 2019-2020 recommendation on University Wide Committee Composition: “The CCC recommends that all university wide committees strive to represent, in their composition, the diversity of the campus community and the employee groups (classified/ non classified). Committee appointments should, ideally, ensure an opportunity for all members of the campus community to serve.”
      i. As student participation is vital to shared governance, the committee believes that all university-wide committees should make every effort to fill the spaces reserved for student participation through open and consistent communication between the committee chairs and the SGA.
      ii. Additionally, the number of student positions on the Climate Committee specifically, and university-wide committees broadly, should be taken as a minimum, except where otherwise specified, with the goal of reaching parity with the number of faculty and staff appointed to said committees.
   b. Specific adjustments to the CCC committee as recommended in 2020: “Moreover, the committee believes that staggered membership, or multi-year terms, to ensure continuity would best enable the work of the committee.”
      i. To this end, we note that only one faculty member returned to the 2020-2021 committee from the previous year, which both hampers the work of the committee and, more importantly, we believe reflects the
broader point about a sense that campus climate is worsening for the reasons discussed above. Therefore, it is recommended that the call to DEI committee membership should highlight the staggered membership as well as the minimum 2-year commitment while providing exceptions for campus community members whose situations do not permit this commitment, namely contingent faculty members and students.

c. This item relates to the following elements of the Strategic Plan:
   i. STRATEGY 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized group
   ii. STRATEGY 5.2: Recruit, retain and reward high-quality and diverse faculty and staff committed to educating and supporting a diverse student body
   iii. STRATEGY 5.3: Continue to equip and encourage all faculty and staff to address the diverse and evolving needs of a changing student body
   iv. STRATEGY 5.4: Promote greater unity, communication and sense of institutional pride across campus
   v. STRATEGY 6.4: Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity

5. Report out CCC annual recommendations by having co-chairs and different committee members present last year’s report and recommendations to the different governance bodies on campus, such as SGA, Chairs, Cabinet, Deans, and AUC. This report would take place in the fall and spring of each year and include action steps and solicit feedback from these constituencies.
   a. Recommend that all other DEI committees report their recommendations to SGA, AUC, Chairs, Deans, solicit feedback from these groups, and incorporate the recommendations from these groups into their work before presenting to the president.
   b. Present the recommendations to Faculty and Staff via Opening Day during a breakout session that shares the work and findings of the previous year.
      i. Include climate committee report and recommendations in the opening day materials.
   c. Present the recommendations to the campus community through the Campus Conversation venue in Fall and Spring.
   d. Deans of both schools should present to their faculty and staff on initiatives and programs aimed at improving campus climate within their respective school.
   e. Department chairs should initiate a discussion of student outcomes with respect to DEI within the first two department meetings.
   f. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan:
      i. STRATEGY 5.3: Continue to equip and encourage all faculty and staff to address the diverse and evolving needs of a changing student body
      ii. STRATEGY 5.4: Promote greater unity, communication and sense of institutional pride across campus
iii. STRATEGY 5.5: Foster a culture of assessment and data-based decision making

6. Campus Police Audit
   a. Expand police data to include data on incidences beyond parking enforcement.
   b. University Administration should provide presentations describing the scope and power of the newly formed oversight committee to the campus community and ensure it includes cross-institutional campus representation.
   c. Develop a report process for the WSU community on concrete accountability and progress towards RENZ recommendations.
   d. See also Area 4: University Police Reform of this document.
   e. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan:
      i. STRATEGY 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups
      ii. STRATEGY 5.4: Promote greater unity, communication and sense of institutional pride across campus
      iii. STRATEGY 5.5: Foster a culture of assessment and data-based decision making
      iv. STRATEGY 6.4: Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity

Area 2: Financially commit to prioritizing diversity

1. The hiring process for all new staff and faculty should be equipped with resources necessary to recruit diverse employees in a timely and competitive fashion, with a goal of meeting (or exceeding) AA goals for each department and division. This would include, but not be limited to:
   a. Support for broad and targeted advertising of positions, moving beyond an over-reliance on personal networks for recruiting candidates.
   b. Fund incentive programs that both make new positions attractive to and demonstrate a commitment to diverse candidates, such as:
      i. Startup funds for building a research program and/or creative practice
      ii. Covering relocation costs
      iii. Course releases or alternative assignments in first two years of employment
      iv. Partner hires where applicable
      v. Opportunity hires
   c. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan:
      i. STRATEGY 3.3: Increase the diversity of the faculty and staff to better reflect the WSU student body and applicant pool
      ii. STRATEGY 4.4: Establish WSU as a research and policy hub where faculty, staff, and students actively engage in developing solutions to meet regional challenges
iii. STRATEGY 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups

iv. STRATEGY 5.2: Recruit, retain and reward high-quality and diverse faculty and staff committed to educating and supporting a diverse student body

v. STRATEGY 6.4: Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity

2. For the long term viability of WSU, invest in a strategic plan to recruit and graduate ALANA students. WSU invested in plans to recruit international students and out-of-state students but has not invested similarly in terms of ALANA students.
   a. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan:
      i. STRATEGY 2.1: Increase overall retention and graduation rates and close achievement gaps
      ii. STRATEGY 2.3: Embrace student-centeredness as a guiding principle for faculty and staff, and adopt holistic student support as a University-wide imperative
      iii. STRATEGY 2.4: Ensure all students, including non-traditional students and distance learners, have full and equitable access to the academic resources, support services, and technology they need
      iv. STRATEGY 3.5: Position and promote WSU as a first-choice university for students from traditionally under-represented groups
      v. STRATEGY 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups

3. Given that DEI work done by Faculty and staff in DEI committees often requires commitment above and beyond what is contractually required of service work and that many BIPOC faculty and staff are double-burdened by the task of serving on multiple DEI committees simultaneously, the committee recommends that the university recognize and support work done by ALANA faculty and staff in support of DEI by offsetting the commitment of time and energy to that work in relation to their other campus responsibilities, such as:
   a. Create APRs to support DEI work done by faculty.
   b. Offer course releases to faculty who co-chair DEI committees.
   c. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan
      i. STRATEGY 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups
      ii. STRATEGY 5.2: Recruit, retain and reward high-quality and diverse faculty and staff committed to educating and supporting a diverse student body
      iii. STRATEGY 6.4: Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity
4. Recognize, support, fully fund, and expand existing programs that have demonstrated positive impact on DEI, including:
   a. Office of Multicultural Affairs
      i. A.I.D. Program and WSU Summer Bridge Program
      ii. Pipeline programs: Upward Bound Program & 100 Males to College Program
      iii. OMA-Multicultural Programming Committee
      iv. MLK Youth Breakfast
      v. ALANA Preview/African American read-in Day
      vi. Heritage Month Celebrations
   b. Education Department
      i. Future Teachers Pipeline & Call to Teach Program
   c. Office of Diversity, Inclusion, Affirmative Action & Equal Opportunity
      i. expansion and enhancement of search committee orientation
      ii. provide further opportunities for all department chairs relating to development of inclusive job descriptions
      iii. faculty led development of inclusive pedagogies learning sessions
      iv. further development of training for hiring managers
   d. Latino Education Institute
      i. Early College Worcester -- placing WSU students as paid mentors for dual enrollment classes
      ii. Teaching Corps - Workbased learning for WSU students
      iii. LASOS - Pipeline program for girls
      iv. ENLACE - Pipeline program for boys
      v. My Voice, My Community -- Faculty led community learning academy
      vi. LIDER -- College Preparation
      vii. YCU College Readiness and Leadership
      viii. Club E -- Adult ESL and family engagement
   e. Intensive English Language Institute
   f. Sexual Assault Violence Education (SAVE)
      i. We Stand Up Bystander Intervention
   g. Military Affairs and Veterans Services
   h. Student Accessibility Services
      i. Expand funding and support to better meet faculty needs in accommodations for students (for example, pdf text conversions, closed captioning services, etc.)
   i. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan
      i. STRATEGY 1.5: Enhance support for scholarly and creative work that is applied, innovative, interdisciplinary, and inclusive of marginalized traditions
      ii. STRATEGY 2.3: Embrace student-centeredness as a guiding principle for faculty and staff, and adopt holistic student support as a University-wide imperative
iii. STRATEGY 3.5: Position and promote WSU as a first-choice university for students from traditionally under-represented groups

iv. STRATEGY 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups

v. STRATEGY 5.4: Promote greater unity, communication and sense of institutional pride across campus

vi. STRATEGY 6.4: Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity

5. Provide funding to develop the following new student initiatives and programs to promote diversity on campus:
   a. Establish and fully support an LGBTQI+ Center. This includes allocating space for students to congregate on campus as well as hiring a full-time coordinator.
   b. Establish and fully support a Women’s Center. This includes allocating space for students to congregate on campus as well as hiring a full-time coordinator.
   c. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan:
      i. STRATEGY 2.3: Embrace student-centeredness as a guiding principle for faculty and staff, and adopt holistic student support as a University-wide imperative
      ii. STRATEGY 3.5: Position and promote WSU as a first-choice university for students from traditionally under-represented groups
      iii. STRATEGY 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups
      iv. STRATEGY 5.4: Promote greater unity, communication and sense of institutional pride across campus
      v. STRATEGY 6.4: Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity

6. Finally, at the time of these recommendations, we are aware that an Interdisciplinary Studies Department will be created but have not yet received details of the department’s structure, so we will limit our recommendations to reiterating those made by the IDS committee: the department should be provided adequate funding, staffing, and a cluster hire of diverse faculty.

Area 3: Prioritize an open and effective university-wide equity audit process

Implementation

1. Previous Data Review
   a. Review and assess current DEI committee recommendations and list the outstanding recommendations that have not been met
   b. Review and assess the previous data gathered by DEI survey instruments and other available data for further planning.
   c. Assess the impact of the RASE plan on historically marginalized and under-represented students
d. Create an implementation plan to implement outstanding recommendations

e. This item relates to the following area of the Strategic Plan:
   i. STRATEGY 5.5: Foster a culture of assessment and data-based decision making

2. Open Audits
   a. Assess the efficacy of wraparound services including the Academic Success Center and Academic Advising with regards to Worcester State’s diverse student population, including historically underserved students, first generation students, and newly admitted students under the changed GPA requirement.
   b. Make recommendations for more culturally aware wraparound services. Develop policies and services focused around cultural sensitivity and competency for the center.
   c. Assess cost of course materials in STEM/other fields. The committee recommends supporting the adoption of low-cost or open-access educational resources across fields. This may include allocating resources to the library to purchase course textbooks to be made available to students.
   d. Broader monitoring/assessment of RASE plan impact on BIPOC students and student outcomes.
   e. Provide REJI data to Chairs and Deans with the intention of developing baselines and benchmarks for increasing outcomes for BIPOC students.
   f. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan:
      i. STRATEGY 2.1: Increase overall retention and graduation rates and close achievement gaps
      ii. STRATEGY 2.3: Embrace student-centeredness as a guiding principle for faculty and staff, and adopt holistic student support as a University-wide imperative
      iii. STRATEGY 2.4: Ensure all students, including non-traditional students and distance learners, have full and equitable access to the academic resources, support services, and technology they need
      iv. STRATEGY 3.5: Position and promote WSU as a first-choice university for students from traditionally under-represented groups
      v. STRATEGY 5.5: Foster a culture of assessment and data-based decision making

3. RASE Plan Assessment: The Student Diversity and Outcomes Report demonstrated a trend that ALANA students are less likely to complete their major of choice, which prolongs their time to degree. This is especially the case among STEM fields. The university needs the flexibility to modify the RASE plan accordingly.
   a. Assess the impact of the RASE plan on historically underrepresented populations and address disparities related to time to completion, graduation, and drop-out rates.
   b. Adjust the RASE Plan with regards to its impact on ALANA students, with an eye towards making the RASE Plan more equitable for ALANA students.
c. Audit of programs indicated by the Student Diversity and Outcomes Report to be struggling to retain students, specifically STEM fields, and to determine the root cause.

4. Equity Audit: Building on commitments of Areas 1 and 2 (that is, increasing transparency and accountability and financially committing to prioritizing diversity), the university should begin its equity audit as soon as possible with the following caveats:
   a. Recognize that the scale and scope of an equity audit is beyond the sole-capacity of members of the CCC committee and other DEI committees on campus. Therefore, the equity audit should be conducted with a similar level of funding and support set by the precedent of the RASE plan.
   b. Maintain the commitments to transparency and diverse participation in all decisions to hire outside consultants. To accomplish this, funding and compensation should be provided to faculty and staff to participate in the auditing process as part of their regular work and not in addition to it.
   c. The contract for the equity audit must include the development, implementation, and monitoring of an action plan.
   d. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan:
      i. STRATEGY 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups
      ii. STRATEGY 5.2: Recruit, retain and reward high-quality and diverse faculty and staff committed to educating and supporting a diverse student body
      iii. STRATEGY 5.5: Foster a culture of assessment and data-based decision making

Area 4: University Police Reform

1. FYS should include a module explaining student rights under the student code of conduct as well as a module on student rights under the law and student conduct.
2. Provide UPD training on student rights under the code of conduct as well as their intersection with state and local law.
3. Implement recommendations from the 2020-2021 RENZ Consulting equity audit of UPD.
   a. Take proactive steps to address the culture of police within UPD with the goal of shifting from a warrior mentality to a community engagement and service model as outlined in the Executive Summary.
      i. In implementing recommendation 1 of the RENZ Consulting Executive summary, position community engagement and cooperation as a cornerstone of developing the department's policing philosophy.
   b. The CCC especially supports recommendations 7, 8, and 9 of the RENZ Consulting Executive summary regarding the relationship between UPD and WSU Counseling Services. See also Area 5.2 of this document.
   c. In implementing recommendation 5 of the RENZ Consulting Executive summary, require UPD to participate in cultural awareness and competency training.
i. Recruit and compensate WSU faculty to participate in developing UPD cultural awareness and competency training. The university should prioritize utilizing the excellent WSU faculty expertise in this area rather than or in addition to seeking outside firms.

ii. Offer the opportunity for UPD to take university coursework focused on diversity and inclusion. To avoid the introduction of dangerous power dynamics into classrooms, it may be advisable that such opportunities be offered either asynchronously or separate from regular WSU course curriculum. Under no circumstances should officers be permitted to participate in in-person courses with WSU students and faculty while armed.

d. Expand recommendation 11 of the RENZ Consulting Executive Summary to include evaluating all UPD enforcement practices through the lens of racial equity.

e. Engage with campus stakeholders in developing a Bias-Free Policing policy as described in recommendation 12 of the RENZ Consulting Executive Summary.

4. Engage in an additional audit with specific emphasis on UPD interactions with the campus community along the lines of gender, sexuality, and disability.

5. Examine use of force policies and revisit the 2007 decision regarding the arming of UPD.

   a. Audit use of force policies to assess impact on the campus community along lines of race, gender, sexuality, and disability.

   b. Reconsider the justifications for the 2007 decision to arm UPD and whether they continue to apply today.

   c. Utilize the Campus Conversation venue to educate the campus body, including dispelling common myths and re-imagining the meaning of campus safety.

6. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan:

   a. STRATEGY 2.3: Embrace student-centeredness as a guiding principle for faculty and staff, and adopt holistic student support as a University-wide imperative

   b. STRATEGY 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups

   c. STRATEGY 5.3: Continue to equip and encourage all faculty and staff to address the diverse and evolving needs of a changing student body

   d. STRATEGY 6.4: Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity

**Area 5: Institutional Support Recommendations**

1. University and departments need to provide extensive and proactive support services for incoming students including, but not limited to:

   a. Cultivating a university wide climate where students feel empowered to ask for help.

   b. Discipline specific tutoring to address student pedagogical needs.
c. Robust early warning mechanisms not focused on “counselling out” students, but addressing student needs.

2. Provide more funding to counseling services to have more resources for preventative support and care.
   a. To the extent possible, expand services to include all Worcester State students not fully served by existing services, specifically IELI and graduate student groups.
   b. Encourage the hiring of diverse counselors or counselors with expertise in engaging with marginalized populations to address the unique needs of Worcester State’s population.
   c. Explore collaboration with local mental health and advocacy organizations with experience and expertise in serving marginalized populations.
   d. Extend and enhance the case management structure.

3. Offer a series of intercultural communication workshops through CTL and OMA, especially on difficult topics.
   a. Parallel efforts around difficult conversations with CTL, OMA & TWA programming to offer strategies for campus staff, faculty, and offices to address issues around diversity and equity.
   b. Develop CTL workshops on having uncomfortable conversations within personal relationships.

4. Build out OMA’s Multicultural Programming Model (multi-tiered membership and development of themes that are centered around current events and workshops geared at diversity and equity.)
   a. Provide ongoing funding to OMA’s multicultural programming committee to support ongoing efforts through the office.

5. Investigate whether departments have the capacity to offer Intercultural Communication Courses specific to their discipline and department.
   a. Recommend the creation or offering of discipline specific coursework on Intercultural Communication.

6. Ensure resources allocated to the CTL are adequate to support University-wide priorities relating to academic excellence and distinction as outlined in the strategic plan, with specific reference to the university’s diversity goals in instruction.
   a. Provide instruction on how to include BIPOC experiences across all courses.
   b. Provide instruction on culturally informed pedagogy.

7. Create an instructional design position in the CTL to develop best practices for universal design components and including diverse experiences in course design and pedagogy.

8. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan:
   a. STRATEGY 1.2: Support and celebrate excellent teaching, and expand opportunities for broadening pedagogical expertise through both internal and external professional development
   b. STRATEGY 1.5: Enhance support for scholarly and creative work that is applied, innovative, interdisciplinary, and inclusive of marginalized traditions
   c. STRATEGY 2.3: Embrace student-centeredness as a guiding principle for faculty and staff, and adopt holistic student support as a University-wide imperative
d. STRATEGY 2.5: Adopt a mentoring model of advising and ensure faculty and staff are appropriately trained to deliver effective support to a more diverse student body

e. STRATEGY 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups

f. STRATEGY 5.3: Continue to equip and encourage all faculty and staff to address the diverse and evolving needs of a changing student body

g. STRATEGY 6.3: Ensure technology, facilities, and systems are adequate to support operational needs and strategic goals

h. STRATEGY 6.4: Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity
Worcester State University Bias Incident Response Team

Academic Year 2020-2021 Draft Report

Submitted May 21, 2021

Committee Membership

Co-Chairs: Dr. Tanya Mears and Maureen Stokes

Committee Members: Johnathan Flowers, Adrian Gage, Leah Guzman, Erica Hanlon, Matthew Hare, Jaylene Hurley, Anna Johnson, Jason Kapurch, Joshua Katz, Thomas Kelley, Russell Kinell, Laura Murphy, Jennifer Quinn, Brittany Rende, Jeremiah Riordon, Karen Shalev, Marcela Uribe-Jennings.

Ex-Officio: Maria Isabel Gariepy and Stacey Luster

Introduction

BIRT efforts during the 2020-2021 academic year began with a focus on programming addressing bias incidents reported to our campus community. As the academic year progressed, the focus of the work concentrated on mitigating and addressing bias incidents and its response. BIRT members continue to sound the alarm in response to both anti-Black and anti-Asian bias incidents nation-wide. BIRT coordinated messaging and programming around national events of bias in collaboration with faculty, staff, and students. As the Spring semester progressed, the global pandemic made the role of institutional efforts shift. However, BIRT continued to meet virtually as scheduled. BIRT continues to explore further programming opportunities for early Fall and work to be completed by Staff over the Summer 2021.

Achievements/ New Initiatives and Activities

❖ The Bias Incident Response Team (BIRT) collaborated with other campus organizations promoting DEI, while also working to alert faculty, staff and students of the severity of anti-Asian and anti-Asian Americans violence taking place in the United States. Further, BIRT issued a statement of solidarity with faculty and offices. The BIRT response was amplified by the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Third World Alliance, the largest multicultural student organization on campus.

❖ BIRT outreach and awareness around its mission. BIRT undertook a review of the ways the purpose and the responsibilities of the committee were communicated to the university community (see next bullet point).
As reviewed and suggested by BIRT last academic year, further communication around reporting mechanisms was necessary, specifically for our student population. Over the summer and during the fall and winter (2020-2021), the Office of Diversity and Inclusion met this need by developing sessions tailored in length and scope, both live and recorded, to explain the work of the Office of Diversity & Inclusion, the different DEI committees and options for reporting bias incidents as well as discrimination complaints. Sessions were offered to incoming students, RAs, student orientation leaders, SGA, among other campus groups requesting such information.

BIRT brochure and poster branding updates will take place over the summer. This poster, which was designed by students last year, will be fully implemented and distributed in high-traffic areas on campus by fall 2021. As a result of this project, BIRT recognized the need for further updates to the brochure to bring the design of the brochure and the information provided in line with the poster itself. The distribution of the posters to high traffic areas, including residence halls, is planned to proceed ahead of the Fall 2021 semester. The brochure will be in student-centric areas and expected completion is summer 2021 so it can be used during orientation and training of key student populations.

BIRT receives a log of complaints, BIRT incidents, and other discrimination concerns and findings handled by the Office of Diversity & Inclusion. This report includes dates, complainant and respondent affiliation, as well as the subject of the alleged discrimination and the general finding, without detailing any identifiable or other case related information. In order to continue reinforcing institutional transparency and accountability; we are recommending that such a report be shared on the WSU website going forward. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion can be the host of this information, as they update and revamp DEI institutional information under their scope. This report can be made accessible to WSU users, with the necessary firewall/security protections in place.

The student-founded Chabad chapter was organized in the Spring of 2020. The organization serves and supports Jewish students on campus through social, cultural, religious, and educational programming; in partnership with local Jewish leadership from Central Mass Chabad and a WSU faculty advisor. During the AY 2020-2021, members of Chabad recruited eight active student members. Events included: Shabbat dinners; to-go packages; holiday to-go packages; and holiday celebrations; which are available to those at WSU who self-identify as Jewish: faculty, students, and staff, and members of the WSU community who do not self-identify as Jewish. Chabad has also been actively involved in voicing student concerns regarding rising rates of anti-Semitism and other issues of concern to Jewish students. The next academic year will include ongoing events supported by BIRT to address the concerns of Jewish students, staff, and faculty. Event opportunities include: experts from trusted organizations describing the causes and manifestations of anti-Semitism and what the university can do to eliminate it. This includes introducing the preferred definition of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s definition of anti-Semitism; Holocaust education; and diaspora education. BIRT should also be open to extra event opportunities as Jewish students respond to being back on campus.
In the AY 2020-2021, 770 students completed the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion training module. This included incoming freshmen, Resident Assistants and students participating through course work assigned by their Faculty, both a required work and as complementary/optional work. The Diversity, Equity & Inclusion training module incorporates topics related to identities, power, privilege, oppression, and how to create a culture of respect. Additional resources and information will be added to the EVERFI customization for the 2021-2022 academic school year, including specific information related to BIRT and how to file a bias incident report. EVERFI is an online learning platform that is assigned to targeted student populations and managed by Student Affairs personnel that are part of the BIRT.

BIRT organized a student mentoring program for student members of the committee. It is designed to help students not only understand BIRT’s role, but also help them understand their responsibilities as committee members of the team. Mentoring BIRT student representatives helped the specific students very much. Student members were encouraged to be ambassadors for BIRT. They explained BIRT’s purpose to their fellow students. They also encouraged students to report events to the BIRT committee so their concerns could be effectively documented and addressed through proper institutional channels. Current students serving in BIRT have been contacted about continued support from Faculty and Staff on BIRT who have volunteered to serve in a mentor capacity. As of now, the students serving in BIRT have expressed interest for an informal type of mentoring relationship going forward, which will be explored further in summer and fall 2021.

Closing

Although a good portion of the programming taking place in the Fall and Spring semesters of AY 2020-2021 was focused on/ in response to the bias incidents that took place on campus and the national climate of hostility toward marginalized populations, the outcomes and main events such as the campus-wide Asian-American Solidarity rally and sessions around how to report incidents of bias and hate on campus, can be seen as setting the stage for future opportunities for training and messaging from this group to the campus community in any Fall 2021 scenario.

BIRT recognizes and underlines the current and ongoing challenges presented to our campus community as a result of this global pandemic, which has exacerbated bias incidents against subgroups of our population. Further, BIRT recognizes the increasing national climate of hostility towards marginalized populations, specifically the Asian-American community. As such, BIRT’s work is of particular importance as we delve into more concrete plans to define the Fall semester while continuing to utilize different modalities and inclusive opportunities for accessing future programming and education opportunities. As a group, we will need to develop further efforts and define the strategy regarding communication, structuring and delivery of such opportunities in the upcoming months.
Committee Membership:

Co-Chairs: Christina Santana and Frances Manocchio

Committee Members: Marilyn Cleary, Johnathan Flowers, Adrian Gage, Susan Mitroka-Batsford, Cara Berg Powers, Michelle Puch, Karen Shalev, Hardeep Sidhu, Mark Wagner.

Ex-Officio: Maria Isabel Gariepy, Stacey Luster.

Over the past year, we, the Advisory Committee for Equal Opportunity, Diversity & Affirmative Action, have discussed ways that the university can meet its affirmative action goals by enabling search committee members to move past their biases and choose candidates from increasingly diverse and historically underrepresented/underserved backgrounds. The committee has also extensively discussed ways to attract a variety of programming and training to be offered to the campus community within the structures/avenues already in place. While it may be the purview of the Campus Climate Committee, we also recognize that without a deep investment in a welcoming and supportive environment, meeting hiring goals will be of little to no consequence, given the likelihood of retention.

In support of the values outlined in the strategic plan,

**Strategies and Initiatives Related to Equity** (excerpt from the WSU Strategic Plan 2020-2025)

**PEOPLE AND CULTURE**

- Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups
- Recruit, retain and reward high-quality and historically minoritized faculty and staff committed to educating and supporting a diverse student body
- Continue to equip and encourage all faculty and staff to address the diverse and evolving needs of a changing student body
- Conduct an equity audit
- Promote campus-wide cultural fluency, anchored in WSU’s core values, to foster greater understanding and inclusion of the diverse cultures represented in the WSU community
- Implement a strategic recruitment and retention strategy for under-represented faculty and staff, including visiting faculty, adjuncts, and international hires
- Offer multiple levels of staff and faculty training, from beginner to advanced, on issues relating to diversity, equity and inclusion.
I. INCREASING DIVERSITY OF FACULTY AND STAFF

Recommendation #1 Cluster Hire Historically Minoritized Faculty for the New Interdisciplinary Department

For searches starting in Fall 2021, we recommend the strategy of cluster hiring to increase the diversity of racial and ethnic representation of the Worcester State University community, specifically the faculty. Faculty searches that do not result in a hire that would contribute to increasing the diversity composition/representation of minority groups at WSU should be considered failed searches. For more information, see Recommendation #5.

Recommendation #2 Promote Faculty Involved in Diversity Support

A proposal, from the University, for a pathway towards a tenure-track position for full-time temporary faculty who contribute to the diversity of Worcester State University. (This will need to be negotiated during bargaining). This is in specific regard to full-time-temporary faculty who have been actively engaged in moving forward the equity agenda set forth by Commissioner Santiago and/or have contributed towards Worcester State University’s DEI efforts. Work done contributing to these purposes should be accounted for in both the Service and Continuing Scholarship areas of review.

Recommendation #3 Create Adjunct to Tenure Pipeline

Seek out opportunities to promote Adjunct and Part-Time Faculty toward more senior or tenure-track positions by prioritizing existing WSU records of service in hiring searches, in particular in the case that they increase the goals of the Strategic Plan around equity and inclusion. Documentation of course materials, support for students of color and first-generation students, and other relevant experience should be considered in hiring to full-time positions.

Recommendation #4 President Visits to Departments to Discuss Diversity

This committee feels that President Maloney’s active voice and presence at department and other group meetings would better enable him to explain his vision for diversity, discuss specifics for unique groups, and encourage concrete and meaningful improvement and change (including, but not limited to, the establishment and development of departmental and group specific diversity goals).

We also see real value in the President working with the Staff Navigator and the Faculty Fellow positions we recommend later in this report to speak to diversity support campus wide. For more information, see recommendation #2 under the Funding/Resources section.

Recommendation #5 Allow Failed Searches to Prioritize Hiring a More Diverse Staff

We recommend that search committees prioritize candidates that increase the diversity and Affirmative Action institutional/departmental/division goals to the extent that searches may “fail” if the candidate pool includes qualified applicants from minoritized groups and the search committee does not hire one of such candidates. For those cases where the labor market exists
for such positions, the committee recommends tenure track positions be filled with Adjuncts if the hire does not meet the Affirmative Action goals set forth.

We appreciate President Maloney’s example in this regard from a recent example he shared with the MSCA Union Executive Board about the search for Campus Police Officers.

Recommendation #6 Budget and Prioritize Activities to Proactively Seek out Historically Minoritized Candidates

We recommend the exploration of other proactive recruitment techniques to recruit historically minoritized candidates in addition to current approaches of attending national conferences. Departments could be queried to identify key opportunities to reach a more diverse pool of experts in each field, including outreach to specific programs and professional/affinity organizations, while reducing reliance on personal networks for recruitment of faculty and staff.

II. COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Recommendation #1 Update Existing Language Used to Attract and Retain a Diverse Workforce

Last year, a team of faculty and administrators worked on the Higher Education Innovation Fund grant study focused on diversifying the faculty. That effort identified a series of updates that could be made to better attract and retain a diverse workforce, often women and faculty of color. Specifically, there were four places where language on diversity and inclusion and engagement might be updated and be made more specific.

This committee recommends that these changes are implemented:

- **The WSU Prospectus.** A key publication of HR in recruitment and marketing the school. This document was reviewed for verbiage, images, and missing content. A series of recommended changes was submitted.

- **The Chronicle Ad:** Every Fall, WSU runs an ad in the Chronicle of Higher Education, announcing the tenure track faculty vacancies. This ad already speaks to our work with the tagline: Changing Lives, in and out of the classroom. This ad and video link should be reviewed and new recommendations should be made.

- **Messaging Content on Social Media:** A review of the language and images used on social media, particularly as it relates to LinkedIn, should be reviewed to ensure consistent communication of diversity and inclusion values.

- **Interview Exchange:** A review of the paragraph of content unique to WSU should determine if the language fully expresses our diversity and inclusion values.

Further review of those documents that includes our leadership (and new diversity-focused positions Staff Navigator and Faculty Fellow) would be ideal to ensure that changes that will reflect the values of diversity and inclusion and engaged scholarship at WSU.
Recommendation #2 Place Historically Minoritized Faculty and Staff in Charge of Task Forces

According to Frank Dobbins, renowned expert on why diversity programs fail, evidence from data on over 600 studies, covering 30 years, shows that diversity managers and faculty-led task forces have strong positive effects on diversity.

We recommend prioritizing the people most impacted by our DEI efforts to the leadership roles of said efforts, such as teams of faculty and staff serving on committees and other diversity task forces or councils. As a reminder to earlier recommendations, work done contributing to these purposes should be accounted for in both the Service and Scholarship areas of review.

Recommendation #3 Introduce a LASC Task Force

Following from recommendation #2, we see an opportunity to create a task force to support the implementation of the new Diversity Content Area with the following focus areas:

- This taskforce should assess all previous courses designated Diversity Across the Curriculum for inclusion in the new Diversity Content Area.
- This task force should also have the freedom to recommend revision of old syllabi to bring them in line with the requirements of the Diversity Content Area as well as to reject those courses that fail to meet the requirements of the Diversity Content Area.
- This taskforce should develop methodologies to help departments and faculty to diversity their curriculum and the materials offered in their courses.

Recommendation #4 Support a More Diverse Faculty through Child Care Access

We recommend the exploration of partnerships with local child care facilities/providers such as QCC’s Education Lab School to better attract, support and retain Faculty and Staff and offer child care access for new hires. Explore possibilities for similar programs at Worcester State University. Dr. Frank Dobbins suggested there were three effective means to increase diversity identified in his study.

Recommendation #5 Increase Communication

We recommend that communication between projects, DEI related committees, faculty, staff, and students increase and improve though the following actions:

- Collect information on the various committees and task forces, HR, marketing, faculty and co-curricular efforts related to DEI.
- Centralize and prioritize communication of campus opportunities and information to faculty, staff, and students as it relates to DEI efforts and programming to ensure broader audience reach.
- Take advantage of “Opening Day” breakout sessions to announce the plans/roadmap regarding DEI efforts, committees work, search processes and hiring.
III. FUNDING/RESOURCES

Recommendation #1: Creation of a Budget Line for Initiatives that Impact D, I, and AA

We recommend that a budget line item be created to serve initiatives that impact diversity inclusion and affirmative action prioritized by this committee. Currently, the only monies devoted to these commitments are specific to the diversity mini grant fund, which is not substantial enough to attract applications or move the needle in any significant way.

As the charge specifies, we must “evaluate institutional compliance with respect to all equal opportunity, diversity, and affirmative action programs, and to recommend appropriate strategies to the President.”

We request that $50,000 be set aside and earmarked for use by the advisory committee to pursue the diversity goals articulated by this committee in support of the strategic plan. Specifically, we aim to fund the following initiatives:

- Diversity Support Navigator and Faculty Fellow Initiative (See recommendation #2 below)
- Diversity and Inclusion focused Tiered Training (see recommendation #1 in the Training section below)
- Diversity Advocates Program (see recommendation #2 in the Training section below)

Other options are being explored to develop training on campus, and existing resources (HERC, CUPA, and online employee compliance system) will be utilized when possible.

Recommendation #2: Creation of a Diversity Support Navigator and Faculty Fellow

We recommend that two part-time positions be created - these two positions would be filled by one staff member and one faculty member, who are focused on engaging with, supporting, mentoring, and helping to retain faculty and staff of color.

Institutions that have similar positions include

- Pikes Peak Community College [https://www.ppcc.edu/fellows](https://www.ppcc.edu/fellows)
- University of Tennessee at Knoxville [https://diversity.utk.edu/campus-initiatives/academic-diversity-initiative/faculty-and-administrative-fellows-program/](https://diversity.utk.edu/campus-initiatives/academic-diversity-initiative/faculty-and-administrative-fellows-program/)
- University of North Carolina, Asheville [https://academicaffairs.unca.edu/faculty-openings/university-fellowship-for-faculty-diversity/](https://academicaffairs.unca.edu/faculty-openings/university-fellowship-for-faculty-diversity/)

We believe that the creation of these positions would enable WSU to be competitive and attract candidates whose identities contribute to a more diverse campus or who are committed to diversity and inclusion.

Fuller position descriptions, with our best initial ideas regarding responsibilities and qualifications, are attached.
IV. TRAINING

The following recommendations were forwarded in the 2020 final report. Due to the COVID pandemic, they were unimplementable. Therefore, we include them again as we still believe that they are vital to enabling the university to meet its affirmative action goals by enabling search committee members to move past their biases and choose candidates from increasingly diverse and historically underrepresented/underserved backgrounds.

Recommendation #1: Diversity and Inclusion focused Tiered Training

We recommend that a tiered training is developed during the summer of 2021 to be piloted during the fall 2021-2022 academic year. In order to achieve this initiative, we recommend that a small cohort of committee members (3-5 total) from the different committees that work on Diversity and Inclusion initiatives/issues on campus (CCC, BIRT, LGBTQ+ and AA/EO) develop such a program over the summer months.

The committee originally imagined the initiative as a summer working group project that would combine the efforts of multiple committees. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has shifted budgets and changed plans; we recognize this is no longer possible as originally imagined. Instead, we have worked collaboratively with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion as they lead this effort through this time. The committee expects continued collaboration in the fall as soon as we return to normal operations.

The sessions the committee supports and recommends are implemented as part of the tiered training may be available individually or as part of a comprehensive Certificate program. Examples include:

- 2-hour workshops that further the WSU’s Five Point Plan of Action with specific key learning outcomes.
  - Diversity & Inclusion: Necessary Skills for a Welcoming Environment
  - Power & Privilege: How We Use Them and Their Impact at WSU
  - Who Gets Hired: The Impact of Bias in Hiring and Retention

- One-week (5 full days) programs of instruction/training time and can be offered both in-person or online, in a time-customized manner.
  - Mindfulness as a Catalyst for Equity & Social Justice

- 2-hour (faculty led) workshops under a “train the trainer” program.
  - Principles and Practices of Inclusive Pedagogy

The estimated cost of this program, based on projections provided by vendors, is 20,000.

Recommendation #2: Diversity Advocates Initiative

An increasing number of higher education institutions, both private and public, have adopted a Diversity Advocate model within search committees. This model works more effectively when
part of a comprehensive set of strategies all taking place at a given time on a given campus, not done in isolation. Some models and examples are detailed and can be explored here:

- https://facultyaffairs.gwu.edu/diversity-advocate
- https://searchadvocate.oregonstate.edu/about
- https://diverseeducation.com/article/149878/

Overall, the concept involves the use of Diversity Representatives or Advocates that typically and predominantly function as consultants to the search committee process from an AA/EO perspective. Most Diversity Advocates undergo extensive training and have the capacity to train other individuals in these topics, including in a train the trainer model. Diversity Advocates educate themselves and others on issues of discrimination, privilege, other social justice issues, as well as matters related to the context of search committees, with an AA/EO lens. We recommend that university faculty, staff, and administrators be provided with advanced non-discriminatory training which would allow them to act as Diversity Advocates. In particular, we imagine that within search committees, Diversity Advocates would be able to advocate for candidates from traditionally underrepresented and underserved groups and have a more in-depth knowledge of best practices, unconscious bias, and other aspects of successful search committees.

Faculty, staff, and administrators interested in becoming Diversity Advocates would take a series of trainings designed to enhance and expand basic training.

Current trainings would be considered a prerequisite:
- Title IX,
- anti-discrimination / harassment,
- search committee orientation,

As well, more specialized opportunities:
- Safe Spaces,
- Bias Impact in Hiring and retention,
- Power & Privilege, etc.

These trainings could be drawn upon from the organized series of tiered training (see Recommendation # 1). Furthermore, specialized/ tailored options would be specifically designed with search committee dynamics and Diversity Advocates in mind and can include Job competency-based interview questions, Social Justice focused hiring practices, amongst others. Once a tiered diversity and inclusion training program is in place, individuals who aspire to serve as Diversity Advocates would be required to complete the most advanced level of training. Ideally, a significant percentage of WSU faculty, staff, and administrators could be diversity advocates. We envision no less than 10% of the full-time employee population, in order to ensure participation of Diversity Advocates across all searches taking place on campus. Ideally, when search committees are formed a chair and a diversity advocate are identified. The hiring manager should work with the EO officer to identify the Diversity Advocate for the search committee.
APPENDIX 1

Brainstorming Priorities for the EODAA Committee 2020-2021

Over the course of the year, the members identified and pursued the following priorities in subcommittees.

**Hiring a More Diverse Faculty and Staff Related Questions**
1. How does WSU currently approach hiring historically minoritized faculty and staff (i.e., job advertisements, recruitment, requesting diversity statements of candidates, etc)?
2. What training could be offered (now or in the future) that might effectively impact the whole picture of hiring historically minoritized faculty and staff? Maybe with the goal of setting some specific framing around what equity looks like on our campus? (one answer might be the “Diversity and Inclusion Focused Tiered-training Initiative”)
3. How might we advocate for or otherwise initialize strategic approaches (i.e., cluster or targeted hiring) to diversify the faculty and staff?
4. How can we effectively and respectfully intervene in search committees to ensure that bias does not impede the recruitment and selection of historically minoritized faculty and staff? (one answer might be the “Diversity Advocates Initiative”)

**Communication and Engagement Related Questions**
1. How might we leverage the current moment to provide the campus community with answers to their questions, including, why aren’t there more Black professors?
2. What can be done to engage, encourage, and/or enforce the diversifying of inert departments? Specifically, how can we encourage departments and faculty to diversify their curriculum and the materials offered in their courses.
3. How can we support campus leaders interested in leveraging the expertise of internal and community-based individuals to provide diversity and inclusion-focused content? (one answer is to develop the “Diversity Speakers List”)
4. How can we more effectively inspire and fund faculty, staff, and students to take on and execute projects within their own circles that promote diversity, equity and inclusion? (one answer is to continue promoting the “Diversity Mini Grant”)
5. How can we increase student engagement and awareness of the efforts of this committee? (a few ideas include connecting with professors whose courses achieve a “Diversity” LASC designation, working with the SGA, attending student events).
6. How can we respond to or productively engage with campus community members’ mistrust of affirmative action initiatives?

**Resources and Funding Related Questions**
1. What resources can we call upon and rely on to fund initiatives recommended by this committee?
APPENDIX 2

Staff Navigator for Diversity Support

A diverse staff is essential to Worcester State University’s mission to create an environment which allows all members of our campus community to succeed. We understand that faculty members with diverse identities may have higher retention rates if supported by peer mentors and opportunities to meet and build relationships with other BIPOC staff as they acclimate, settle into, and thrive in their roles at WSU.

This position is responsible for enabling the success of retaining BIPOC staff, a component of the Strategic Plan. The successful integration of historically minoritized staff members will be the focus. Responsibilities include communication with BIPOC staff, facilitating opportunities for community engagement and mentoring BIPOC staff to support the retention of new staff members of color.

Responsibilities:
- Working with human resources to help to support and retain BIPOC staff members.
- Coordinating events to assist historically minoritized staff as they join the WSU community through community building and mentoring activities.
- Serving as a resource for BIPOC staff with any questions they may have as they become acclimated to the university.
- Assist new BIPOC staff in developing a sense of belonging to WSU’s campus community.
- Providing BIPOC staff about opportunities for professional development and networking opportunities.

Requirements:
- Member of the WSU staff/administration team
- Strong understanding of and commitment to the diversity goals outlined in the strategic plan
- Experience as an advisor and/or mentor
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills

Compensation: $30/hr * 10 hours/week * 50 weeks/year = $15,000/year

Reports to: Human Resources

Estimated Cost: $15,000/ year
Faculty Fellow for Diversity Support

A diverse faculty is essential to Worcester State University’s mission to create an environment which allows all members of our campus community to succeed. We understand that faculty members with diverse identities may have higher retention rates if supported by faculty mentors and opportunities to meet and build relationships with other BIPOC faculty as they acclimate to their roles at WSU.

This position is responsible for enabling the success of retaining BIPOC faculty, a component of the Strategic Plan. The successful integration of historically minoritized faculty members will be the focus. Responsibilities include communication with BIPOC faculty, facilitating opportunities for community engagement and mentoring BIPOC faculty to support the retention of new faculty members of color.

Responsibilities:
- Working with human resources to help to support and retain BIPOC faculty members.
- Coordinating events to assist historically minoritized faculty as they join the WSU community through community building and mentoring activities.
- Serving as a resource for BIPOC faculty with any questions they may have as they become acclimated to the university.
- Assist new BIPOC faculty in developing a sense of belonging to WSU’s campus community.
- Providing BIPOC faculty about opportunities for professional development and networking opportunities.

Requirements:
- Ph.D. or Ed.D., rank of Assistant (including VAPs), Associate or Full Professor
- Strong understanding of and commitment to the diversity goals outlined in the strategic plan
- Experience as an advisor and/or mentor
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills

Compensation: three (3) credit APR per semester

Reports to: Human Resources

Estimated Cost: $15,000/ year
Massachusetts Development Finance Agency
Worcester State University; Public Coll/Univ - Unlimited Student Fees

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Credit Profile

Massachusetts Development Finance Agency, Massachusetts
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Rating Action


As of June 30, 2020, WSU had $22 million in total debt outstanding, composed of MDFA-issued series 2007 bonds of $41,000 and series 2012 bonds of $8.9 million, as well as a $13 million financing agreement with MSCBA to fund part of its wellness project that was completed in 2016. The 2012 bonds are a general obligation of WSU and do not contain a debt service reserve (DSR).

WSU makes lease payments to cover the associated debt service on additional bonds that are separately secured dormitory bonds issued through the Massachusetts State College Building Authority (MSCBA). These bonds are secured by project revenues, multi-tiered series of DSRs, and a state intercept if project revenues are insufficient to secure all MSCBA debt. The MSCBA finances auxiliary debt for state colleges and universities. For more information on the security and pledge related to these debt obligations, see the full analysis on the MSCBA, published Feb. 21, 2020, on RatingsDirect. As of June 30, 2020, total debt outstanding issued through the MSCBA for WSU was $117 million. The university's adjusted maximum annual debt service (MADS) burden, including these required lease payments, is just under 8% of fiscal 2020 operating expenses, which is somewhat high but manageable for the rating. The MSCBA refinanced its outstanding debt in summer 2020, restructuring debt service to be lower in fiscal years 2021 and 2022 given current enrollment and occupancy levels across the state colleges and universities. In our view, this provides some flexibility as WSU and the other institutions rebuild occupancy levels to ultimate support required lease payments under this debt structure.

While there is a high level of uncertainty regarding the duration and extent of the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak, we believe that WSU has taken prudent steps to ensure the safety of its students, faculty, and staff, while also supporting financial stability. In March 2020, the university transitioned to an online format and reopened for fall 2020 with a combination of in-person, hybrid, and fully virtual learning. The university incurred about $4.5 million in COVID-19 related costs in fiscal 2020, including approximately $2.8 million in room and board refunds to students. WSU was allocated about $4.2 million in Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act stimulus.
funding, 50% of which went directly to aid students with emergency funding and the remainder for institutional use. About $1.9 million of the student related funds were spent in fiscal 2020, with the rest utilized in fiscal 2021. In addition, under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act 2021 (CRRSAA), WSU has been allocated an additional $5.2 million for the institution and $2.1 million for student support. Management expects to utilize these funds in fiscal 2021 as well.

With some portion of students on campus, WSU reopened its dorms but did limit occupancy for health and safety reasons. Housing occupancy in fall 2020 was 58% compared with 99% the prior year; current occupancy for the spring is 42%. Auxiliary revenue typically accounts for just over 10% of total adjusted operating revenue. Given the enrollment and occupancy pressures faced by all state colleges and universities, the MSCBA refinanced its outstanding obligations last summer for significant savings. In addition, the refinancing lowered near-term debt payments to provide relief while institutions move toward achieving closer to historical occupancy levels beyond the impacts of the current pandemic. In addition to this relief on required lease payments to support debt service, WSU also took a close look at expense savings and delaying deferred maintenance needs to balance the fiscal 2021 budget. We understand with these efforts, as well as the support from CARES and CRRSAA, the university expects to post close to breakeven operations for fiscal 2021.

Credit overview

We assessed WSU's enterprise profile as strong, reflecting fairly stable enrollment, outside of the large decline for fall 2020 affected by COVID-19, sufficient demand metrics for a school that largely has a regional draw in a competitive market, and proactive management team. We assessed WSU's financial profile as very strong, characterized by healthy available resource levels and low MADS burden, reflecting the benefit of its relationship with the MSCBA, which offset operating deficits on a full-accrual basis. The combined enterprise and financial profile assessments lead to an indicative standalone credit profile of 'a+'. As our criteria indicate, the final rating can be within one notch of the of the indicative credit level. In our view, the final 'A' rating on the university's bonds better reflects WSU's relatively modest enrollment base with weakening selectivity and financial performance trends that lag higher rated peers.

The 'A' rating also reflects our assessment of WSU's:

- Fairly stable enrollment over the past five years, outside of the large decline for fall 2020, with acceptable demand metrics for the rating level;
- History of modest operating deficits on a full-accrual basis, though the university has posted consistent cash-based operating surpluses;
- Steady operating and fringe benefit appropriations from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and expected capital support; and
- Low debt levels, with a 1.4% MADS burden of fiscal 2020 operating expenses.

Partially offsetting credit factors include our view of WSU's:

- Significant amount of off-balance-sheet debt, issued for WSU through the MSCBA, which somewhat understates the university's MADS burden and financial resource ratios relative to debt;
- Strong competition for students from other state schools, including community colleges; and
• Somewhat low adjusted unrestricted net assets (UNA) to operating expense metric for the rating level, though this ratio has improved in recent years.

The stable outlook reflects our expectation that beyond the current impacts of the pandemic, enrollment will rebound, operations will remain consistent, and available resources will likely grow incrementally, with no additional debt expected.

WSU is a public, commonwealth-supported university located in Worcester, Mass. While the university, prior to COVID-19, had been focused on expanding its on-campus residential presence, it still caters to a large commuter population, which accounts for two-thirds of the student body, according to management. WSU offers 60 undergraduate majors and minors; 29 master's degrees, post-baccalaureate certificates, and graduate programs; and real-time access to online, noncredit professional training. The university is expanding its online programs and launch fully online graduate programs in nursing and education for the first time. WSU is accredited by the New England Commission on Higher Education.

**Environment, social, and governance factors**
We view the risks posed by COVID-19 as an elevated social risk for all higher education entities given the uncertainty around the duration and impact on overall operations. As WSU has adopted strategies to protect the health The pandemic has affected WSU's enrollment levels and mode of instruction, creating revenue and expense pressures. Despite the elevated social risk, we believe the university's environmental and governance risk are in line with our view of the sector.

**Stable Outlook**

**Downside scenario**
We could consider a negative rating action during the outlook period if WSU's enrollment declines substantially, full-accrual deficits continue to grow, or if available resources decline relative to operating expenses and debt. We would also consider a significant increase in debt or notable cuts in commonwealth support to be a credit risk. While we believe management has been proactive in its response, unforeseen pressures from the pandemic that cause material weakening of demand, finances, or the trajectory of university may also result in a negative rating action.

**Upside scenario**
We consider a positive rating action as unlikely over the outlook period given the current enrollment and financial challenges presented by COVID-19, as well as the impacts of a slow economic recovery. We could consider such an action over the longer term should WSU's enrollment and demand trends strengthen significantly, with consistent surpluses on a full-accrual basis and growth in available resources to a level commensurate with a higher rating.

**Credit Opinion**
Enterprise Profile

Economic fundamentals
In our view, the university has limited geographic diversity. About 94% of WSU’s students are drawn from within Massachusetts, with the vast majority from Worcester County, where the university is located. Therefore, our assessment of WSU’s economic fundamentals is anchored by Massachusetts' GDP per capita.

Market position and demand
Outside of the disruption caused by the current pandemic, enrollment at WSU had been fairly steady in prior years as part of an intentional enrollment maintenance strategy. Fall 2020 enrollment declined across both undergraduate and graduate programs, though we view the 5.4% decline in full-time equivalent enrollment as generally consistent with regional and industry wide trends. For the current academic year, just under 25% of students are in-person, about 15% are hybrid, and the remainder are learning virtually. Given the impacts of the pandemic and uncertainty heading into fall 2021, management expects enrollment and demand for next year is likely to be affected as well. The university is planning for in-person learning to reach about 75% of total capacity, with continuation of virtual programming options, which should support some stabilizing trends.

Despite prior declines, freshman applications increased by about 4% for fall 2020, indicating that demand for the university is likely to remain steady over time despite demographic challenges in a competitive market. Selectivity has continued to weaken, though we view overall acceptance rates as still in line with that of other similarly rated regional universities. Softened selectivity is offset by improved retention rates, which are hovering just below 80%. In recent years, management has focused on centralized efforts to improve student retention, including retention-based scholarships, a student emergency fund, and comprehensive tracking of student data to function as an early alert system when a student may need additional support.

WSU's tuition is among the lowest for public colleges and universities in the commonwealth. Costs for the 2020-2021 school year for an in-state student, including tuition, room, and board, total $23,154, an increase of just under 3% from the previous year's cost due to an increase in fees as tuition has been flat. For the 2021-2022 academic year, tuition and fees will be held flat.

Management and governance
In our view, WSU is led by a capable and experienced senior management team, with good oversight provided by an active board of trustees. Barry Maloney, WSU's current president, joined the university in 2011, and the leadership team has been stable in recent years, with no expected changes. The university is in the early stages of implementing its current five-year strategic plan, which was finalized in summer 2020 and will guide priorities through 2025. Overall goals are aligned with prior areas of focus including the broad areas of academic excellence and distinction, student support and success, marketing and enrollment, community engagement and public good, people and culture, and
resources and infrastructure. There is a specific focus on equity as a driving force and improving access for first
generation students, and continuation of a goal to increase four-year graduation rates and a “Succeed in 4” initiative
that improves communication between students and advisors. WSU's six-year graduation rate is up to 58%, from a
previous low of 50%.

Financial Profile
Financial policies
The university has formal policies for reserves, investment management, and debt. It operates according to a five-year
strategic plan and has a formal reserve liquidity policy. The university meets standard annual disclosure requirements.
The financial policies assessment reflects our opinion that, while there may be some areas of risk, the organization's
overall financial policies are not likely to weaken its future ability to pay debt service. Our analysis of financial policies
includes a review of the organization's financial reporting and disclosure, investment allocation, liquidity, debt profile,
contingent liabilities, and legal structure, and a comparison of these policies with those of similar providers.

Financial performance
Overall, WSU has fluctuated between modest surpluses and deficits on a full-accrual basis, which we view as
manageable at the current rating level. Given the impacts of COVID-19, with increased costs and revenue pressures, as
well as a transfer of operating funds to its capital reserve fund, the university posted a deficit on a full-accrual basis for
fiscal 2020. WSU did not recognize the institutional portion of its CARES allocation in fiscal 2020. Including this
funding and conservative assumptions on enrollment and expenses, WSU's initial fiscal 2021 budget called for utilizing
operating reserves and deferring $2 million of deferred maintenance needs to support balanced operations. With the
additional relief funding from CRRSAA and careful expense management, WSU expects to offset these budget
pressures without utilizing the additional reserves. In addition, the university recognized some savings in utilities,
travel and dining as fewer students have been on campus. Performance for fiscal 2021 is expected to be close to
breakeven.

The largest source of WSU's adjusted operating revenue is tuition revenue, at 42% of the total, followed by state
operating appropriation at 36%, auxiliary operations at 10%, and other at 12%. The university received $41.1 million
—including fringe benefits and tuition remitted back to the state) in net state appropriation in fiscal 2020, up 4% from
2019. In addition, WSU received additional performance funding of $250,000 from the state, which is likely to be
ongoing in nature. For fiscal 2020, state appropriations are flat, with an additional $400,000 in funding that was
originally vetoed and then restored. At this time, fiscal 2022 state appropriations are expected to remain flat.

Available resources
We believe WSU's available resources overall are healthy; however, the university's adjusted UNA to operating
expense ratio is somewhat modest for the rating category, compared with those of the rating medians and the
university's peers. In fiscal 2019, WSU's adjusted UNA to operating expenses were 37.3%, reflecting some growth in
recent years. WSU maintains stronger ratios relative to debt outstanding, with available resources to debt at a much
higher 202%; however, we view this figure as overstated, as MSCBA is the conduit issuer for the majority of WSU's
debt. With MSCBA debt included in our ratios, fiscal 2020 available resources to debt equals approximately 30%,
which we view as modest, but sufficient for the rating level. The balance sheet also receives support from a small endowment, which had a fiscal 2020 market value of approximately $24.9 million. We expect resource ratios will remain somewhat steady given expectations of near breakeven operations and no plans for additional debt.

**Debt and contingent liabilities**

On Dec. 20, 2012, WSU entered into a memorandum of understanding with the commonwealth and the MSCBA to jointly finance a new wellness center at WSU (a $50.7 million project). Management indicates that the commonwealth used funds earmarked for the project in the amount of $25.5 million and the university used $15 million of MSBCA loan proceeds, as well as approximately $10 million of its reserves set aside for capital purposes. Although WSU's reserves were reduced as a result of the drawdown for the wellness center, the institution continues to rebuild reserves from previous and ongoing fundraising efforts.

WSU contributes to the Massachusetts State Employees’ Retirement System, a cost-sharing, multiple-employer, defined-benefit pension plan administered by the state of Massachusetts. We understand that the pension plan's funded status is approximately 66.3%, which we view as sufficient. Massachusetts sets its annual pension contribution based on its own methodology under state statute. It has not fully funded its annual required contribution since fiscal 2011, but currently plans to increase pension contributions by 8.9% per year to fully amortize the unfunded liability by 2036. WSU’s contributions for pension and other postemployment benefits are currently at 1.9% of total adjusted operating expenses, which we view as manageable.

### Worcester State University, Massachusetts Enterprise And Financial Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>--Fiscal year ended June 30--</th>
<th>Medians for 'A' rated public colleges and universities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enrollment and demand</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headcount</td>
<td>5,724</td>
<td>6,204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time equivalent</td>
<td>4,596</td>
<td>4,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman acceptance rate (%)</td>
<td>81.0</td>
<td>80.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman matriculation rate (%)</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduates as a % of total enrollment (%)</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>85.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman retention (%)</td>
<td>79.7</td>
<td>79.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation rates (six years) (%)</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>57.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income statement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted operating revenue ($000s)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>115,512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted operating expense ($000s)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>119,321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net adjusted operating income ($000s)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>(3,809)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net adjusted operating margin (%)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>(3.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated operating gain/loss before depreciation ($000s)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>1,664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in unrestricted net assets (UNA; $000s)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>(257)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State operating appropriations ($000s)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>41,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State appropriations to revenue (%)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Worcester State University, Massachusetts Enterprise And Financial Statistics (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>--Fiscal year ended June 30--</th>
<th>Medians for ‘A’ rated public colleges and universities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student dependence (%)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research dependence (%)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endowment and investment income dependence (%)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding debt ($000s)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>22,026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current debt service burden (%)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current MADS burden (%)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial resource ratios</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endowment market value ($000s)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>24,916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related foundation market value ($000s)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>35,116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and investments ($000s)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>52,328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNA ($000s)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>(17,788)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted UNA ($000s)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>44,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and investments to operations (%)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>43.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and investments to debt (%)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>237.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted UNA to operations (%)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted UNA plus debt service reserve to debt (%)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>201.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age of plant (years)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPEB liability to total liabilities (%)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Related Research

Through The ESG Lens 2.0: A Deeper Dive Into U.S. Public Finance Credit Factors, April 28, 2020