Worcester State University is a vibrant public university located in the residential west side of Worcester, Massachusetts—the second largest city in New England and home to 37,000 college students at more than a dozen colleges and universities in the area. Situated on a picturesque 58-acre campus, the University offers 92 undergraduate and graduate academic programs to roughly 6,400 students annually. The Princeton Review has consistently ranked us as “Best in the Northeast”. Of the public universities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Worcester State University is the only one to earn this distinction, which is largely based on academic quality and student surveys. Worcester State University champions academic excellence in a diverse, student-centered environment that fosters scholarship, creativity, and global awareness.

Since 1874, Worcester State University has served the region by educating students who are prepared for success. Our courses are taught by committed, accessible faculty offering engaging research opportunities.

University History and Current Programs

Founded in 1874 as a Normal School to train teachers, Worcester State University has grown to become a full-scale liberal arts and sciences university with programs spanning the biomedical sciences, business, humanities, behavioral sciences, the health professions, and, of course, education. Our fastest growing academic program is in criminal justice; our most academically competitive programs include nursing and occupational therapy; we offer interdisciplinary programs in urban studies and visual and performing arts; and star faculty are evident in departments as varied as chemistry, English, mathematics, and philosophy.

Worcester State University offers a growing Honors Program and 4+1 accelerated master’s degree options; 29 master’s degrees and graduate certificates; an Intensive English Language Institute; and an expanding set of continuing education programs. WSU students and faculty have access to the Worcester-area collegiate consortium—the Higher Education Consortium of Central Massachusetts—which facilitates cross-registration among 11 area institutions and encourages academic and other collaborations among its members.
Academic Quality

Worcester State University’s enrollment has grown by more than 1,000 over the past decade, while at the same time, our academic quality has improved, resulting in students with better academic credentials.

From 2012 to 2016, total faculty full-time positions were increased about 10 percent, helping us to maintain a low student-to-faculty ratio. High-impact academic programming and experiential learning—like study abroad, practica, and internships, and civic engagement and service learning—are emphasized and expanding. The University is in the midst of a self-initiated (and state-supported) push for improved retention and graduation rates—and is making excellent progress. A “Succeed in Four” campaign kicked off in 2011, supported with state Department of Higher Education Vision Project grant funds, led to more than 71 percent improvement in WSU’s graduation rate. In March 2013, WSU earned renewed accreditation for 10 years from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). The accreditation decision signaled the successful completion of a process begun on campus more than two years earlier, and reflected the thorough and diligent work of the entire campus community.

Other recent program accreditations have been uniformly successful, including those for the departments of Communications Sciences and Disorders, Education, Nursing, and Occupational Therapy. Additionally, new academic degree programs have been added, including a major in math for elementary education, a liberal studies major, and a vibrant interdisciplinary concentration in ethnic studies.
Building on a commitment made 17 years ago, the Worcester State University campus has undergone a transformation unprecedented in its over 140-year history—one designed to promote and support student success in the 21st century.

Since opening the Ghosh Science and Technology Center in 2000—the first building dedicated to sciences in the nine-campus state university system—the University embarked upon an aggressive schedule of new construction and renovations, adding two new residence halls, expanding an existing one, and building a parking garage. At the same time, every existing building on campus had undergone major renovations, with the exception of the Gym Building, which was demolished to make way for construction of a Wellness Center, which opened in 2016.

The new 400-bed Sheehan Hall, with a $12 million, state-of-the-art dining facility, opened in 2014, completing the University’s transition from a largely commuter school in 2000 (when it was about 19 percent residential) to one that has a significant resident student population, which by 2017 represented 40 percent of our undergraduates.

The tremendous impact this change has had on campus life has led to a growing sense of belonging among our students and has contributed to a significant uptick in retention.

**New Facilities and Upgrades**
**Improve Campus Life,**
**Impact Retention**

**NEW WELLNESS CENTER**
Construction of a new 101,000-square-foot Wellness Center was completed in summer 2016. The complex serves the entire campus community and represents another facility aimed at connecting students to campus.

**SAGAMORE ROAD STUDIOS**
In addition, the University’s footprint has expanded beyond the campus to include studios in the Worcester Center for Crafts, which have been extensively renovated for use by our students.

**MAY STREET BUILDING**
In 2015, the University purchased a building and land immediately adjacent to its campus that adds both acreage and 40,000 square feet of classroom, office, and meeting space.
The Worcester community is ideally situated in the center of New England—and Massachusetts—with easy access to the cultural, business, and natural attractions of the region, from the Atlantic Ocean beaches to the Berkshire, Green, and White Mountains. Boston is about 40 miles to the east and is accessible via commuter train; other major cities in the region are also readily accessible. The city has its own airport, and access to four other regional hubs (Boston, Hartford, Manchester, and Providence).

The Worcester community has a rich history. Incorporated in 1722 and named after the city of Worcester, England, local historians claim the American Revolution began here in 1774. John Adams was a teacher here before returning to Boston to practice law. Worcester became a thriving industrial city in the mid-1800s through the early 1900s, manufacturing textiles, wire, and machinery. After a period of post-industrial decline, Worcester's renowned hospitals and the UMass Medical School helped the city become a hub for biotechnology and medical research and development, while the dozen higher education institutions help supply the region’s knowledge-based workforce.

The city offers a dynamic cultural scene that includes a world-class art museum, the nation’s second-oldest continuously operating Worcester Center for Crafts, an active theater scene built around the restored Hanover Theatre for the Performing Arts, and the world's premier collection of early American printed materials housed in the American Antiquarian Society. All four of these local gems have formal active relationships with Worcester State University that serve the academic and cultural interests of students and faculty.

Worcester County benefits from the cultural strength and regional diversity of its nearly 800,000 residents in both urban and rural communities. Within the city of Worcester, thousands of college students co-exist with a rich mix of cultures and peoples including recent immigrant populations from Southeast Asia, Latin America, and East and West Africa. The resulting neighborhoods and community groups provide an active and vibrant network of support and activity.
Students and Faculty

The Worcester State University student body of 6,471 (2016) has a 18:1 student-faculty ratio. The University integrates liberal arts and science programs with a variety of professional programs at the baccalaureate, master’s, and post-graduate levels. Seventy-eight percent of the full-time faculty has earned a doctorate or other terminal degree in their field.

Worcester State University’s faculty members share a deep and genuine dedication to the process of teaching and learning. Faculty members are active scholars in their fields, and keep abreast of theoretical and applied developments in their disciplines. Faculty research is a growing and significant emphasis for the University’s faculty. Faculty-guided undergraduate student research is also a strong characteristic of the University’s academic life, which the campus features annually through the Celebration of Scholarship and Creativity. The University supports the professional growth and development of faculty and staff through the Center for Teaching and Learning.

The University’s Academic Affairs Division includes two schools and the Division of Graduate and Continuing Education (DGCE). Each school—Humanities and Social Sciences, and Education, Health, and Natural Sciences—is led by a dean, as is DGCE. In addition to Academic Affairs, there are divisions of Student Affairs, Enrollment Management, University Advancement, and Administration and Finance. Each division is led by a vice president or comparably ranked individual. The remaining University unit is the Office of the President.

Student life at Worcester State University offers a rich array of opportunities to augment classroom work with participation in numerous cultural, athletic, and social events, over 35 student clubs and organizations, 21 honor societies, and 20 varsity-level athletic teams. The University—supported with state legislative funding, student tuition and fees, and donor philanthropy—is substantially expanding its internships, and the institution has made study away—including study abroad—a priority. Partnerships in the past three years have developed with China, the Czech Republic, and Ireland, bringing the total to nearly two dozen, substantially expanding the global reach of the campus for students and faculty.

FACULTY CHARACTERISTICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Faculty</th>
<th>425</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>215</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS
(Entering Fall 2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undergraduate</th>
<th>5,381</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>74.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>1,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA Residents</td>
<td>96.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 2015, the University launched a new strategic plan and corresponding restatement of our mission and core values. The development of these statements followed a highly successful NEASC re-accreditation process completed in 2013, and involved a broad and deep campus discussion about mission, values, and planning.

The public college and university network in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is comprised of fifteen community colleges, nine state universities—including Worcester State—and the five campuses of the University of Massachusetts. The system exists to provide accessible, affordable, relevant, and rigorous academic programs that adapt to meet changing individual and societal needs for education and employment. All campuses are committed to operating effectively and efficiently in order to maintain tuition and fees at a level as low as possible, while providing a high-quality education to students. The Massachusetts public universities and colleges are committed to continuous improvement and accountability in all aspects of teaching and learning. The Board of Higher Education and institutional boards of trustees recognize their responsibilities to the taxpayers and residents of Massachusetts in the performance of their roles and responsibilities. Massachusetts state universities are commemorating their 175th anniversary; Worcester State marked its 140th anniversary in 2014.

**STATE UNIVERSITIES SUMMARY**

There are six comprehensive state universities—Bridgewater State University, Fitchburg State University, Framingham State University, Salem State University, Westfield State University, and Worcester State University—and three specialized institutions—Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, and Massachusetts Maritime Academy. All nine of these institutions integrate liberal arts and sciences programs with professional education, and the three specialized colleges also focus on academic areas identified in their names.

Each university places a special emphasis on teaching and lifelong learning, and promotes a campus life that fosters intellectual, social, and ethical development. Committed to excellence in instruction and to providing responsive, innovative, and educational programs of high quality, they seek to develop each student's critical thinking, quantitative, oral and written communications skills, and practical appreciation of the arts, sciences, and humanities as they affect good citizenship and an improved quality of life. The state universities provide a campus environment where the ideas, values, perspectives, and contributions of all students are respected.
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.

**CORE VALUES**

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

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**Mission and Core Values**

Strategic Plan 2015-2020

**SCHOLARSHIP, PARTNERSHIP, AND LEADERSHIP FOR A CHANGING WORLD**

**Academic Program and Excellence**

1. Enhance the undergraduate academic program and expand graduate programs in a community of learning that promotes academic excellence and innovation

**Differentiation and Impact in the Wider World**

2. Leverage WSU’s distinctive strengths, both to enhance the University’s reputation and to prepare students to lead, serve, and make a difference in the world

**Enrollment, Retention, and Student Success**

3. Attract and enroll a diverse pool of highly motivated students and attach institution-wide priority to promoting their retention and success

**Community and Campus Life**

4. Cultivate a vibrant campus life and a collaborative work and learning environment in which all members of the WSU community feel welcomed, included, respected, empowered, and valued

**Resources, Revenues, and Organizational Sustainability**

5. Promote financial strength and organizational sustainability while continuing to secure and invest the resources required to maintain WSU’s reputation for excellence and value