

An aerial photograph of the William Paterson University campus, showing various buildings, a large stadium, and surrounding greenery. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange color.

WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY
**STRATEGIC
PLAN 2012-2022**
A Year-by-Year Summary of Progress

President's Message

Dear Friend,

I am pleased to share with you *Strategic Plan 2012-2022*. This year-by-year summary provides a decade of highlights as William Paterson developed and implemented its first-ever Strategic Plan. This plan grew out of the University's Middle States reaccreditation process, and its creation and success drew on the input and expertise of every constituency in the William Paterson community under the leadership of then-President Kathleen Waldron. I want to thank President *Emerita* Waldron for that leadership, which facilitated the successes summarized in this document and helped build a culture of strategic planning and assessment that has taken root in the decade since, and which continues to benefit the University.

The highlights summarized within this document are the result of good work done across the University under the guidance of teams organized around each of the plan's five goals: 1) Offer academic programs of the highest quality; 2) Achieve student success by increasing matriculation, retention, and graduation; 3) Provide students with exceptional opportunities beyond the classroom; 4) Enhance the sense of community throughout and beyond the University; and 5) Establish the University as a model of outstanding and affordable public higher education. This document summarizes many successes in expanding and strengthening academic offerings on campus and online, new construction and renovation to support learning and student life, forging new community partnerships, creating a comprehensive system of student support, and more. Because sound strategic planning is built on clear-eyed assessment of what is and is not working, this summary also points out where outcomes did not measure up to our goals.



With the close of Strategic Plan 2012-2022, the University recently launched a new, three-year Strategic Plan. When I took office in 2018, I decided that, since the University was already far into this Strategic Plan, I would see it through to its conclusion. Because the 2012-2022 plan extended two years into the latest Middle States reaccreditation cycle, this three-year plan will give us the option to realign our strategic planning efforts and reaccreditation when it concludes.

Importantly, given the accelerating pace of change that William Paterson and all public higher education institutions are dealing with, Strategic Plan 2022-2025 will allow us to focus with a greater sense of urgency on the issues and opportunities that define our post-pandemic environment: 1) Adult learning; 2) Alternative credentials and certificates; 3) Attrition; 4) Decolonization; and 5) Revising our Mission Statement. I look forward to updating you again as this new plan is implemented, and I thank you for your interest in William Paterson University.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard J. Helldobler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richard J. Helldobler, PhD
President

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Implementation of Strategic Plan 2012-2022 began in the fall of 2012 after an inclusive and extensive campus-wide process that engaged the University's Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and others during a series of discussions and forums. The Plan, under the leadership of then-President Kathleen Waldron, addressed all aspects and operations of the University, providing a path forward based on five strategic goals:

- Goal 1 – Offer academic programs of the highest quality;
- Goal 2 – Achieve student success by increasing matriculation, retention, and graduation;
- Goal 3 – Provide students with exceptional opportunities beyond the classroom;
- Goal 4 – Enhance the sense of community throughout and beyond the University; and
- Goal 5 – Establish the University as a model of outstanding and affordable public higher education.

Over the course of the 10-year plan, the University progressed as an outstanding public regional university that has consistently prepared its students for successful lives and careers. During the later stages of the plan, with the leadership of President Richard J. Helldobler, the University began to pivot toward development of a new strategic plan that would build on progress and reset the institution for success in the dramatically changing environment for higher education.

The following is a summary and analysis by year of the accomplishments and challenges during the course of Strategic Plan 2012-2022.

YEAR ONE

The Plan was recommended by the Faculty Senate and adopted by the Board of Trustees. Implementation plan teams were created for each goal and subgoal. A review committee, Committee 2022, was appointed by the President to conduct an annual review of progress and to generate a report to the campus community.

YEAR TWO

The University made strategic investments in existing programs such as media production, through the construction of new state-of-the-art broadcast studios; and music, including the nationally recognized Jazz Studies program, through funding for the renovation of two recital halls in Shea Center and six new music practice rooms in Gaede Hall.

A Strategic Enrollment Management Plan was developed and implemented with Dashboard Indicators approved by the Board of Trustees. Overall enrollment remained flat although the incoming student profile improved on combined SAT scores and high school GPA. One-year retention did not improve for first-time, first-year students nor transfers, while four- and six-year graduation rates improved. A Student Success Team was created to provide leadership on improving retention and graduation rates.

The University entered into an agreement with the newly created Great Falls National Historical Park for development of academic programming on site.

To enhance weekend and evening programming for students, the University made a strategic investment to hire a new Student Development professional. The University conducted a mini-Master Plan for the Core Academic Zone to ensure that facilities are modernized and welcoming. The plan led to demolition of the obsolete Coach House and development of a new academic building, partially funded through a State of New Jersey general obligation bond, to house three health science-related departments and general use classrooms.

The University hired a new marketing agency to support identity and image-building and the agency, in partnership with the University, launched the Will Power. campaign and began integration throughout University marketing.

YEAR THREE

Graduate programs at the doctoral level continued to be strengthened and developed. The second cohort of students graduated from the Doctor of Nursing Practice program and the University enrolled its first class in the new Doctor of Clinical Psychology program.

A gift to the Center for New Art helped to purchase a robot, the first of its kind at a college or university in New Jersey, capable of carving in a variety of materials, allowing for precision sculpting of large-scale forms.

The University increased tuition by only 1 percent, the lowest of any of the state colleges and universities in New Jersey, and Institutional Advancement continued to focus its fundraising efforts on scholarship support. New student enrollment did not meet targets due to changes in the scholarship matrix, resulting in a reexamination of the matrix. Enrollment increased for new first-time, full-time students. The Summer Foundations Program helped students fulfill development needs prior to beginning college. Strategic funding supported faculty/student research, promoting enhanced student engagement and intellectual development. The four-year graduation rate continued its upward trend, while one-year retention and six-year graduation rates declined.

The University's commitment to providing practical experiences for students was underscored by a NSSE survey that found that 40 percent of seniors indicated they had an internship experience prior to graduation. The University Core Curriculum (UCC) focused on community and civic engagement with coursework and extracurricular experiences built around this important initiative. A commitment was made to develop a new civic engagement plan to guide and expand activities going forward.

Strategic funding was provided to expand extracurricular and co-curricular opportunities for students. The Pesce Family Mentoring Institute was established and achieved 72 professional mentor/student mentee matches in its inaugural year.

Human Resources implemented a reward and recognition program to highlight employees who are

innovative in support of the University and its students. The University worked to lower expenses related to business practices. The commitment to sustainability advanced with increased recycling programs and installation of electric vehicle charging stations.

YEAR FOUR

Curricular development and redesign for specific academic programs continued, including a significant redesign of the Health Sciences program with a component that allows students in a variety of applied health disciplines to complete pre-requisites for various programs before moving into those programs or remaining in the more general Health Sciences track; a newly redesigned BA degree in Communication Disorders; development of a stand-alone MA in Communication Disorders; and development of a more applied focus to the Anthropology degree programs.

The First-Year Experience program was redesigned to help align admissions, recruitment, orientation, and student success efforts in support of student retention. First-year retention rates continued to present challenges. The four-year graduation rate increased significantly while the six-year rate decreased. The emphasis of Undergraduate Admissions shifted to yield rate improvements and transfer admissions.

The Civic Engagement plan was implemented, better connecting co- and extracurricular activities with classroom learning, with a specific focus on UCC civic engagement courses. Opportunities expanded for student experiential learning.

Social media expanded as an engagement tool for students and alumni. Alumni programming, including career-related webinars and other events, expanded. Institutional Advancement's support for scholarships increased and the University began the silent phase of a \$10 million Scholarship Campaign.

Construction of University Hall was completed with smart classrooms, small group study spaces, and laboratories, and renovation began at the Hunziker buildings to add new classrooms.

The name change to School of Continuing and Professional Education reflected a growing strategic focus on innovative programming for adult professionals seeking credentials beyond traditional credit-bearing programs and precollege youth seeking academic enrichment.

YEAR FIVE

Online teaching opportunities continued at both the graduate and undergraduate levels and although no new exclusively online programs were developed, a sufficient number of online courses were offered to enable a student to earn a Liberal Studies degree entirely online, positioning the University for the growing market of adult returning students.

The four-year graduate rate significantly improved, exceeding Dashboard Indicator goals. One-year retention increased but did not meet the goal. Changes were made to advising and orientation activities, including the addition of specific advising/registration days. The new Starfish student support tool was piloted with full launch planned.

The University proudly gained designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). Enrollment of Hispanic students grew from 22 percent of our overall student population in 2012 to close to 30 percent for 2016. International recruitment for graduate students was implemented with promising results.

Institutional Advancement launched the public phase of a \$10 million Scholarship Campaign.

The number of paid internships and jobs available for students increased via the Trailblazer resource. An evolving civic engagement website provided community partner and resource information in support of growing student activities in this important area. The number of students and mentors increased in this fourth year of the Pesce Family Mentoring Institute.

The College of Education implemented an additional partnership with the Paterson School District for dual enrollment programs and engaged in discussions with Mercer County Community College on initiatives to add students to the MA in Higher Education program and develop a cohort model for P-3 education in Trenton.

A growth area for the upcoming year was developed via a partnership with Interstudio Viaggi, a company that brings European high school students to the United State for summer programming.

YEAR SIX

The University Core Curriculum Council reviewed and approved 28 courses new to the UCC from 13 disciplines and the Center for Teaching Excellence offered a workshop on teaching civic engagement. In support of learning, Information Technology upgraded WiFi access in residence halls, upgraded classrooms with high-definition and accessible podiums, and provided wireless displays in group study rooms.

Fall 2018 freshman enrollment increased 29 percent, new enrolled graduate students increased, and the four-year graduation rate trended up for both first-time, full-time students and transfer students. Programs were initiated or further developed to improve retention and graduation rates for both new and transfer students.

NSEE survey results indicate that both first-year students and seniors rated their advisors below the comparison means. To help improve these outcomes, full implementation of Starfish advanced, providing progress surveys, automated flags to alert concerns or holds, and other tools to enhance advisee-advisor relationships and improve student success.

According to NSSE results, first-year students and seniors reported levels of engagement in events that “address important social, economic, or political issues” at or above peer groups. Student Development programming, particularly in cultural theme celebrations, civic engagement activities, and leadership development training included intentional student learning and high-impact practices designed to engage students. Student civic engagement continued to increase as indicated by hours of student service and a WP student was selected as a Campus Compact Newman Fellow, a coveted and competitive recognition, for the third year in a row.

Preakness Hall and Skyline Residence Hall opened and Hunziker Hall was upgraded with the addition of 27 large, small, and group study classrooms.

A new investment policy allowing the University to invest operating cash with external financial advisors increased earnings by nearly \$1 million.

Institutional Advancement raised \$7.5 million toward the \$10 million Scholarship Campaign. Funding from donors provided research stipends, travel abroad support, and conference and research presentation support for students in all Colleges.

YEAR SEVEN

The University continued to strengthen and develop high-quality and timely academic programs designed to enhance institutional reputation while contributing to the needs of local, regional, and national workplaces. A BA in Disability Studies, the first in New Jersey, was implemented. The College of Education was authorized to begin development of an online Doctor of Education in Leadership degree. The University proceeded with plans for WP Online, designed to offer a range of online graduate programs in partnership with Academic Partnerships. Development also began for programs to provide degree completion opportunities for the large number of adults in the region with earned credits but not a completed degree.

The University fell short on goals for All Student Headcount, Undergraduate Headcount, Graduate Headcount, Full-Time, First-Year Retention, and Four-Year Graduation rates.

Under the leadership of President Richard Helldobler, the University launched an innovative and all-encompassing new first-year experience program for students, including the Will. Power. 101 workshop, to provide structured academic and student support services in a program designed to improve retention while guiding students toward timely graduation. The University also approved and began implementation of Pledge4Success to provide grants to low-income students to fill the gap between federal and state aid and tuition and fees.

Efforts to increase student engagement through opportunities for student-faculty research, scholarship, and creative expression progressed.

The Office of Transfer Programs and Special Sessions continued to set up dual enrollment partnerships. The University provided important experiential learning opportunities for students. William Paterson moved forward as an active leader in New Jersey Campus Compact and a student, the University's fourth, was awarded a Newman Civic Fellowship. The Office of Campus Activities, Service, and Leadership (CASL) offered 116 civic engagement opportunities, resulting in more than 11,000 hours of service.

The Center for Diversity and Inclusion and the Black Cultural Center launched to provide programming and increased support for underrepresented populations. The University proceeded with a process to further

access and address the needs of Latinx and LGBTQ students.

The University purchased the building at 1800 Valley Road and renovation work included conversion to academic and other new and expanded revenue-generating uses.

Efforts to expand the University's fundraising to support institutional affordability guided success in reaching \$9.04 million toward the \$10 million Scholarship Campaign goal. The University raised \$2.71 million, more than in any prior year.

Plans proceeded to diversify funding streams, including growth in the partnership with Interstudio Viaggi and Precollege Summer Youth Programs.

The University established an innovative program of two-hour, weekly professional development opportunities for staff throughout the summer, including mandatory diversity training.

The University's commitment to sustainability gained strength with innovations and results. A growing percentage of waste was recycled and all construction and renovation projects are designed with green building standards in mind. Sustainability efforts were supported by the academic curriculum, including the Department of Environmental Science whose faculty and students conduct climate science research.

YEAR EIGHT

The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly affected every aspect of the University during the year and necessitated changes in operational strategies throughout the institution.

Extensive support was provided to students and faculty to ensure their ability to complete the 2020 spring semester after the pivot to remote teaching and learning in mid-March. Workshops and other online teaching development sessions were conducted to assist faculty in the transition to teaching online. Faculty and staff provided students with digital resources and support for online learning and academic advising, and for access to library resources.

Early results of the First-Year Experience program, including the Will. Power. 101 workshops and other initiatives crafted to improve student retention rates demonstrated progress and optimism for the future with an increased one-year retention rate for

first-year students. The University's four-year and six-year graduation rates also increased through greater engagement and more focused data-driven advisement. The pandemic's impact on enrollment emerged as a challenging trend with decreases in All Student Headcount and Undergraduate Headcount. The launch of WP Online, a series of fully online degree programs, showed great promise, exceeding its first-year enrollment goals and driving an overall increase in Graduate Headcount.

The Strategic Plan contributed to decisions about funding and resource allocation for academic programs and facilities. The full implementation of the Campus Labs digital assessment platforms throughout Academic Affairs supported academic program planning and assessment.

Student engagement and support programs and services shifted to virtual based on student need and practicality. Student demand and the University's ability to provide counseling, health, and wellness services, academic advisement, and financial aid support, remained high. The Center for Diversity and Inclusion, Black Cultural Center, CASL, Recreational Services, and others continued to provide student engagement activities and support in virtual formats.

Fundraising exceeded goals for supporting students via scholarships with one of the most successful years of fundraising. The University closed the Scholarship Campaign by raising \$16 million over the course of the campaign, exceeding its goal by \$6 million.

IRT provided workshops for faculty teaching online to support the rapid shift to online classes resulting from the pandemic.

Progress was made in the development of 3+1 agreements and accelerated programs via agreements with Mercer County Community College, Passaic, Sussex, and Essex county colleges, and the County College of Morris. Dual enrollment programs expanded with additional high schools participating and increased student enrollment.

Human Resources provided remote professional development programming during the summer for all staff members supporting diversity and inclusion, expanding growth mindsets, and building leadership skills.

YEAR NINE

The COVID-19 pandemic continued its impact on all facets of the University including enrollment, campus life, and institutional finances. At the same time, the University moved forward with plans and programs that enriched the experiences of students and positioned the institution for the future.

Implementation of successful plans and programs University-wide demonstrated the University's commitment to diversity and inclusion and the positive impact of initiatives on, and beyond, the campus community. The University launched its Pre-Doctoral Fellows Program in support of diversifying faculty and hired four faculty fellows. The Center for Diversity and Inclusion expanded programming, leading to increased student participation. Participants in the Lavender Graduation honoring LGBTQIA allies and graduates grew. Plans proceeded for development of the Center for Latinidad, leading to a fall 2021 ribbon cutting.

The University gained momentum in development and implementation of academic programs that diversify instructional delivery models to meet the changing demands of the marketplace and capitalize on evolving markets such as adult learners. Graduate enrollment in programs that are offered as part of WP Online increased, dramatically exceeding goals. The Doctor of Education in Leadership, the University's first research doctoral program, admitted its first cohort and the new BA in Leadership and Professional Studies launched. High school dual enrollment exceeded goals and new agreements with Brookdale and Mercer County community colleges expanded the offering of 3+1 and 2+2 programs.

The pandemic, which has disproportionately affected the population of students that the University serves, continued to heighten enrollment and retention challenges. Full-time undergraduate enrollment, the University's most significant source of revenue, dropped significantly.

Retention support programs were developed and implemented, including Campus Logic-Student Forms, which reduces the manual process related to financial aid, and a new chatbot was launched to provide students with personalized answers to routine questions.

Fundraising continued to provide significant support for students via scholarships and emergency support funding. The University renamed the former Preakness Hall academic building in honor of the late Dr. Barbara Moll Grant '54, an alumna and professor *emerita* of education, and took receipt of \$5 million from Dr. Grant's estate, increasing the overall institutional endowment. The Career Development Center exceeded its goal with an increasing number of students utilizing Handshake, a career management system that facilitates job and internship opportunities.

The University completed a decennial self-study for accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and hosted a successful virtual site visit with the peer review committee, followed by affirmation of our accreditation by the full commission.

YEAR TEN

The University continued to build upon new programmatic opportunities and emerging trends in higher education while re-setting to thrive in the dramatically changing environment in higher education. These initiatives supported the University as it pivoted toward development of the new Strategic Plan. The growth of WP Online programs for graduate and undergraduate students accelerated and the University worked to expand development of adult learning opportunities.

The University positioned itself for success with significant construction and renovation of facilities. Construction of the new Child Development Center, which serves children of members of the campus community and the surrounding communities, and provides experiences for students seeking certification as early childhood education teachers, was completed in the 1800 Valley Road Building and major renovations to Wayne Dining Hall were completed, offering a reimagined, modern facility.

The University's commitment to diversity and inclusion continued to produce initiatives and refine services that support the campus community. Student participation at Center for Diversity and Inclusion-sponsored events increased 200 percent from fall to spring.

In response to needs expressed by prospective and current students and their families, the University expanded its ability to prepare students for career success with enhancements to career and internship opportunities. The Career Development Center worked to expand the impact of Handshake with an increased number of opportunities posted for full- and part-time jobs, internships, fellowships, graduate assistantships, and other on-campus opportunities. Career Development, Academic Affairs, and Marketing and Public Relations partnered to develop new academic department home pages with an emphasis on program-specific career outcomes.

Fundraising achievements exceeded KPIs and extended scholarship support for students. Institutional Advancement raised \$4.1 million, exceeding the annual goal by 23.5 percent. The University received a significant and transformative commitment from Dr. Dorothy Grant Hennings to rename Science Hall East in honor of Dorothy and her late husband, Dr. George Hennings, and secured naming gifts for the Overdorf Tennis Courts and the Martini Family Electronic Resource Center.

An athletic rebrand was implemented to build pride and strengthen the campus community. The University's new mascot, Pio, and newly composed spirit song were formally introduced as part of October's Homecoming Game with a full communications campaign that resulted in extensive engagement via social media.

The University took a major step forward toward streamlined processes, administrative efficiencies, and long-term cost reductions with the decision to invest in and begin implementation of Workday Finance Enterprise Resource Planning. These efficiencies are particularly crucial as the University rethinks systems that support operations during these changing times.

For more detailed information please visit:
<https://wpunj.edu/sp2012-22>



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