



HIGHER VALUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION 2017-2027  
Vision, Mission, and Values

*Our*



is committed to anti-racism, anti-oppression, equity, social justice, and diversity. We value inclusion as a core value and as an essential element of Western's public service mission.

Western embraces individual uniqueness and a culture of inclusion that supports broad and specific diversity initiatives. Western believes in the educational and institutional benefits of diversity in society as integral to the success of all individuals.

At Western, we will:

- Maintain a safe and secure environment for all members of our Western communities;
- Educate and empower students, staff, and faculty to be social and environmental justice advocates;
- Provide curricula, programs, training, resources, and environments that reflect and strengthen the diversity of our communities in order

Action 7:

# HIGHER VALUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION 2017-2027

## GOAL 1: ENRICH ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Western Illinois University will continue to recruit, retain, and support diverse, high-potential students, faculty, and staff. At its core, Western is defined by an activity that leads to a larger public good: our faculty and staff teach our learners, who then develop and grow as they move from our campuses into their professional, civic, and private lives.

We attract high-

- d) Western will work with bargaining units to develop agreements that allocate available resources to support salaries that meet or exceed the mean of peer institutions.

Action 3: Maintain high standards of excellence in instruction and in the assessment of student learning

(PEHGGHG LQ WKH 8QLYHUVLW\¶V KLVWRU\ LV WKH FRPPLWPHQW high-quality instruction is the highest priority of the faculty. We will continue delivering high standards of instructional excellence, with strong commitments to the assessment

Our students, faculty, and staff apply disciplinary expertise and professional commitments to advance the social, economic, cultural, and ethical quality of life for members of our host communities, regions, and beyond. We serve as volunteers and board members, and actively participate in civic engagement, service learning, fundraising, and many other activities designed to advance the public good.

In order to continue to build stronger, more resilient, more dynamic communities, we will:

- a) 6XSSRUW VWXGHQW IDFXOW\ DQG VWDII SXEOLF VHUYLFH DF  
Community Engagement classification.
- b) Use university public service centers, the Auxiliary Facilities System service



- b) Promote innovation and creativity in developing new programs
  
- c) Align all new programing with high standards of accessibility and community needs by identifying audience, market dynamics, and the potential contribution of the program to the larger economic viability of the region.

## GOAL 2: ADVANCE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

We define educational opportunity as providing high-quality academic programs and learning communities to high-potential, diverse learners. We have a strong academic portfolio and we will continue to deliver excellent educational opportunities to our immediate region and the surrounding communities.

*Action 1: Establish and implement institution-level equity plans and practices to close access, progression, completion, and attainment gaps*

We will strive to provide greater access and opportunity

- b) Bring more applicants and students who have been accepted to campus prior to initial registration and enrollment.
- c) Increase recruitment partnerships that will lead to increased accessibility and more diversity in each new cohort of students.
- d) Provide new educational opportunities by developing the new programs and reinvesting in existing programs that have a clear, high demand in our diverse communities.
- e) Advance opportunities by focusing recruitment initiatives on underrepresented learner groups in our immediate communities and in the state of Illinois.

*Action 4: Advance affordability and decrease time-to-degree dates*

At Western, we value persistence and completion while providing leadership in learner access and we emphasize quality and cost predictability. As such, we recognize that Western is uniquely poised to reduce the opportunity gap in Illinois.

To build on these efforts and to advance leadership in access and student persistence and completion, we will do the following:

- a) Continue to engage in fiscally conservative, mission-driven spending that limits cost increases to new students.
- b) Maintain competitive values for Western Commitment Scholarship and other financial aid programs.
- c) Implement and evaluate new strategies designed to decrease or eliminate the difference between student costs and financial aid.
- d) Work with Financial Aid Office, Budget Office, and others to improve the student experience when receiving financial assistance.

*Action 5: Increase retention and graduation rates with focus on the opportunity gap*

We will improve retention and graduation rates, and we will reduce the opportunity gap that defines the experience of many learners in the state of Illinois. To do this, we will:

- a) Address costs and relevance of programs.
- b) Enhance WKH LQVWLWLRQ through comprehensive annual assessment.
- c) Improve college transitions and the sense of belonging in our community.
- d) Increase responsiveness to learner needs by expanding delivery modalities that promote in1 11.04 Tf1 0 6-4(t) 61236

As noted in the Preamble of this plan, from its inception Western Illinois University has been an institution devoted to the needs of the west-central Illinois region, and an institution connected to the economic growth and stability of that region.

In order to maintain this tradition, we will:

- a) Pay close attention to the feasibility of and market need for all new academic programs
- b) Conduct annual analyses of market, economic, and intellectual needs in the region
- c) Continue our long commitment to educating students who will become teachers, professionals in legal and justice administration, professionals in public health and social work, professionals in business and technology, and professionals in the traditional STEM disciplines, the Fine Arts, the Humanities, and the Social Sciences.



within our respective conferences and nationally

- g) Demonstrate strict adherence to NCAA operating principles related to governance and rules compliance, academic integrity, equity, and student-athlete welfare
- h) Foster a culture that integrates Western with its surrounding communities at every level.

*Action 3: Provide safe, accessible, and attractive campus environments in Macomb, Quad Cities, and online.*

We will provide safe and secure learning and living environments for our students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University. Our safe and accessible campus environments are guided by our Campus Master Plans; our objective, as outlined in these plans, is to provide the premier facilities and grounds that premier students, faculty, and staff deserve. As part of our facilities planning and curricular delivery, we are strongly committed to environmental sustainability and justice, and as such will:

- a) Support educational programs, services, and partnerships committed to the prevention of crime; protection of life and property; preservation of peace, order, and safety; and enforcement of laws and University policies
- b) Enhance university facilities.
- c) Demonstrate statewide and national leadership in environmental sustainability.

*Action 4: Educate students on the processes, procedures, and support services q0.hju*

b)





The Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs (IIRA), for example, was established in 1989 after a Task Force on the Future of Rural Illinois completed 25 public hearings. IIRA was chartered as a companion agency to the Governors Rural Affairs Council and charged with finding innovative solutions for rural issues that can be implemented in Illinois and providing technical assistance to policy makers. These efforts have focused on economic development, value-added rural development, health care, transportation and infrastructure, public management, housing

## Summary and Conclusion

As members of the Western Illinois University community, we share in the goals of recruiting, retaining, and graduating students in a transformative educational experience where learners engage in the discovery, acquisition, and application of knowledge for personal enrichment and in preparation for future occupations and/or graduate and advanced studies. We do so in a manner that is inclusive and engaging; it is an educational environment built upon the foundation of our core values-- academic excellence, educational opportunity, personal growth and social responsibility.

We are nationally recognized for our leadership in quality, opportunity, affordability, community and economic development, and graduating more students than predicted based on academic preparation variables.

We empower students to become engaged and productive global citizens committed to making a difference in the diverse communities and professions that they represent. Our alumni are leaders in their fields equipped with knowledge, problem solving skills, and community awareness necessary to address the professional, economic, and social issues of our time.

We are a strong university built on the foundations of excellent teaching, engaged research, and deep service