

Summary: During the “OUR STUDENTS” subcommittee meetings time was spent: (1) Reviewing the current Strategic Plan (2) Discussing areas/sections for clarity and understanding (what was intended-why included/at the time); (3) Discussing what should be kept/edited/expanded/deleted/shift to another section within the plan; (4) Subgroups were created to focus specifically on sections related to subcommittee members units/areas and expertise. (5) Subgroups met and created narrative to strengthen/edit/expand/provide additional clarity for new Strategic Plan consideration. (6) Subcommittee met and discussed the subgroup suggestions and added additional information.

Charted below are the Suggestions for consideration related to OUR STUDENTS.

Affordability & Accessibility
Define accessibility as financial, academic, physical, digital, and psychological access.
Ensure that the true cost of a WKU education is transparent, predictable, and competitive within Kentucky and the region.
Publish data about student indebtedness upon graduation
Maintain a diverse offering of housing options and meal plans to accommodate different budgets
Promote individualized financial planning services offered by the WKU Center for Financial Success
Expand access to Personal Finance (FIN 161) such that any student can take the course
Promote awareness of the WKU Opportunity Fund by clearly communicating its accessibility to eligible students experiencing unexpected financial hardships, as well as educating faculty and staff so they can confidently refer students in need.
Help students fully understand the long-term value of earning a college degree, while also recognizing the affordability of Western Kentucky University
OVERARCHING GOALS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep things AFFORDABLE 2. Focused on upcoming opportunities that have the potential to hinder affordability (HRL/new resident halls, meal plans, additional student fees. -have financial options-& meal plans 3. Provide the experience with different price points to provide accessibly

Additional Considerations

1. Have---but may need additional financial assistance across campus/Promote financial literacy –create university wide opportunities
2. Create Opportunity fund protocol
3. TRIO programs/admission/other individuals to assist with promoting HE.

A Diverse Body of Students *(suggestions)--A Broadly Representative and Mission-Aligned Student Body*

REFINED/Rewrite-- WKU will enroll and support a broad and representative body of undergraduate, graduate, transfer, online, and nontraditional students who are prepared to succeed in a rigorous academic environment and who reflect the **geographic, economic, and experiential breadth of the Commonwealth** and beyond. A strong public university must serve students from different regions, life stages, and backgrounds while maintaining academic standards and institutional sustainability.

Establish and sustain state, regional, national, and international recruitment conduits that expand WKU’s reach while aligning enrollment strategy with institutional strengths and workforce demand.

Recognize neurodiversity and disability as dimensions of institutional diversity that strengthen the academic community, and position WKU's disability and accessibility infrastructure as a strategic asset rather than a baseline obligation. WKU will expand and elevate support for students with disabilities and neurodiverse learners — building on distinctive programs such as the Kelly Autism Program — by ensuring that accessibility services, faculty preparation, and academic design keep pace with enrollment growth among these populations. WKU will embed universal design principles into course development, advising structures, and physical and digital environments so that accessibility is proactive rather than reactive, and will communicate clearly to prospective students and families that WKU is a place where neurodiverse students are recruited, supported, and expected to succeed.

Leverage flexible delivery models, strategic partnerships, and targeted outreach to grow enrollment among graduate, online, transfer, military-affiliated, adult, and returning learners while maintaining academic rigor and student-centered support.

Expand recruitment and enrollment strategies to intentionally serve first-generation students, rural students, transfer students, adult and returning learners, military-affiliated students, and students from varied socioeconomic backgrounds.

Align enrollment growth with institutional capacity and program quality, ensuring that student mix supports both mission fulfillment and long-term financial sustainability.

Overarching Goals

1. CONTINUE/KEEP what we are doing WELL

Student Completion, Success, and Support

Student success requires disciplined alignment between enrollment, instructional capacity, and degree of design. WKU will intentionally structure academic pathways and resource deployment to ensure students can progress efficiently to completion without avoidable delays or unnecessary credit accumulation. (**DEFINE STUDENT SUCCESS related to WKU-graduates**)

Use data-informed decision-making to determine course offerings, scheduling patterns, and instructional modalities that align with documented student demand and time-to-degree expectations.

Eliminate instructional bottlenecks in high-demand courses and sequences that impede progression or extend time to completion.

Design and maintain clearly structured academic pathways that support timely completion for first-time, transfer, online, and returning students.

Monitor progression and capacity metrics to ensure enrollment growth does not exceed instructional infrastructure or compromise academic standards.

Incorporate student-athlete transfer and enrollment patterns into broader institutional analyses of mobility and completion pathways.

Develop and sustain integrated early alert and predictive intervention systems that proactively identify and support students at risk of delays, preserving credit momentum, and improving completion outcomes.

Advising, Mentorship, and Career-Integrated Student Support

Completion and post-graduation outcomes require more than course scheduling. WKU will deliver coordinated academic, career, and developmental guidance from pre-enrollment through graduation — and beyond — using structured advising systems, faculty mentorship, and scalable technology to ensure students make informed decisions and progress efficiently. This includes leveraging institutional data analytics (via tools like Slate CRM) to identify and proactively recruit students enrolled in WKU Dual Credit courses after they complete initial credits, as well as high school students with strong Advanced Placement performance, by communicating personalized degree benefits.

Strengthen and modernize the Comprehensive Advising Program (CAP) to provide **holistic advising** and coordinated **academic and career planning** support from enrollment through graduation, with **clearly defined roles for professional advisors, faculty advisors, and faculty mentors**. (*CONNECTIONS*)

Fully integrate individualized academic and career planning into advising structures rather than treating personal and professional development planning as a separate administrative layer.

Use data analytics and AI-enabled workflow tools to improve advising efficiency, early alert systems, degree mapping, and proactive student engagement, and targeted recruitment and conversion of Dual Credit and AP students. This involves identifying students who have completed a few Dual Credit courses or reached settled performance levels in AP, then delivering automated, personalized outreach detailing exact credit-hour waivers, test-out options, time-to-degree savings, and opportunities to pursue additional majors or certificates within their program.

Expand structured pathways from dual credit, Advanced Placement, honors, and transfer entry points into clear degree progression maps that reduce excess credits and accelerate time to completion.

Establish a "Career-Plus" framework as a structured, institution-wide approach to embedding career-connected value within every degree program. Career-Plus integrates stackable micro-credentials, digital badges, applied learning experiences, and employer-validated competencies directly into academic pathways — not as add-ons, but as intentional design features of the degree itself. Students will graduate with documented, portable evidence of professional competencies alongside their diploma, and alumni will retain access to Career-Plus credentials and pathways for ongoing professional development as workforce demands evolve.

Leverage the visibility, alumni networks, and employer relationships connected to WKU's Division I athletics program to expand mentorship and career-connected learning opportunities for students.

Strategic Academic Portfolio and Workforce Alignment

(defined) WKU will maintain a vibrant and flexible academic portfolio that prepares students for emerging professional demands while stewarding limited institutional resources responsibly. Academic offerings must be responsive to labor market trends, technological shifts, and regional economic development.

Engage deans and department chairs in a comprehensive, data-informed academic program review to ensure an appropriate mix of study options and responsible deployment of resources.

Ensure program review processes emphasize flexible curricula aligned with workforce trends, emerging technologies, and regional economic needs.

Integrate career readiness, applied learning, and employer partnerships into program design across disciplines.

Prioritize interdisciplinary and innovative programs that respond to evolving student and employer demand.

Other Considerations

1. Remove barriers for student success-collectively
2. Expand Career Support for all students (Career PLUS)
3. Strategically offering classes to ensure time complete-a TRUE PATH

Campus Engagement, Belonging, and Community/ *IMPACTFUL* experience/cultivate a *CAMPUS* community— “traditions” (what it means to be a HILLTOPPER)

On the Hill and beyond, WKU is committed to fostering a vibrant, **inclusive campus-wide** community that promotes a sense of belonging among students, faculty, staff, and local residents. Our mission is to provide enrichment through connections with peers, mentors, experiences, student-driven support systems, and opportunities for growth. At WKU, we invest in not only your education, but also in your spirit, for at Western we know, “The Spirit Makes the Master.”

Create a Culture of Recruitment

Cultivate a campus culture where all students experience belonging, meaningful engagement, and shared responsibility for the community.

Strengthen support structures for graduate and professional students, including mentoring, research engagement, career preparation, and community integration.

Enhance the graduate student experience to support WKU’s aspirations for expanded research activity and scholarly impact. -- does this belong here? Maybe career readiness? (I think it belongs to Career readiness.

Establish intentional mechanisms for gathering and responding to student feedback, ensuring that student perspectives inform institutional decision-making and continuous improvement.

Define what it means to be a Hilltopper — and make that identity legible, aspirational, and shared. WKU will articulate a clear and compelling answer to the question every prospective student, current student, and employer should be able to answer: what does a WKU education produce, and what kind of person does it develop? This identity will not be a marketing tagline but a substantive institutional commitment — grounded in WKU's applied learning heritage, regional mission, and record of producing graduates who elevate the communities they enter. WKU will embed this identity into the first-year experience, advising structures, co-curricular programming, and degree completion milestones so that students develop a genuine and durable sense of what they are becoming, not just what they are studying. By graduation, every Hilltopper should be able to articulate — to an employer, a graduate school, or their own community — what WKU gave them that nowhere else could.

Promote transparency in communicating actions taken in response to student input.

Establish a pathway for students to engage with on-going campus activities such as campus speakers, performances, and athletics to build a more-connected campus community.

Leverage the Elevate WKU housing transformation to advance student belonging and community integration by intentionally designing new residential communities as **platforms for engagement, not just accommodation**. WKU will align residential life programming, Living-Learning Community placement, first-year experience initiatives, and student support services with the phased development of new P3 residential facilities — ensuring that the physical investment in the Hill translates directly into measurable gains in connection, retention, and sense of place for students who live on campus.

Integrate counseling services, advocacy resources, health services, and academic support programs into a coordinated student support network that promotes mental health, resilience, and overall well-being.

Enhance visibility of existing resources and strengthen referral pathways to ensure students receive timely and appropriate support.

Utilize athletics participation as one dimension within a comprehensive student engagement strategy that supports the sense of belonging. Intentionally connect athletics with broader campus engagement initiatives (first-year experience, leadership development, and residence life) to strengthen student connection, institutional identity, and retention. Athletics will be positioned as a visible contributor to campus culture that reinforces belonging and supports persistence to graduation.

Other Considerations

1. Create a Campus Wide Student Success Committee
2. **ENHANCING the STEPS---CONNECTIONS-university wide (WHERE does it START)**
HUMAN CONNECTIONS*

Career Readiness for a Global Stage

At WKU, the world is your classroom. Time spent on the Hill prepares you for a life and career in the ever-changing world at home and abroad. WKU is committed to preparing new generations of graduates with the hard and soft skills necessary to thrive

Embed career-connected learning, internships, research, and employer partnerships throughout the academic experience, so students graduate prepared for evolving workforce demands.

Ensure that graduates develop digital fluency, data literacy, and the ability to responsibly and effectively use emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence.

Expand equitable access to study away and study abroad opportunities, recognizing the transformational impact of global learning experiences on students’ academic, professional, and personal development.

WKU will prepare students from every background to elevate their life trajectory through career-connected learning, digital fluency, and AI-enabled competence in a changing global economy.

Prepare students to collaborate effectively across cultures, disciplines, and global contexts by embedding cross-cultural communication, teamwork, and professional adaptability skills throughout the academic experience.

Other Considerations

1. VAULE –BASED-define it
2. Study aboard---get out of the KY region BUT offer instate/regional and beyond opportunities also consider--Implications for the program of study—How does it align with DEGREE completion –Reducing more than just cost. Empower international students to teach the majority across cultural divide
3. Career READY-----JOB Ready—Get a JOB and KEEP it (Professionally READY)
4. Enhance off campus Partnership for greater student experience
5. Expand service-learning opportunities—aimed at ENGAGEMENT (cultural within our community)

Subcommittee Struggles/Challenges

1. The desire to do it all and put it on paper
2. The desire to fix RIGHT now-and not focusing on years to come
3. The questions-what should be in the plan (should we highlight all the things we need to do-to ensure it's done).