

Pathways to Excellence:
A Strategic Vision for Missouri Western State
University 2018-2025*

Overarching Goal: Student Success

Mission Statement

Missouri Western State University is a student-centered learning community preparing individuals for lives of excellence through applied learning.

Vision Statement

Missouri Western will be the premier open access regional university, known for transforming the lives of our students and the communities we serve.

“Premier open access regional university” is defined in terms of student success, as compared against other U.S. institutions in this category.

Student Success

We will use the following indicators to define student success in relation to our open access status:

- Percent of Pell-eligible students obtaining a credential
- Six year graduation rate
- Retention rate
- Employment/placement rate of graduates

These key performance indicators (KPI's) were selected because they focus on student outcomes and allow us to benchmark our results against similar institutions. The indicators will also be examined for specific groups of students so that our success strategies can be appropriately targeted to achieve maximum results.

Key performance indicators will also be identified for individual strategies. This will enable us to determine the degree to which each one supports institutional effectiveness and advances the achievement of our objectives.

In order to achieve our vision for student success, we will shape our culture to embody the following key characteristics and engage in strategies related to the following themes.

*On October 27, 2022, the Board of Governors approved an extension of the Strategic Plan from the original expiration date of 2022 to 2025.

Culture

“Culture constrains strategy”

-Edgar Schein

Strategy is our desired path, or road map, for moving forward and culture is the sum of our shared norms, beliefs and values. Our culture will influence how we operate in achieving the goals of the strategic plan. As we move forward, it is vital that we clearly affirm the culture we desire. To that end, we seek a culture that:

- Demonstrates our values of service, quality, enthusiasm, freedom, respect, and courage
- Shows that every student matters
- Encourages creativity and collaboration
- Uses evidence-based decision-making
- Fosters agile innovation
- Exhibits accountability
- Supports diversity and inclusion
- Affirms every employee as an educator (E³ principle)

In order to build this culture, each of our strategies will be shaped by these ideals and will explicitly address them.

Missouri Western completed its first Diversity and Inclusion Taskforce Report in May 2018. Diversity and inclusion is intrinsically important and related to the values of Missouri Western, including respect and freedom. To this end, the taskforce report is the beginning of a larger conversation on how Missouri Western can grow in diversity, inclusion and cultural competence to make our campus a welcoming and enriching community for all.

Planning Themes

Advancing student success requires a comprehensive, integrated approach along with the engagement of every individual associated with Missouri Western. Five broad planning themes have been identified that will guide our efforts. Each one is crucial and will help ensure that we address key aspects of institutional effectiveness.

Student Experience

A central element for student success at Missouri Western is a supportive, positive, and thriving community. We are committed to providing high quality services in the areas of academics, co-curricular experiences, and community experiences that elevate and enhance student learning.

It is also imperative that we find ways to keep the college experience affordable, despite rising costs and reduced state funding. Without this, college will be out of reach for students who would benefit the most.

Finally, we must eliminate the barriers that inhibit student access and student success. This includes revising processes where appropriate, eliminating redundancies, and using digital workflows to streamline tasks.

Objective: Missouri Western will provide a learning experience that is affordable, engaging, and barrier free.

Key Strategies

- Employ real-time data analytics to support student success
- Increase affordability by creating additional need-based scholarships, a comprehensive campus student employment program, and reducing out-of-pocket costs
- Increase engagement by implementing a co-curricular record/transcript and systematically using surveys to obtain student feedback and input

People

Student success is the responsibility of every employee and each of us plays a vital part in the student experience. Therefore, we affirm that every employee at Missouri Western is an educator, no matter his/her official capacity on campus.

It is our goal to provide every educator with the tools necessary to succeed in their work, thereby contributing to overall well-being and fostering a vibrant campus culture. Doing so will ensure that students succeed and are prepared for life.

Objective: Missouri Western will create a culture that demonstrates our values and affirms the role of every employee as an educator.

Key Strategies

- Expand the on-boarding process for employees
- Advance professional development opportunities
- Develop a process for tracking employee job satisfaction
- Pursue best practices to recruit and retain a diverse workforce

Partnerships

"If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

-African Proverb

Since our founding as the St. Joseph Junior College in 1915, Missouri Western has relied upon community, regional and state partnerships for success. The institution was created through a partnership between community leaders from the St. Joseph School District and the Commerce Club (the predecessor to the St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce) and became a four-year institution through the collaborative efforts of the regional communities and the State of Missouri.

Continued success for our institution cannot be achieved alone; we must support the communities who support us by providing education, services, and resources to enhance the region and state. It is our goal to be the "partner of choice" for business, not-for-profits, entrepreneurs, community members and governmental entities by being accessible, responsive, accountable and user-friendly for all.

Objective: Missouri Western will expand partnerships that meet regional needs and enhance learning opportunities across campus.

Key Strategies

- Centralize responsibilities for partnerships and external relations, and charge with:
 - a. Creating a "one-stop shop" with streamlined and user-friendly service for community and campus partners
 - b. Retaining and servicing current university partnerships
 - c. Cultivating new partnerships for the benefit of the community and campus constituencies
- Create and implement an assessment process for partnerships to better evaluate time and resource allocation.
- Create and implement a comprehensive communications plan to promote University partnerships and opportunities available.

Programs

"Education is the best provision for life's journey"

-Aristotle

Quality programs are the hallmark of great institutions. Students seek out these programs, knowing that the rigor and reputation of their selected studies will pay dividends - including outstanding career opportunities, placement in graduate education, and preparation for the future. Missouri Western is fortunate to have a host of strong programs and excellent faculty who are dedicated to student learning.

Of course, past success does not guarantee the future. Meeting tomorrow's needs for our society will require innovation, agile thinking, and creativity. Essentially, we must model lifelong learning as we prepare students for the jobs of today and the careers of the future. This idea is particularly well suited for our statewide mission of applied learning, and this focus sets our institution apart from our peers. Missouri Western is committed to the idea of continuous improvement so we can lead the way as the premier open access regional university.

Objective: Missouri Western will provide quality programs that are future-focused, meet workforce needs, and prepare students for success.

Key Strategies

- Create a Center for Teaching and Learning for faculty and staff development, grant writing, and technology support
- Expand opportunities for applied learning
- Create master academic plan

Stewardship

Missouri Western has benefited greatly from the significant investments made by the citizens of this region and the State of Missouri. Thus, we have a fiduciary responsibility to protect those investments and manage wisely. Furthermore, the continued volatility of our financial circumstances require creative solutions that provide financial stability. Doing so is essential for Missouri Western to serve our students, our region, and our state most effectively.

Objective: Missouri Western will be an excellent steward of our resources and achieve long-term financial stability.

Key Strategies

- Create a strategic enrollment management plan
- Create a strategic technology plan
- Advance the goals of the facilities master plan and make infrastructure investments that increase efficient use of existing facilities and serve the institution's mission and vision
- Implement proven processes to increase organizational efficiencies, such as lean principles
- Create and implement a long-range fiscal plan that increases revenue and proactively prepares the institution for financial challenges that arise