

State of the University & State of Academic Affairs
Alignment with Youngstown State University
Plan for Strategic Actions to Take Charge of Our Future
December, 2024

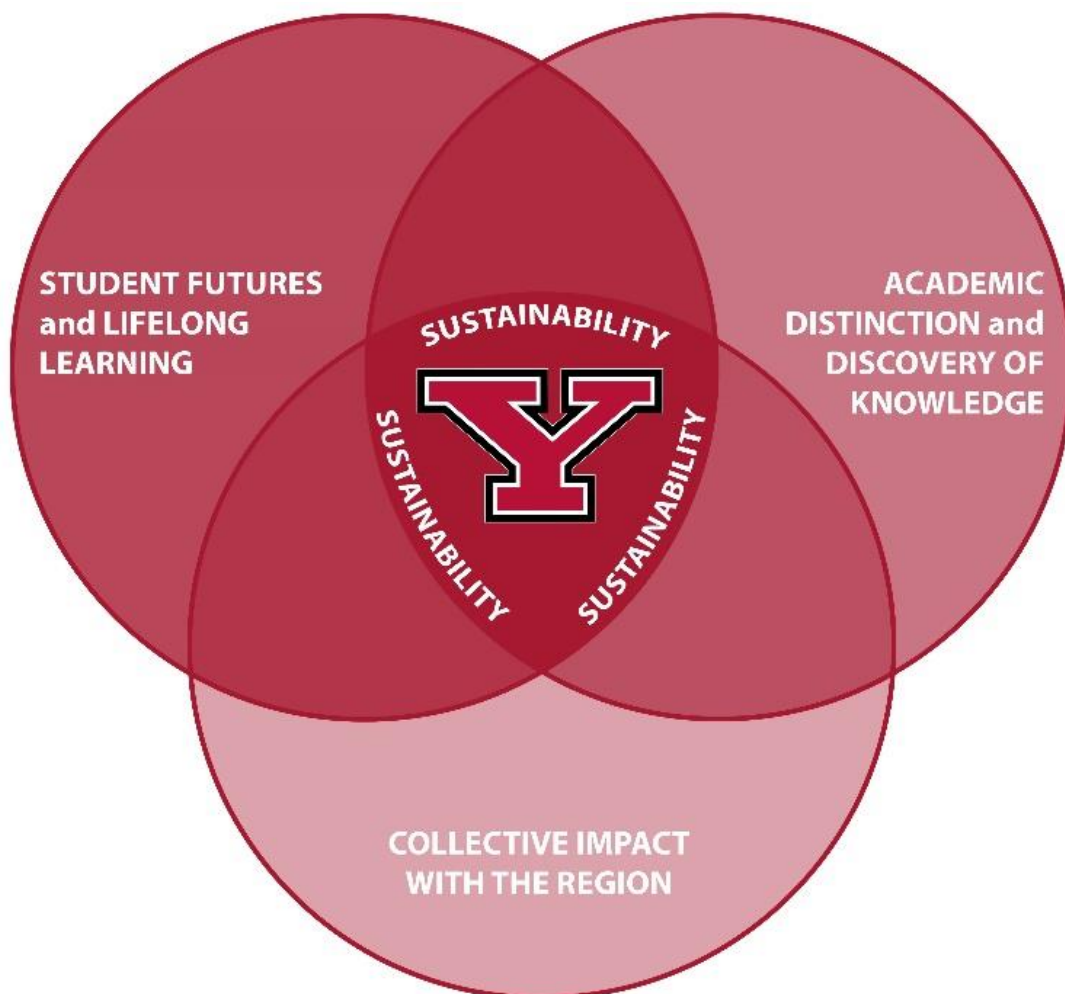
STRATEGIC PLAN OVERARCHING PERSPECTIVES

Brand objective:

YSU will be THE Anchor University of Northeast Ohio

Operational vision:

YSU is An Institution of Opportunity: YSU inspires individuals, enhances futures, and enriches lives.



Institutional themes:

- **STUDENT FUTURES & LIFELONG LEARNING**
 - ...create environments that empower students to acquire intellectual and social capital and experiences to realize individual aspirations and prepare them to meet the challenges of their generation

We will:

- Adopt a student-centered approach to all University operations and policies that values and includes all students.
 - Ensure curricula, systems, policies and practices increase academic persistence and facilitate steady progress to graduation.
 - Adopt a coordinated approach to admissions, matriculation, persistence, completion and the career success of our students.
 - Develop an approach to the admission and matriculation process, as well as effective and cost-effective support services, that improves the retention and completion strategy, that in particular, attends to academic performance achievement gaps between non-PELL and PELL recipients.
- **ACADEMIC DISTINCTION AND DISCOVERY OF KNOWLEDGE**
 - ...foster the development of a community that will grow intellectually, socially, and ethically in which individuals put knowledge into practice

We will:

- Continuously evolve an academic portfolio that serves students and the region for on-going career success
- Implement a continuous, purposeful strategy to improve teaching, learning and any area identified for national research distinction.
- Adopt and integrate university-wide learning outcomes throughout the curriculum, including credentials for distinction.
- Develop internships, service, experiential and applied learning projects with local businesses and organizations that provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge in scholarly and career-preparing activities.
- Implement continuous and regular assessment of student learning outcomes and best teaching practices to ensure that every student has a fair and equal opportunity to succeed.
- Improve student, faculty, and staff access to advanced technologies, equipment, and facilities.

- **COLLECTIVE IMPACT ACROSS THE REGION**

- ...create deliberate, mutually beneficial, educational, civic, industry, and philanthropic partnerships that achieve equal opportunities and access to innovative regional development that supports sustainable regional prosperity

We will:

- Listen to the needs of the community and collaboratively address those needs.
- Actively collaborate with community partner organizations which share in our mission.
- Develop activities that demonstrate impact and purpose in accordance with the university's mission.
- Communicate the impact and value of community engagement activities.
- Strategically align community engagement goals and activities with regional educational needs via both degrees and industry credentials.
- Ensure that current and future partnerships provide equal opportunities and access to inclusive and accessible systems and best practices.

- **SUSTAINABILITY**

- ...there will be continuous quality improvement processes that reflect a commitment to alignment of resources with Plan implementation, and that integrate with and facilitate the institution's long-term goals and objectives.

We will:

- Focus on enhancing organizational effectiveness improving efficiencies.
- Prioritize as part of the budget process, academic program quality; enrollment as a marketing and communication strategy directly impacting admissions; finance and facilities; human resources; and information technology.
- Ensure all aspects of the institution, from its overarching mission and vision to specific objectives and metrics, align with strategic priorities.

INSTITUTIONAL VALUES

We—the faculty, staff, administrators, and students of Youngstown State University—hold the following values essential to achieving the mission and realizing the vision.

- Centrality of Students – We put students first, fostering their holistic and lifelong success.
- Excellence and Innovation – We bring academic excellence and innovation to learning and life for all stakeholders.

- Integrity and Human Dignity – We root all behaviors, decisions and actions in the achievement of integrity, mutual respect, collegiality, and inclusion.
- Collaboration and Public Engagement – We embrace collaboration and create innovative partnerships to foster sustainability and enrich our university, our culture, and our region.

THE ACTION PLAN

The following integrates the basic elements of the previous versions of the Plan’s overarching perspective with action steps that reflect the seamless integration of the President’s State of the University and the Provost’s State of Academic Affairs.

The integration of these two addresses by the president and the provost align with the following objectives/goals:

- Optimize the academic portfolio
- Improve the student experience for the thousands of students who trust their future to YSU
- Increase enrollment purposefully and strategically
- Seamlessly integrate with businesses, industries and service organizations
- Cultivate a culture of empowerment and inspiration among all faculty, staff, and leadership team throughout YSU
- Assure a strong financial outlook

OPTIMIZE THE ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO

PREVIOUS VERSION OVERARCHING PERSPECTIVE: Develop a culture of assessment that optimizes the academic portfolio to ensure the quality of academic program majors, minors, and other credentials

State of University: YSU is in the people business, and therefore will provide a robust repertoire of educational choices, not just so students have a successful career but also to assure future generations of Americans are sustained by an informed and educated citizenry.

State of Academic Affairs: Continuously assess the academic portfolio to assure it is relevant to academic priorities and aligned with workforce needs of the region considering education from a broad perspective including credentials, upskilling/reskilling, and associates, bachelor, masters, and selective doctoral degree programs.

- **ACTION:** Establish the Academic Master Plan that will assure the academic portfolio is optimized via a robust process of assessment and actions that includes the rigorous evaluation of potential new programs that strategically serve the educational, workforce and career needs of the region

- **ACTION:** Implement universal learning outcomes and transform general education to enhance the value of a degree
- **ACTION:** Develop a culture of assessment that ensures the quality of academic program majors, minors, and other credentials

IMPROVE THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS WHO TRUST THEIR FUTURE TO YSU

- PREVIOUS VERSION OVERARCHING PERSPECTIVE: Implement best practices that address student needs throughout the student life cycle to increase persistence, completion and postgraduate success.

State of the University: Students are our central focus. We must welcome them, embrace them, and empower them to be a member of the Penguin family. We engage and support them to pursue a degree for which they are prepared and interested, facilitate availability of various types of aid to reduce their personal financial burden in pursuit of their college education, optimize the availability of internships and co-ops, and work collaboratively with them to prepare for their successful career.

State of Academic Affairs: Our students deserve our very best not only educational experience, but also a totality of experience unlike they ever expected or even imagined. This requires each faculty and staff member to be inspired, motivated and committed to support the success of each and every student in every way possible. Such an environment will assure the quality of the YSU experience, the outcome of which will differentiate our alumni from others and assure our graduates are employees of choice.

- **ACTION:** Implement a comprehensive fund-raising campaign to fully fund the renovation of the Kilcawley Student Center to assure a highly functional location for student organizations, provide a variety in foods and beverages, and gathering space that is welcoming and inviting
- **ACTION:** Improve the advising processes and centralize the leadership of undergraduate academic advising in the Office of Academic Affairs
- **ACTION:** Implement a comprehensive student retention solution
- **ACTION:** Mandate individual coaching for students placed on academic warning
- **ACTION:** Implement automated GPA recalculation for students who successfully repeat a course.

INCREASE ENROLLMENT PURPOSEFULLY AND STRATEGICALLY

- PREVIOUS VERSION OVERARCHING PERSPECTIVE: Develop integrated recruitment and enrollment strategies that align with integrated marketing and communications strategies to gain market share.

State of the University: There is a direct relationship between enrollment and the financial well-being of a university, and the competition among all institutions of higher learning is becoming epically intense. YSU provides an outstanding educational experience that is very affordable, making a degree from YSU highly valuable. To optimize enrollment, we must cast a wider net and go “student hunting” where the students are and use tools and methods that resonate with them. In other words, YSU must be competitive and earn/gain market share, a component of which is to further build the YSU brand so all potential college eligible students “Know Y” YSU is the place to be, and “Know Y” YSU should be their first-choice educational opportunity.

State of Academic Affairs: With a robust Academic Master Plan, we must be very strategic in how we market specific academic programs. Components of every academic program’s dashboard include information regarding student interests that directly reflect program demand; available career opportunities, including knowledge and skills necessary to compete for jobs associated with the major; and an indication of how saturated the market might be for a particular academic program. This is why the Office of Academic Affairs is aligning marketing with every aspect of academic program evaluation, redesign and/or creation.

- **ACTION:** Implement a strategic communications function that synergizes our communications, marketing, branding, advertising, social and digital media, and local and national press relationships as well as connect with alumni as recruiters and ambassador for enrollment.
- **ACTION:** Implement the Enterprise Enrollment Plan that includes not only cultivation for matriculation, but that also addresses student persistence and creates a Strategic Enrollment Plan tailored to focus on many of the areas addressed below.
 - **ACTION:** Increase yield in current catchment area, and extend beyond current catchment into Cleveland and Pittsburgh areas to increase yield
 - **ACTION:** Enhance the newly prototyped Penguin Prep program to attract college-capable students who might otherwise get overlooked
 - **ACTION:** Expand recruiting into the veteran and active-duty military markets
 - **ACTION:** Introduce new undergraduate online programs tailored to individuals with some college and no degree
 - **ACTION:** Expand College Credit Plus high school programs
 - **ACTION:** Strategically enhance and expand graduate programs
 - **ACTION:** Build on the success of international student cultivation and matriculation, including optimizing the student experience
 - **ACTION:** Introduce new aviation and CDL programs to address serious workforce deficiencies in the commercial aviation and commercial transportation industries.

SEAMLESSLY INTEGRATE WITH BUSINESSES, INDUSTRIES, SCHOOL DISTRICTS, AND SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

- PREVIOUS VERSION OVERARCHING PERSPECTIVE : YSU will be recognized as a Carnegie community-engaged campus, will assure a presence in Washington and Columbus to optimize support for YSU, and will cultivate relationships with businesses, industries, school districts, and regional service organizations.

State of the University: YSU is THE ANCHOR institution of higher learning in this region, and we intend to further enhance that status by cultivating a robust partnership with businesses, industries, school districts and other. The outcomes will include elements of mutually beneficial opportunities such as creating internships/co-ops, experiential education, data mining and “education-to-work” pathways. Our engagement with service organizations will be strategic and mutually beneficial to those that they serve and will directly connect to our academic programs. The idea here is to create a synchronous and synergistic integration between the faculty that educates and trains the workforce (i.e. the students) and the businesses and industries in our community that so desperately need that workforce.

State of Academic Affairs: We will strive to assure that when they graduate, every student will have had a rich experience of experiential and service learning also accompanied by relevant student employment and/or an internship or co-op experience. This will be achieved via the efforts of each college but will also be leveraged via our focus on workforce education and innovation taking advantage of the Watson Team Center, the Williamson Innovation Park, and the Excellence Training Center.

- **ACTION:** Each college will develop and implement a plan to assure each student has experiential and service-learning experiences.
- **ACTION:** Each college will evolve a strategy to assure each student has workforce experiences via university employment, internships or co-ops
- **ACTION:** Each college will actively seek to foster student experiences aligned with the IT Workforce Accelerator, Data Mine, Excellence Training Center, Williamson Innovation Park, Tressel Institute for Leadership and Team work, and/or Online Skills Accelerator programs

CULTIVATE A CULTURE OF CARING, EMPOWERMENT AND INSPIRATION AMONGST ALL FACULTY AND STAFF, AND THROUGHOUT YSU

OVERARCHING PERSPECTIVE: Talent will be attracted and retained at YSU being known for instigating a culture that values and respects all individuals and fosters innovation in the workplace and professional development for the success of all employees.

State of the University: The strength of the institution is based upon the collective strengths of the faculty and staff. Those collective strengths will be cultivated by attending to a work environment that values and respects all employees.

State of Academic Affairs: Talented faculty and staff bring strength to the institution through their dedication and innovations that provides an exceptional educational experience. Those talents will be valued by the institution as through actions that support on-going learning and development.

- **ACTION:** Implement KNOW Y Fridays both within and via outside the university to extend and enhance brand awareness
- **ACTION:** Implement a Thought Leader Series to enhance institutional awareness and stimulate discussion on a broad range of topics important to students and society as a whole
- **ACTION:** Implement an Innovation Investment Fund, to provide the opportunity for interdisciplinary collaboration to explore, assess, or implement innovative strategies associated with teaching and learning and/or student success

ASSURE A STRONG FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

PREVIOUS VERSION OVERARCHING PERSPECTIVE: Align institutional resources with strategic priorities by optimizing resource allocation to enhance overall effectiveness contributing to a vibrant future state as reflected by appropriate senate bill six ratios and other pertinent measures of institutional performance.

State of the University: To achieve the mission and realize the vision, YSU must continue to operate within its financial resources, including state funding, tuition, federal financial aid, and philanthropic revenue sources. In addition, YSU must have a strong presence in Columbus and in Washington to be proactively engaged with discussions and legislative actions that impact and influence YSU's economic well-being. In addition to faculty research, YSU must secure additional funds via government grants and/or contracts to support the quality of the physical environment with an emphasis on teaching and learning, and deferred maintenance. The YSU Foundation plays a significant role supporting student and institutional success and that relationship will be optimized to serve the best interests of YSU. In addition, YSU will appropriately value the role that Intercollegiate Athletics contributes to the student experience but also to enhancing the YSU brand.

State of Academic Affairs: YSU is in the business of educating future generations of workforce, including the doers, makers, and builders, as well as the visionaries, engineers, and creators of next generation innovations and problem solutions. Thus, the academic programs associated with YSU's academic portfolio is what attracts students, significantly impacting enrollment, as well as serving the workforce needs of the region. We will value this perspective by assuring our academic programs are aligned with student career

aspirations and the workforce needs of the region. The assessment of academic program dashboards on an annual basis will help assure such a successful outcome.

- **ACTION:** We will aggressively pursue appropriate state and federal contracts and grants to improve the quality of the student experience and the physical environment with a particular emphasis on reducing deferred facility maintenance
- **ACTION:** We will produce academic program dashboards that will be used to support continuous quality improvement without which programs will be rated as Detailed Analysis, a designation requiring action to grow enrollment and increase the number of graduates (Focus Plus) or be eliminated from the portfolio.
- **ACTION:** We will continue to assess space utilization and take steps to optimize how space is utilized on campus, particularly increasing campus activities during the summer