

Western University
of Health Sciences




Tomorrow's WesternU

**STRATEGIC PLAN
2025-2030**



Building the humanistic
healthcare workforce
of tomorrow.





Western University of Health Sciences stands at a pivotal moment in its institutional journey. As we look toward 2030, we reaffirm our commitment to humanistic values, academic excellence, and transformative leadership in graduate health sciences education. This strategic plan—Tomorrow’s WesternU 2025–2030—is the product of deep reflection, inclusive dialogue, and bold vision—shaped by the voices of faculty, staff, students, and stakeholders across our Pomona, California, and Lebanon, Oregon, campuses.

The need for this plan is urgent and clear. Growing national healthcare workforce shortages, evolving educational models, and shifting societal expectations demand a proactive and unified response. Our institution must not only adapt to these changes but lead through them—ensuring that our graduates are prepared to thrive in a complex, interprofessional, and increasingly digital health ecosystem. This plan provides the strategic clarity and institutional alignment necessary to meet these challenges head-on.

This strategic plan builds upon our legacy of innovation and directly confronts the dynamic shifts in healthcare, education, and society. It affirms our identity as a single institution with a shared mission and unified goals, while honoring the importance of regional adaptability. By addressing the distinct needs and opportunities of each campus, we ensure that our strategies remain responsive, relevant, and rooted in the communities we serve.

Guided by our mission and shaped by our community, this plan charts an aspirational and actionable path forward. It unites our campuses in purpose and empowers them to lead with local insight, driving growth, delivering excellence, and creating a lasting impact on our students, our patients, and the world.

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Executive Summary:

Tomorrow's WesternU

Strategic Plan 2025–2030

Tomorrow's WesternU 2025–2030 is a forward-looking blueprint designed to advance our mission. Developed through a multi-phase, inclusive process, this plan reflects the voices of faculty, staff, students, and stakeholders across both Pomona, California and Lebanon, Oregon campuses. At the heart of this plan is WesternU's **mission**:

To produce, in a humanistic tradition, health care professionals and biomedical knowledge that will enhance and extend the quality of life in our communities.

This mission is supported by a clear **vision** to become a global leader in graduate health sciences education, research, and service—addressing healthcare workforce shortages and advancing human and animal health through innovative and humanistic approaches.

The plan is grounded in three enduring **core values**:

- **Humanism:** Compassion, empathy, and respect in all interactions.
- **Scholarship:** Evidence-based education, research, and intellectual curiosity.
- **Integrity:** Ethical leadership, transparency, and accountability.

These values shape the university's culture and will guide the following **strategic priorities**:

Strategic Priorities

1. Culture of Excellence and Support

- a. Establish mentorship programs
- b. Promote professional development
- c. Improve internal communication and transparency
- d. Foster psychological safety and recognition
- e. Enhance Governance and Operational Systems

2. Sustainable Growth

- a. Build WesternU through philanthropy and purpose
- b. Expand clinical and research enterprises
- c. Implement a clear research strategy
- d. Develop workforce-aligned academic programs
- e. Optimize Institutional Processes and Technology Platforms
- f. Strengthen partnerships and community engagement



3. Enhanced Campus Experience and Infrastructure

- a. Create student-centered spaces and wellness facilities
- b. Modernize learning environments
- c. Improve amenities and accessibility
- d. Invest in simulation and digital learning technologies

Operational Excellence serves as a cross-cutting theme that underpins all strategic priorities. By optimizing best-practice processes, WesternU will enhance institutional performance and enable data-informed decision-making across all areas of the institution.

As WesternU continues to grow across its two campuses, this plan affirms our identity as a single institution with a shared mission and unified strategic goals. At the same time, it recognizes the importance of regional adaptability—acknowledging the distinct needs, opportunities, and cultural contexts of Pomona and Lebanon. By balancing centralized coordination with local responsiveness, WesternU is uniquely positioned to deliver high-quality education and patient care that reflects both institutional consistency and community relevance.

The plan also outlines a robust governance and stakeholder engagement framework, a phased implementation timeline, and key performance indicators to measure progress. WesternU is poised to lead with humanism, scholarship, and integrity—advancing health sciences education, research, and clinical care for generations to come.

Why WesternU is the Solution to Healthcare Needs and Workforce Shortages

Western University of Health Sciences (WesternU), with campuses in Pomona, California and Lebanon, Oregon, stands at a defining moment in its evolution—marked by sustained growth, academic excellence, and a deep commitment to humanistic health care education. As an independent nonprofit institution, WesternU confers advanced degrees across a wide spectrum of health professions, including osteopathic medicine, veterinary medicine, pharmacy, nursing, dental medicine, optometry, physical therapy, podiatric medicine, and more. Home to WesternU Health and WesternU Pet Health, the university delivers collaborative, compassionate care to both people and animals. For over 45 years, WesternU has prepared health care professionals for long-term success, guided by values that honor the individuality of every patient. As one of California’s largest graduate schools for the health sciences, WesternU continues to shape the future of biomedicine through its alumni, who lead and serve in communities across the nation and around the world.

WesternU has achieved significant distinction over the past several years. As one of the most expansive graduate institutions for health professions and the fifth-largest medical school in the United States of America, WesternU is well positioned to become a national academic leader in healthcare workforce development. Upholding its inception in the principles of osteopathic medicine, WesternU is now ranked in Tier 1 for “Best Medical Schools for Primary Care”. WesternU now also enjoys a No. 7 ranking for “Most Graduates Practicing in Primary Care” by U.S. News & World Report.

Building on this strong foundation, WesternU has recently achieved several milestones that reflect its continued institutional maturation. These include full WSCUC accreditation, the launch of strategic business plans, a comprehensive classification and compensation initiative, and the development of institutional marketing and capital campaign strategies. The university has strengthened governance and senior leadership, and established new divisions and offices focused on compliance, external affairs, accreditation, and enrollment management. With growing national recognition and a commitment to financial stewardship, WesternU is well-positioned to advance its mission and impact.

Responding to a Changing Educational and Operational Landscape

Higher education is under increasing scrutiny, with students across disciplines reevaluating the cost-benefit of graduate degrees and turning toward more flexible, competency-based alternatives such as certificates, badges, and technical training. While this trend is more pronounced in some fields than others, even health professions education is not immune—particularly as learners seek programs that offer clear pathways to licensure, employment, and career advancement. WesternU recognizes this shift and is actively evolving to meet the expectations of a new generation of learners. Through curricular modernization, we are prioritizing “need-to-know” content that directly supports clinical readiness and interprofessional collaboration. Our programs are integrating emerging technologies, such as simulation-based learning, to enhance relevance, skill acquisition, and career mobility. At the same time, we acknowledge that graduate degrees in the health sciences remain essential for entry into regulated professions. Rather than rejecting traditional models, WesternU is enhancing them—aligning academic rigor with practical relevance and career mobility.

Competing in this new value-based academic market also demands operational excellence. WesternU is investing in software platforms that enable real-time validation of institutional outcomes and impact. Automated assessment tools are being deployed to provide timely insights to stakeholders, ensuring that performance variants, outliers, and deficiencies are identified and addressed

efficiently. Comprehensive program evaluation—focused on relevance, return on investment, and learner outcomes—is central to our strategy for long-term viability. By aligning academic innovation with data-driven accountability, WesternU is strengthening its position as a leader in humanistic health sciences education while remaining responsive to the evolving demands of students, employers, and society.



Transforming Healthcare Through Humanistic Education and Workforce Development

Just as higher education faces increasing scrutiny over its value, the healthcare industry is undergoing a parallel transformation. The traditional fee-for-service reimbursement model is rapidly giving way to value-based, outcomes-driven, shared-risk payment systems. Patients are demanding health and wellness over reactive “sick care,” prompting a shift in focus from acute interventions to preventative and primary care. This evolution is reducing operating budgets, increasing demand for community-based programs, and expanding the definition of primary care to include dental health, mental health, social services, and interdisciplinary care teams.

WesternU is uniquely positioned to meet these emerging challenges of a transforming healthcare landscape. As a premier graduate health sciences university, WesternU trains highly skilled professionals across a wide range of disciplines—including medicine, nursing, dentistry, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, podiatric medicine, and more. Our humanistic mission guides the education of compassionate, competent providers who are prepared to lead in integrated, team-based care environments. By emphasizing whole-person care and interprofessional collaboration,

WesternU prepares graduates to deliver coordinated, patient-centered services that improve health outcomes—particularly in underserved communities where access to comprehensive care is limited. While access to care is influenced by geographic and systemic factors, the presence of well-trained, team-oriented providers is essential to expanding services in Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) and other care deserts. WesternU’s strong emphasis on primary care and its track record of placing graduates in underserved regions directly supports efforts to increase access and reduce disparities. Our graduates are not only clinically prepared but also equipped to address the social, behavioral, and environmental determinants of health that shape community well-being.





JOB OUTLOOK FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics projects strong national job growth for many healthcare professions:

- **Primary Care:**
 - » Family Medicine and Internal Medicine Physicians: 4% growth
 - » Nurse Practitioners: 40% growth
 - » Physician Assistants: 28% growth
- **Dental Health:**
 - » Dentists 5% growth
- **Mental Health:**
 - » Psychologists: 7% growth
 - » Marriage and Family Therapists: 16% growth
 - » Mental Health Counselors: 19% growth
- **Other Healthcare Professions:**
 - » Veterinarians: 19% growth
 - » Physical Therapists: 14% growth
 - » Optometrists: 9% growth
 - » Pharmacists: 5% growth
 - » Podiatrists: 1% growth

Summary of US Healthcare Professional Shortages and Job Outlook

HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SHORTAGE AREAS (HPSAS)

The US government has identified regions, population groups, or facilities with shortages of healthcare professionals.

These HPSAs are categorized into three main areas:

1. **Primary Care:** Many rural areas and parts of urban areas like Los Angeles County and surrounding regions are designated as HPSAs for primary care.
2. **Dental Health:** Los Angeles County and surrounding areas, rural areas of California, as well as most regions in Oregon, face dental health shortages. California has the most dental health HPSAs in the U.S., with 545 designated shortage areas as of September 2025, impacting around 2.2 million people in need of dental care.
3. **Mental Health:** Significant portions of California and Oregon are designated as mental health HPSAs.



KEY POINTS:

- **Significant Demand:** There is a substantial demand for healthcare professionals, particularly in HPSA regions.
- **Diverse Career Opportunities:** A wide range of healthcare professions offer strong job growth potential.
- **Addressing Shortages:** By training and educating healthcare professionals, institutions like WesternU can help alleviate these shortages and improve access to care.

WesternU, with campuses in California and Oregon, is uniquely, strategically, and geographically positioned to serve areas designated as HPSAs. WesternU graduates are prepared to practice in both urban and rural settings, addressing the urgent need for primary care, mental health, and dental services.

Furthermore, WesternU's commitment to innovative education and research ensures that our graduates are equipped to meet the evolving challenges of the healthcare industry. By investing in WesternU, we are investing in a healthier future for all. In today's dynamic landscape, it is imperative that WesternU strategically strengthen our campus and safeguard our legacy, ensuring our ability to expand and sustain our impact for generations to come. This plan outlines a series of priorities and initiatives designed to achieve that vision.





A Legacy of Strategic Vision: WesternU's Evolution Through Planning

Since its founding in 1977, Western University of Health Sciences (WesternU) has exemplified a bold, forward-thinking approach to health professions education. This spirit of innovation has been consistently reinforced through a series of strategic plans that have guided the institution's growth, transformation, and enduring commitment to academic excellence and humanistic values. To place the current effort in context, it is important to recognize that WesternU has a long history of developing and implementing strategic plans, each building upon prior initiatives to guide the University's growth and evolution.



2005–2013: Foundational Growth and Ambition

WesternU's first university-wide strategic plan, launched in 2005 under President Philip Pumerantz, marked a critical moment in the university's evolution. Designed to elevate WesternU to national prominence, the plan introduced five foundational pillars: Interprofessionalism, Revenue Diversification, the "WesternU Way," Strategic Partnerships, and a deep commitment to Science, Caring, and Humanism.

This plan catalyzed a period of remarkable expansion. By 2011, WesternU had exceeded many of its initial goals:

- Four new colleges were established.
- Enrollment surged from 2,650 to over 3,600 students.
- Faculty numbers surpassed 250.
- More than 371,000 square feet of new facilities were added, including the Patient Care Center and the Western Diabetes Institute.
- Interprofessional Education (IPE) became a university-wide requirement.
- A second expanded campus in Oregon was launched.

This era laid the groundwork for a more integrated and mission-driven institution, with strategic planning becoming a central mechanism for aligning growth with values and long-term vision.



2014–2019: Advancing a National Identity

Building on this momentum, WesternU adopted a new strategic plan in 2014 that sought to align the university's trajectory with national trends in healthcare, education, and research. The plan reaffirmed the original five pillars while introducing a more inclusive and data-informed planning process. A university-wide Strategic Planning Task Force—comprising faculty, staff, students, alumni, and administrators—conducted environmental scans and stakeholder engagement to define seven goal areas: Education, Health Care, Research, Interprofessional Education, Finance, Internal Fitness, and Community Service.

This plan introduced a two-phase structure:

- **Part I** outlined high-level goals and objectives.
- **Part II** detailed implementation tactics, performance metrics, and timelines.

Strategic initiatives during this period included:

- Competency-based, active-learning curricula designed for 21st-century healthcare.
- Patient-centered, population-based care models emphasizing interprofessional collaboration.
- The creation of an Educational Technology Innovation Center to support digital learning and simulation.
- Expanded community engagement and pipeline programs to diversify the healthcare workforce.

This phase marked a shift toward a more outward-facing identity, positioning WesternU as a national leader in health professions education and community impact.

2019 and Beyond: Achieving Aspirations

In 2018, under President Daniel R. Wilson, WesternU launched “Achieving Aspirations,” a transformative strategic initiative that emphasized enterprise-wide implementation. This phase represented a shift from planning to execution, with a focus on institutional integration and operational excellence.

The Strategic Performance Group (SPG) was established to drive this transformation, engaging over 100 faculty and staff across academic, administrative, and clinical domains. The initiative was anchored in the unifying vision: **One Mission. One Vision. One University.**

Key accomplishments included:

- Implementation of the Cascade Strategic Management System to track strategic initiatives.
- Launch of Mission-Critical Strategic Deployments (MCSDs) in areas such as technology optimization, online learning, financial stewardship, digital marketing, and leadership development.
- Introduction of Lean Six Sigma methodologies to improve institutional efficiency.
- Alignment of projects with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) focused on both mission impact and return on investment.

WesternU’s strategic framework during this period gained national recognition, with presentations at the WASC Academic Resource Conference and the Society for College and University Planning (SCUP), validating the university’s leadership in strategic innovation.

Current Strategic Planning Process



WesternU's current era marks a period of accelerated transformation, strategic growth, and institutional maturation—affirming its rising stature on the global academic stage. The university has cultivated a robust, evidence-based culture, strengthened by success in national rankings and reinforced through disciplined business planning and financial stewardship. Governance reforms have deepened stakeholder engagement and enhanced brand commitment. Together, the restructuring of academic and administrative functions and full WSCUC accreditation, have fortified WesternU's leadership capacity and renewed its institutional climate—positioning the university for long-term success in an increasingly complex higher education landscape.

WesternU embarked on a multi-phase strategic planning process under the direction of President Robin Farias-Eisner beginning in 2022, initiated by a Campus Culture and Climate Survey. The insights from this survey informed Phase 1 of the institutional strategic business plan, which focused on understanding and engaging the university community.

Phase 2 launched in November 2023 with academic colleges and expanded to administrative departments in January 2024. This phase emphasized building structures to monitor the progress of individual strategic business plans, ensuring alignment with institutional priorities: academic excellence, future preparedness, a community of belonging, humanistic healthcare, and operational excellence.

The strategic business plan was operationalized during the 2024–2025 budget cycle and continues to guide the current budgeting process. In Spring 2025, the university shifted its focus to developing a broader institutional strategic plan. A strategic planning committee has been meeting regularly to gather additional feedback and data to draft this revised strategic plan. The committee will also assist in identifying additional committees or task forces needed to implement the strategic plan and business plans; and establish processes to measure, monitor, and modify plan goals and objectives.

Revised strategic priorities—emerging from ongoing business planning efforts—were shared with the university community, sparking a reaffirmation of WesternU's mission and a productive dialogue around its core values and future directions.

This 2025–2030 Strategic Plan—Tomorrow's WesternU—builds upon these efforts, aligning institutional priorities with the evolving needs of healthcare, education, and society. For more information, please visit the [University's strategic plan page](#).

Institutional Analysis

Western University of Health Sciences, with campuses in Pomona, California and Lebanon, Oregon, is at a pivotal juncture in its institutional journey. As one of the largest multidisciplinary graduate universities in the health sciences in the country, WesternU offers a comprehensive range of advanced degrees and delivers patient-centered clinical services through WesternU Health and WesternU Pet Health. Grounded in humanistic values and a commitment to excellence, the university continues to prepare health care professionals who lead and serve across the nation and the world.

As WesternU expands its reach and impact, it must balance centralized coordination with regional responsiveness. While both campuses share a unified mission focused on education, research, service, and quality patient care, each operates within distinct demographic, regulatory, and cultural environments. Standardizing core systems and strategic goals ensures institutional integrity and consistency, while allowing for differentiated approaches in Pomona and Lebanon supports agility and local relevance. This dual commitment—to shared purpose and regional adaptability—must be clearly reflected in the university’s strategic vision and goals.

To guide this next phase of growth, a comprehensive institutional analysis was conducted. Drawing from strategic business plans and SWOT analyses from each of WesternU’s eight colleges, along with insights from a university-wide survey of 260 faculty, staff, and students, this report presents a unified SWOT analysis. This holistic view serves as a foundation for our strategic planning, highlighting our collective strengths and identifying key challenges and opportunities for collaborative growth.

Strengths

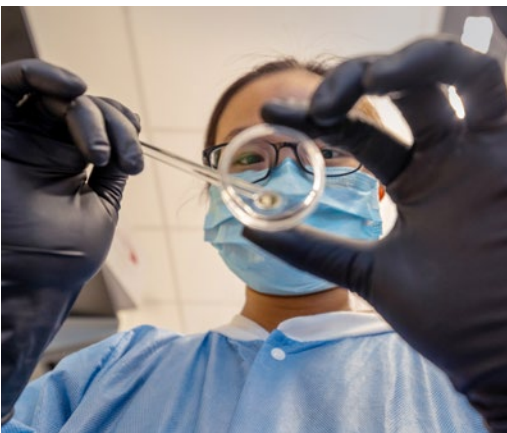
WesternU's strengths lie in its innovative, evidence-based curriculum that emphasizes early clinical exposure and humanistic student-centered education. The university consistently achieves high board pass rates and strong residency placements, supported by a dedicated and diverse faculty and staff. WesternU fosters a deeply inclusive environment, engages actively with the community through patient care, research partnerships, and educational outreach activities, and offers competitive employee benefits. Its clean, secure campus further enhances the overall learning and working experience.

Weaknesses

WesternU faces several challenges that impact its ability to fully realize its mission. The university operates with limited financial resources and remains heavily reliant on tuition, which constrains long-term sustainability. Internal communication is often fragmented, with a lack of transparency that can hinder collaboration and trust. Faculty and staff report experiencing high workloads and burnout, exacerbated by an outdated curriculum and slow adoption of new technologies. Research infrastructure and support remain underdeveloped, and access to clinical rotations is inconsistent across programs. Additionally, aging campus facilities, low brand visibility, and operational inefficiencies present ongoing barriers to growth and competitiveness.

Opportunities

WesternU is well-positioned to capitalize on a range of strategic opportunities that align with emerging trends in health professions education. The university can enhance its academic offerings by integrating advanced technologies such as AI, virtual reality, and telehealth into its curricula. Expanding clinical partnerships and patient care models will strengthen experiential learning and community impact. There is significant potential to grow research through the development of centers of excellence and to build stronger student pathways through targeted community engagement. Strategic fundraising campaigns, investments in faculty development and retention, and efforts to elevate branding and campus aesthetics will further support institutional growth. Additionally, implementing green initiatives and refining strategic planning processes will help WesternU advance sustainability and operational effectiveness.



Threats

WesternU operates in a complex and rapidly evolving environment that presents several external and internal threats to its long-term success. Shifts in federal funding and policy, coupled with broader economic pressures, heighten the university's financial vulnerability—particularly given its continued dependence on tuition revenue. Demographic changes are also contributing to a shrinking pool of prospective students, intensifying competition for enrollment.

The healthcare landscape itself is undergoing significant transformation, with increasing healthcare provider burnout and systemic changes that challenge traditional education and patient care models. WesternU must also contend with growing competition from public institutions and online programs that offer more flexible or lower-cost alternatives.

Internally, risks related to accreditation and faculty retention could impact program stability and academic quality. Cultural disconnects and operational bottlenecks may further hinder institutional cohesion and efficiency. Finally, negative student experiences—if left unaddressed—pose a reputational risk that could undermine recruitment, retention, and community trust.

Critical Risks and Opportunities

In addition to the broader SWOT analysis, further dialogue and analysis among campus administration, faculty, and staff have surfaced several critical areas of risk and opportunity that warrant focused attention. These areas represent both challenges to be addressed and strategic levers to be activated in pursuit of WesternU's long-term vision.

CRITICAL AREAS OF RISK

1. **Deferred Maintenance and Infrastructure:**

- a. **Deferred Maintenance:** WesternU is developing a Campus Master Plan which will effectively address deferred maintenance to enhance the university's infrastructure.
- b. **Campus Master Plan:** The need for a comprehensive Campus Master Plan and space planning is critical, representing an opportunity for clinic expansion and enhancing needed academic classroom space, in both Oregon and California.

2. **Organizational Structure and Culture:**

- a. **Structure:** The current organizational structure is under review and represents an opportunity to enhance efficiency and decision-making of administrative services, including the recruitment of an Executive Vice President.

- b. **Cultural Challenges:** A highly valued current focus is on the evaluation, assessment, and enhancement of shared governance. The theme of collegiality, collaboration, civility, and transparency among faculty and staff is a top priority.

3. **Financial Viability:**

- a. **Tuition Costs:** Tuition for the various colleges remains competitive. However, a unique prospect exists to leverage the upcoming capital campaign and grow the institutions scholarship programs for WesternU's students.
- b. **College and Program Profitability:** A key initiative has been launched to evaluate the profitability and sustainability of the current colleges and programs, including attaining college and program fiscal autonomy.

4. **Brand Recognition and Market Position:**

- a. **Brand Awareness:** An extraordinary window of opportunity exists to create a new brand for the university, focused on the concept that WesternU represents the solution to the current national Health Professional shortage. The university offers a broad band width of solutions that focuses on an effective answer to the national shortage crisis in Primary Care (e.g. Medicine, Physical therapy, Physician Assistant, Graduate Nursing, etc.) Dental Health, and Mental Health, including rural areas, and medically underserved areas and populations. The creation of such a working de novo brand will enhance awareness and help to establish WesternU as an elite institution that offers an operational solution with a human touch.
- b. **Define Our Narrative:** As our culture is defined and consensus emerges, it becomes imperative to articulate a narrative that emphasizes authenticity, transparency, and impact. Such a narrative will leverage the existing window of opportunity to focus on the concept that WesternU represents the solution to the current national Health Professional shortage crisis in Primary Care (e.g. Medicine, Physical therapy, Physician Assistant, Graduate Nursing, etc.), Dental Health, and Mental Health, including rural areas, and medically underserved areas and populations.
- c. **Market Competitiveness:** It will be important to achieve high board scores, recruit quality faculty and staff, and provide professional development to enhance the university's reputation.



WESTERNU'S KEY OPPORTUNITIES

1. Program Expansion and Innovation:

- a. **Dual Degree Programs:** Expanding dual degree programs across multiple colleges presents an opportunity for growth and differentiation.
- b. **New Disciplines:** Exploring new disciplines in postgraduate healthcare and mental health and research programs can attract a diverse student body and meet emerging market needs.

2. Clinical and Research Expansion:

- a. **Clinic Expansion:** Expanding clinical sites for training (e.g. FQHC and 3rd party payor mix PPO models), and revenue generation is critical toward achieving enrollment and financial goals.
- b. **Research Expansion & Integration:** Integrating research into the curriculum, enhancing both clinical and research activities, and expanding research capacity, elevating the university's academic standing and enabling a broader impact on biomedical discovery, health equity, and community wellness.

3. Cultural and Organizational Improvements:

- a. **Collaborative Culture:** Fostering and supporting a collaborative and supportive culture will enhance morale and productivity.
- b. **Professional Development:** Investing in professional development for faculty and staff will further enhance the quality of education and support the university's elite status.

4. Strategic Planning and Metrics:

- a. **Clear Vision and Metrics:** Communicating the university's clear vision from the Office of the President and focusing on specific metrics for success will guide the university towards its goals.
- b. **Accountability and Governance:** Enhancing shared governance and accountability will streamline decision-making and align efforts across the university.



WesternU Campus Community Feedback

Vision

WesternU President Robin Farias-Eisner presented the following vision to the WesternU community. This vision reflects a unified institutional purpose shared across both the Pomona, California and Lebanon, Oregon campuses, while also recognizing the importance of regional adaptability in how that purpose is expressed and implemented.

WesternU aims to be a global leader in health sciences education, research, and service, addressing healthcare workforce shortages and advancing human and animal health through innovative and humanistic approaches.

1. WesternU's vision is to build upon its current preeminent college rankings, as a national academic leader in healthcare workforce development, and emerge as a global leader in health sciences education, research, and service.
2. WesternU will continue to inspire its academic community to advance human and animal health and well-being through a humanistic approach.
3. WesternU in training highly skilled healthcare professionals, will play an increasingly important and pivotal role in addressing the critical healthcare workforce shortages, particularly in Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) across the nation.
4. Through innovative research and cutting-edge educational programs, WesternU will drive advancements in healthcare and improve the quality of life for generations to come.

This vision is grounded in a shared institutional mission and core values, yet it also embraces the need for differentiated strategies that reflect the unique demographic, regulatory, and cultural contexts of each campus. For example, the Pomona campus, situated in a densely populated urban region, emphasizes interprofessional collaboration, community-based primary care, and partnerships with diverse healthcare systems, including HPSAs. In contrast, the Lebanon campus, located in a more rural setting, focuses on addressing rural health disparities and preparing graduates to serve predominately in HPSAs across the Pacific Northwest. These tailored approaches ensure that WesternU's impact is both consistent in purpose and responsive to local needs.

Following the presentation of this vision, the WesternU community was invited to reflect on the university's core purpose during town halls, strategic planning sessions, and Student Vision Forums—yielding nearly 600 responses. The most frequently cited purpose was to educate and train competent, compassionate, and skilled healthcare providers across a wide range of disciplines. This includes graduate-level education in all eight colleges, with a strong emphasis on primary care, interdisciplinary collaboration, and lifelong learning.

The following two sections highlight thoughtful feedback on WesternU's mission and core values gathered during this inclusive planning process.

Mission

HUMANISM AT THE CORE

WesternU is deeply rooted in humanism, consistently described as the institution's defining value. This includes compassion, empathy, respect, dignity, and holistic care. Respondents emphasized that humanism is not just a philosophy but a daily practice that shapes education, innovation, patient care, and community engagement.

EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH PROFESSIONS EDUCATION

WesternU is recognized as a leader in healthcare and biomedical education, training future healers, clinicians, and scientists. It offers graduate-level, interprofessional, and evidence-based education that prepares students to serve diverse communities with skill and integrity.

SCIENCE AND INNOVATION

The university is committed to scientific excellence, integrating cutting-edge research and innovation with humanistic values. It promotes rational thinking, discovery, technology transfer, and evidence-based practice across all disciplines.

COMPASSIONATE PATIENT CARE

WesternU emphasizes patient-centered care, advocating for treating individuals as whole persons. The institution prepares healthcare professionals to deliver compassionate, ethical, and inclusive care that improves outcomes and builds trust.

COMMUNITY AND SERVICE

Service to the community is a recurring theme. WesternU is seen as a change agent, contributing to public health, equity, and access to care. It fosters a supportive, collaborative environment where students, faculty, and staff work together to make a meaningful impact.



OPPORTUNITY, GROWTH, AND PURPOSE

Respondents described WesternU as a place of opportunity, personal and professional growth, and lifelong learning. It's a university that values integrity, excellence, and the potential of every individual to contribute to a better future.

Core Values

The overwhelming consensus from the WesternU community is that **humanism** should remain the central and enduring core value of WesternU. Respondents emphasized its importance in shaping compassionate, ethical, and patient-centered healthcare professionals. It was described as the foundation of the university's identity and success. The Board of Trustees reaffirmed humanism as an institutional core value in April 2025.

The community also emphasized the importance of **scholarship** as a core value. WesternU is committed to academic and scientific excellence, preparing future healthcare professionals through rigorous, evidence-based education and research. This value includes innovation, interprofessional collaboration, and a dedication to high-quality, compassionate patient care.

A third core value also emerged from conversations and responses with our university community, **integrity**. This value reflects a strong call for transparency, ethical leadership, inclusion, and service. It emphasizes supporting both internal (students, faculty, staff) and external (patients, underserved populations) communities, while fostering a culture of trust, fairness, and belonging.

These three core values encompass the full range of values expressed, while being specific enough to guide our institutional culture and decision-making.

Our campus community was invited to contribute definitions of these three core values. A summary of these definitions is below.

Humanism is the unwavering commitment to honoring the dignity, individuality, and shared humanity of every person. As a core value, it calls for compassion, empathy, respect, and inclusion in all interactions—whether in healthcare, education, or community life. Humanism means seeing people as whole beings, shaped by unique experiences, and responding to their needs with kindness, fairness, and understanding. At WesternU, humanism is both a guiding principle and a daily practice, reflected in our policies, culture, and care. It empowers us to advocate for others, celebrate diversity, and build a more just and supportive environment for all.

Scholarship is the rigorous and ongoing pursuit of knowledge through evidence-based education, critical inquiry, and creative exploration. As a core value, it embodies a commitment to academic excellence, intellectual curiosity, and the dissemination of new knowledge through research, teaching, patient care, and community engagement. At its heart, scholarship is about fostering a culture of thoughtful inquiry, open-mindedness, and rational thinking—where learning is not only a personal journey but a shared responsibility to advance understanding and improve the world.

Integrity is the steadfast commitment to honesty, ethical principles, and moral consistency in all actions and decisions. As a core value, it means doing the right thing—even when no one is watching—and being guided by a strong internal compass that prioritizes fairness, transparency, and accountability. Integrity fosters trust, resilience, and thoughtful decision-making, encouraging individuals to stay true to their values while remaining open to others' perspectives. It contributes to a supportive, non-judgmental community where commitments are honored, and excellence is pursued through ethical collaboration and communication.

Tomorrow's WesternU's: Priorities and Initiatives

Based upon WesternU's strategic planning process, Tomorrow's WesternU includes a series of priorities and initiatives designed to strengthen the institution's academic programs, clinical services, research capacity, and community impact as follows:

Culture of Excellence and Support

WesternU will cultivate a thriving academic and professional environment where every individual feels valued, supported, and empowered to grow. This priority emphasizes mentorship, leadership development, transparent communication, and psychological safety—creating a culture rooted in humanism, scholarship, and integrity. Operational excellence and an intentional focus on compliance reinforces this culture by ensuring that governance structures, decision-making processes, and institutional systems are efficient, inclusive, and aligned with best practices. Together, these efforts foster a resilient workforce and a collaborative campus community committed to continuous improvement and shared success.

- **Establish Mentorship Programs Across Colleges:** By connecting experienced faculty and staff with emerging talent, we will foster professional growth, cross-disciplinary collaboration, and institutional knowledge-sharing.
- **Promote Professional Development and Leadership Training:** Targeted programs will empower staff and faculty to expand their skills, embrace innovation, and take on leadership roles that drive strategic progress.
- **Improve Internal Communication and Transparency:** We will implement and enhance systems and practices that promote open dialogue, timely information sharing, and clarity around decision-making processes to foster collegiality and trust across our campuses.
- **Recognize Achievements and Foster Psychological Safety:** Through formal recognition programs and inclusive leadership practices, we will celebrate contributions and create environments where individuals feel safe to express ideas, take risks, and grow, supported by clear policies and protections.
- **Enhance Governance and Operational Systems:** Implement best-practice governance models and operational frameworks that support informed decision-making, promote compliance, bolster cross-functional collaboration, and sustain continuous improvement.

Sustainable Growth

WesternU is committed to advancing its mission through strategic expansion of academic programs, clinical services, research capacity, and community partnerships. This priority focuses on aligning institutional growth with workforce needs, philanthropic investment, and societal impact. Operational excellence plays a critical role in enabling sustainable growth by optimizing institutional processes, deploying effective technologies, and ensuring data-informed planning. Through scalable systems and responsible resource stewardship, WesternU will strengthen its position as a national leader in healthcare workforce development and innovation.

- **Build WesternU Through Philanthropy and Purpose:** Focused fundraising efforts will support campus development, scholarships, and endowments, ensuring financial resilience and expanded opportunities for students and employees on each of WesternU's campuses.
- **Expand Clinical and Research Enterprises:** We will strengthen our research infrastructure and clinical programs to enhance our academic reputation, attract top talent, and contribute to societal advancement.
- **Determine and implement a clear research strategy:** We will determine and implement a clear and unique research strategy for each campus that aligns with our academic mission, responsible conduct of research (RCR) standards, and societal impact goals with targeted investments in funding laboratories and supporting the growth of graduate education with robust PhD programs.
- **Develop New Academic Programs Aligned with Workforce Needs:** By staying attuned to labor market trends and emerging industries, we will design or expand programs, such as behavioral health and primary care, that prepare students for meaningful careers and address regional and global workforce demands and ensure new programs meet accreditation requirements.
- **Optimize Institutional Processes and Technology Platforms:** Deploy modern tools and technologies to streamline operations, improve service delivery, bolster data privacy, cybersecurity, and regulatory reporting (e.g., Clery Act, IPEDS) and support data-driven planning across academic, clinical, and administrative domains.
- **Strengthen Strategic Partnerships and Community Engagement:** Collaborations with industry, government, and community organizations will amplify our impact, enrich learning experiences, and support shared goals.

Enhanced Campus Experience and Infrastructure

WesternU is committed to creating a vibrant, inclusive, and future-ready campus environment that supports the holistic development of students, faculty, and staff. This priority focuses on transforming physical and digital spaces to foster wellness, innovation, and accessibility. Through strategic investments in infrastructure, technology, and amenities, WesternU will ensure that its campuses reflect the highest standards of excellence, sustainability, and humanistic care. This priority is underpinned by operational excellence—ensuring that upgrades and innovations are guided by data, implemented efficiently, and aligned with institutional goals for sustainability, equity, and performance.



- **Create Student-Centered Spaces and Wellness Facilities:** We will prioritize environments that support mental health, social connection, and holistic development, ensuring students thrive both academically and personally.
- **Modernize Classrooms, Labs, and Clinical Environments:** Upgrades will reflect the latest pedagogical and technological standards, enabling high-impact teaching, flexible curricula, and hands-on learning supporting the needs of a diversified student population.
- **Improve Campus Amenities and Accessibility:** Enhancements to culinary options, wellness opportunities, and ADA compliance will ensure a welcoming and inclusive campus for all.
- **Invest in Simulation and Digital Learning Technologies:** Cutting-edge tools will support experiential learning, remote education, and interdisciplinary collaboration, positioning us at the forefront of academic innovation.



Implementation of Tomorrow's WesternU

The strategic plan is anchored in a commitment to inclusive, transparent, and accountable practices that strengthen trust and collaboration across all stakeholder groups. WesternU will implement this strategic plan in accordance with the following:

Stakeholder Engagement

We will host regular town halls to foster open dialogue, share progress, and invite feedback from our stakeholder community. These forums will serve as a platform for listening, learning, and co-creating solutions that reflect shared priorities.

To ensure inclusive participation, we will proactively engage voices from across the university and community. This approach will help us build a more equitable and responsive strategy.

We will also recognize contributions at every level—celebrating the efforts of individuals and teams who drive innovation, uphold our values, and advance our mission. By fostering a culture of respect and appreciation, we aim to strengthen morale and deepen engagement.

Governance

Our governance model will be guided by transparent benchmarks that clearly define success and accountability. These benchmarks will be regularly reviewed by institutional governance groups and communicated to the campus community to ensure alignment with strategic goals and to promote shared ownership of outcomes.

We will uphold a governance culture rooted in accountability, ethical leadership, and continuous improvement. Decision-making processes will be documented and accessible, reinforcing our commitment to integrity and responsible stewardship.

Accountability for Strategic Planning

The integrity and success of this strategic plan hinge on a foundation of clear accountability and coordinated effort. This section outlines a robust framework to define the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders throughout the strategic planning process.

The accompanying RACI chart serves as a critical governance tool, providing a definitive breakdown of who is Responsible for completing a task, who is ultimately Accountable for its successful outcome, who must be Consulted for input, and who needs to be Informed of the progress. This framework is essential for minimizing duplication of effort, accelerating decision-making, and fostering the cross-functional collaboration required to translate our strategic vision into tangible results.

TASK/PHASE	BOARD	PRESIDENT	ADMINISTRATION	FACULTY/STAFF	STUDENTS	EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS
Affirm mission and vision	A/C	R/A	C	C	C	C/I
Institutional Assessment	I	R/A	R/C	R/C	C	C
Develop strategic priorities	A/C	R/A	R/C	C	C	C
Draft strategic plan	I	R/A	R/C	R/C	C	C
Approve strategic plan	A	R	C	C	I	I
Develop action plans for implementation	I	A	R	R	C	I
Set performance benchmarks and metrics	R	A	R	C	C	I
Monitor progress and report outcomes	R	A	R	C	I	I
Adjust plan based on assessment	R	A	R	C	C	I

R = Responsible: Person(s) who do the work to complete the task.

A = Accountable: Person(s) who is ultimately answerable for the correct and thorough completion of the task.

C = Consulted: Person(s) whose opinions are sought; typically subject matter experts.

I = Informed: Person(s) who are kept up-to-date on progress.

Timeline and Metrics

The strategic plan will be implemented in phases over five years, with annual reviews and adjustments. Key performance indicators (KPIs) will track progress toward achieving our strategic priorities and initiatives. A centralized dashboard will support data-driven decision-making and transparency. The Strategic Planning Committee will continue to review community feedback and draft proposals for initiative implementation and assessment.

Strategic Priorities and Possible Aligned KPIs

Culture of Excellence and Support

INITIATIVE	SAMPLE KPIS
Establish mentorship programs across colleges	% of departments with active mentorship programs Mentor/mentee satisfaction scores Retention rates of early-career faculty/staff
Promote professional development and leadership training	% of staff/faculty participating in training annually Number of leadership roles filled internally Post-training performance improvement metrics
Improve internal communication and transparency	Employee engagement survey scores on communication Frequency of leadership updates/town halls Intranet or internal platform usage rates
Recognize achievements and foster psychological safety	Number of recognition events or awards given Psychological safety index (via climate surveys) Reported incidents of workplace conflict or burnout
Enhance Governance and Operational Systems	% of governance processes reviewed and optimized annually Stakeholder satisfaction with decision-making transparency Number of operational bottlenecks resolved

Sustainable Growth

INITIATIVE	SAMPLE KPIS
Build WesternU Through Philanthropy and Purpose	Total funds raised vs. campaign goals Number of new donors or donor retention rate % of campaign funds allocated to strategic priorities
Expand clinical and research enterprises	Research funding secured Number of Clinics Clinic profitability Number of active clinical trials or partnerships Publications or patents per year
Determine and implement a clear research strategy	Number of peer-reviewed publications per year Number of new PhD programs launched Percentage of faculty engaged in funded research
Develop new academic programs aligned with workforce needs	Number of new programs launched Enrollment and graduation rates in new programs Employer satisfaction or job placement rates
Optimize Institutional Processes and Technology Platforms	% of processes automated or digitized Time-to-service delivery metrics Platform adoption and user satisfaction rates
Strengthen strategic partnerships and community engagement	Number of active partnerships Community engagement hours or events Stakeholder satisfaction or impact assessments

Enhanced Campus Experience and Infrastructure

INITIATIVE	SAMPLE KPIS
Create student-centered spaces and wellness facilities	Student satisfaction with campus spaces Utilization rates of wellness services Mental health service access metrics
Modernize classrooms, labs, and clinical environments	% of facilities upgraded or renovated Faculty/student satisfaction with learning environments Technology uptime or support response times
Improve campus amenities and accessibility	ADA compliance audit scores Student/staff satisfaction with amenities Usage rates of dining or wellness spaces
Invest in simulation and digital learning technologies	Number of simulation hours logged Student performance in simulated environments Adoption rates of digital learning tools



Conclusion

Tomorrow's WesternU 2025–2030 is a living document that reflects the university's mission, values, and aspirations—uniting our Pomona and Lebanon campuses under a shared purpose while embracing the distinct needs of each region. By investing in people, programs, and infrastructure, WesternU will continue to lead with humanism, excellence, and integrity. This plan positions the university to meet the challenges of a rapidly evolving healthcare landscape, respond to local and national workforce demands, and improve the quality of life in the communities we serve. Through strategic alignment and regional adaptability, WesternU is poised to shape the future of health sciences education and care for generations to come.

