



Strategic Plan

**Go for Greatness
2011-2018**

G4G Groups
and Office of
University Planning,
Assessment & EEO



Randal J. Webb
UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

Letter from the President

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

I would like to thank you for your fine work and your many important comments and feedback during the creation of Northwestern State University's new strategic plan. The University Assessment Committee dedicated a tremendous amount of time in collecting and sorting through the data derived from the G4G meetings and other forums. I am grateful to them for their dedication to the University.

This strategic plan contains and consolidates many of the ideas which were set forth by faculty and staff, and even before this plan was officially unveiled, several of the important initiatives addressed in the meetings were implemented. For instance, the University has now undertaken the development of a University-wide Academic Advising Center for first and second year students. In 2008, we embarked upon an exciting new greenNSU campaign which continues today with our large scale recycling commitment and partnership with the city. We have developed new residence halls and living-learning communities to enhance our students' lives.

We have increased and improved communication between the administration, faculty, staff, and students, and we continue to work on ways to economize and streamline the University. We have dedicated ourselves to exploring new programs such as the University Honors Program and our new marketing campaign. Additionally, efforts toward the development of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Research are currently underway. I look forward to working with you as we move forward with this outstanding new plan.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randall J. Webb". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Randall J. Webb



Mission, Vision & Value Statements

University Mission

Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution that is committed to the creation, dissemination, and acquisition of knowledge through teaching, research, and service. The University maintains as its highest priority excellence in teaching in graduate and undergraduate programs. Northwestern State University prepares its students to become productive members of society and promotes economic development and improvements in the quality of life of the citizens in its region.

University Vision

Northwestern State University strives for educational quality through excellence in teaching and research, innovative use of technology, and exceptional service to students and other constituencies.

The University seeks to attract and develop outstanding students and faculty and to provide them with the resources needed to promote optimal learning and service. By maintaining a student-oriented environment, Northwestern will offer challenging and rewarding academic experiences augmented and enriched with opportunities for cultural, social, athletic, and other extracurricular activities. The essence of this student-oriented environment will be the University's commitment to create a cooperative atmosphere in which faculty, staff, and students treat each other with dignity and respect and recognize the value and worth of all individuals.

Electronic learning and distance education will be an integral part of Northwestern's role in delivering degree programs and effective services on campus and throughout Louisiana, the nation, and the world.

Northwestern will be responsive to changing views and trends as it works to provide a highly-qualified workforce to promote economic development and to meet the needs that higher education can provide to students, state government, private enterprise, and society.

University Values

Northwestern recognizes the value of all individuals and strives to create a climate in which faculty, staff, and students treat each other with dignity and respect in an effort to provide students the opportunity to achieve success. The University's desire is to retain and graduate students who are satisfied with, and motivated and enriched by, the quality of education and services that they receive at Northwestern.



Planning Process

At the end of academic year 2007-2008, Northwestern State University had cycled through its five-year strategic plan (2003-2008). In the spring semester of 2008, a group of individuals from various campus units met with Dr. Terry McConathy, Executive Vice-President, Dean of the Graduate School and SACS Liaison at Louisiana Tech University. This group convened to engage in discussions regarding options to achieve maximum participation in the strategic planning process, as this had been an issue in the past. Following this meeting, the group favored an inclusive process for the planning process. Based on that request, books by Jim Collins (Good to Great) and Sam Parker and Mac Anderson (212° The Extra Degree) would serve as guides in the planning process, which would be called “Go for Greatness” or G4G.

Supported by the President’s Cabinet, the G4G group formulated a plan to conduct a series of focus groups using the Metaplan Technique (Schnelle & Stoltz, 1988). All full-time University employees were invited to attend one of twenty-eight focus groups held during the month of April, 2008. Faculty members with experience using the Metaplan Technique facilitated the focus groups. Employees were invited to participate via the University’s Messenger system. 380 faculty, staff, and administrators participated in the focus groups.

During each focus group, three questions derived from Good to Great were used to frame the process:

- 1) At what can we be the best in the world? What are those things at which we cannot be best?
- 2) What drives our economic engine?
- 3) About what are we deeply passionate?

The intent of the first round of focus groups was to collect general information based on the Good to Great questions asked. The G4G group used that data to drive a second round of focus groups in order to obtain specific information regarding how to address the issues which emerged in the first round:

- a. Enrollment Management (recruiting, retention, persistence & graduation)
- b. Traditional, Electronic, and Innovative Programs & Services
- c. Training and Professional Development of Faculty & Staff
- d. Communication at NSU

The second round of focus groups was conducted during the fall 2008 semester and focused on the issues identified in the first round. Participants were asked to respond to the following questions:

- 1) When idealizing future plans and strategies in “Going for Greatness” at Northwestern State University, what are the alternatives to what is currently being done at NSU?
- 2) How can the University community make what is being done currently at NSU even better?

In reviewing the responses, most participants felt Northwestern State University is a student-friendly campus but improvements could be made, especially in the area of employee responsiveness to the



Planning Process (continued)

constituents it serves. Providers should be held to higher standards of service and need to ensure follow-up and customer courtesy.

Faculty especially felt the University was not making good use of the resources available. The University has a wealth of expertise in its faculty members and often fails to call upon them to assist with particular issues. Others recognized that faculty workload often makes execution of additional tasks difficult. Teaching, pursuing grants, administering grants once they have been received, research, and publication are time consuming endeavors. In addition to other tasks such as staying current with the literature in the field, updating teaching techniques, generating classroom materials, learning new software, committee work, and advising, it is nearly impossible to keep up with academic responsibilities.

The G4G participants often cited communication issues between administration and faculty-staff. The perception was that this was perhaps the most significant problem faced by the University. Every group mentioned a need for greater sharing of information and transparency in decision making. This issue had a negative effect on morale and the efficient operation of the University.

At the end of the fall semester (2008), the University was required to make significant budget cuts which impacted current and future plans. This change in funding impacted the strategic planning process in terms of the plan duration. Initially, the committee and administration thought that the plan should cover five years. Now, we have decided the plan would be in effect for seven to ten years in order to accomplish short, intermediate, and long-term goals. Despite the national economic crisis, the G4G group spent much of the spring 2009 semester organizing all the data collected in the second round of focus groups and extracted four themes:

- 1) The Successful Student
- 2) Education for a New Tomorrow
- 3) Faculty and Staff Leading Together
- 4) Enrichment for Stakeholders

During the 2009 summer sessions, the G4G group reorganized to form partnerships with faculty and staff in order to draft a strategic plan revolving around the four themes. For each theme, a goal, outcome(s), and strategies were developed. In addition, action plans were designed to respond to the following questions:

- What will be done?
- Who will do it?
- When will it be done?
- Why will it be done?
- How will it be done?

*See Table 1 for document.



Planning Process (continued)

This process will provide each unit the opportunity to fully participate in University-wide planning at both the institutional and unit levels. Action plans are available to serve as models for units developing their plans. These tables can be used “as is” or be revised to meet the needs of the University and/or unit.

Unfortunately, the budget crisis continues, with more cuts in higher education on the horizon. Strategic planning in higher education has become even more important for the following reasons:

- Decreases in federal & state funding
- Increases in demand for education (i.e., access & success)
- Demographics in flux (i.e., non-traditional students & distance education)
- A volatile global economy

The University Administration remains committed to fiscal responsibility, careful and thoughtful planning, and continual review of processes and programs. The Strategic Plan is one of many initiatives which will be examined and assessed yearly.



University Theme #1

The Successful Student

GOAL:

To create an environment that supports individual efforts toward academic, career, social and civic success.

STRATEGIES:

Strategies to accomplish goal include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Increase enrollment in Early Start Program
- Enhance learning environments by cleaning, painting facilities and classrooms.
- Enforce student participation in ACE (Academic & Career Engagement) Program
- Use social media to recruit, retain and graduate students
- Develop sophomore series to include Sophomore Celebration
- Increase student and faculty participation in service learning in courses
- Increase articulation agreements with community colleges
- Use technology in classroom
- Increase student participation in student activities and organizations
- Recruit academically-prepared students
- Increase availability of student scholarships
- Improve academic support programs
- Increase number of on-line course and degree offerings

OUTCOMES:

- Improved access (inquiry & admission) to the university and its programs
- Decreased time to graduation
- Increased persistence, retention and graduation rates
- Enhanced skills which translate to the world of work and professional school



University Theme #2

Education for a New Tomorrow

GOAL:

To make Northwestern State University the premier regional university in the state.

STRATEGIES:

Strategies to accomplish goal include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Establish a Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning
- Enforce Faculty Post-Tenure Review
- Revise New Faculty Mentor Program
- Increase grant writing and submission
- Develop and execute a university-wide marketing plan
- Build infrastructure for technology
- Implement greenNSU initiative
- Utilize cutting-edge technology (i.e., iPad, open source software, mobile device applications, etc.)
- Full ACE (Academic & Career Engagement) implementation
- Use of social media to recruit, retain and graduate students

OUTCOMES:

- Increased total enrollment
- Increased total graduation rate
- Increased persistence rates
- Increased enrollment in distance education courses
- Increased pass rates for licensure exams and certification



University Theme #3

Faculty & Staff Leading Together

GOAL:

To work together and create an environment of excellence.

STRATEGIES:

Strategies to accomplish goal include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Establish a Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning
- Revise New Faculty Mentor Program
- Increase interdisciplinary grant writing and submission
- Revise employee orientation
- Establish faculty-staff forums
- Improve lines of communication across all campus groups
- Increased use of technology in day-to-day operations
- Develop workshops or educational sessions for employee professional development
- Use internal resources (i.e., knowledge and expertise of faculty and staff) to conduct workshops and sessions
- Work across campus units to capitalize on creative ways in which to save money, reduce waste, and operate more efficiently
- Provide opportunities for university employees to “meet & greet” one another
- Faculty and staff will recruit both high school and community college students, coordinating with the Office of University Recruiting

OUTCOMES:

- Increased opportunities for professional development
- Engagement in collaborative works
- Improvement in morale



University Theme #4

Enrichment for Stakeholders

GOAL:

To develop and enhance relationships which are mutually beneficial to both the university and its stakeholder(s).

STRATEGIES:

Strategies to accomplish goal include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Develop student internships within local/regional business & industry
- Host guest speakers from local/regional business & industry
- Market NSU at every event (i.e., social, school, non-traditional, military, etc.)
- Improve communication between university and stakeholders
- Enhance continuing education
- Promote University services to community
- Collaborate with city groups and public schools in region

OUTCOMES:

- Increased economic development in the region
- Enhanced support of Northwestern State University
- Increased financial giving to the Foundation
- Improved quality of life in the region



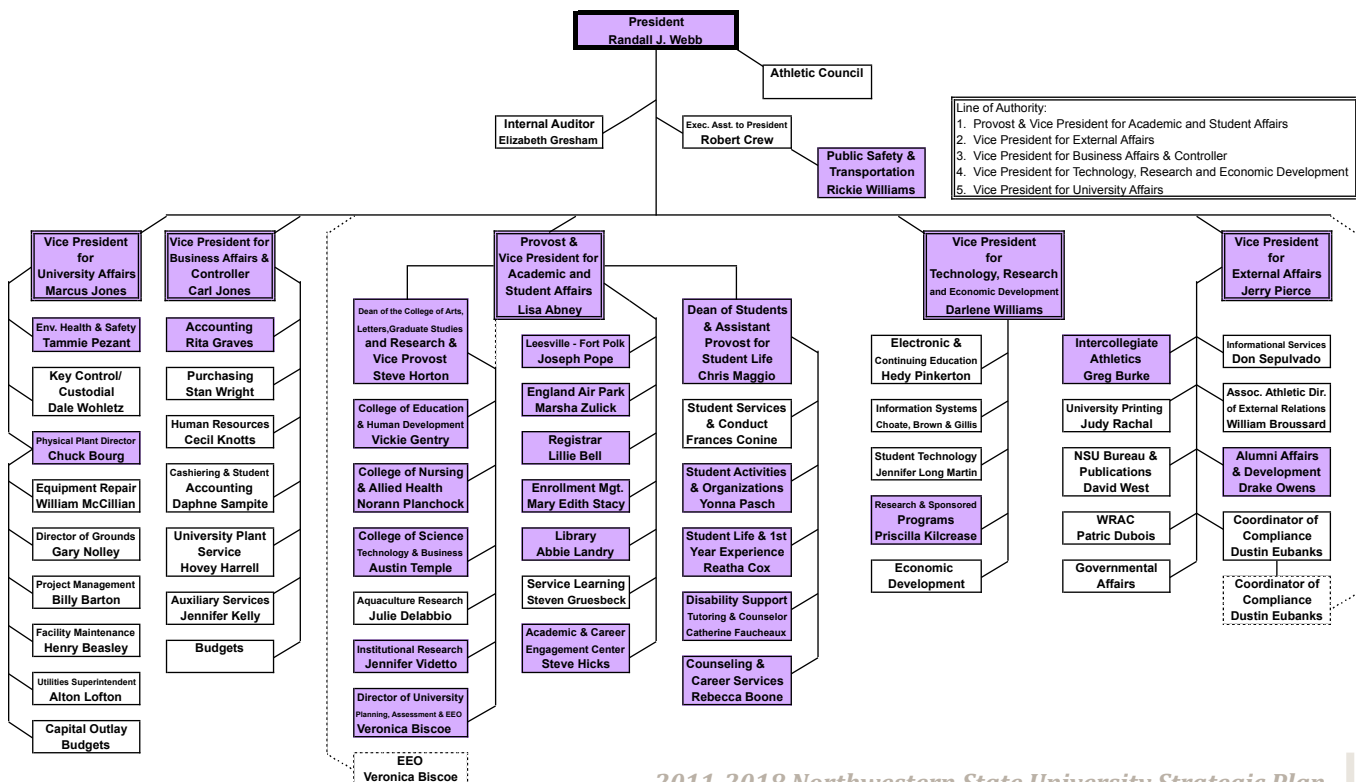
Planning Cycle

The University's strategic plan was developed to be a seven-year document with reviews scheduled annually. The document is intended to serve as a guide in decision-making and responsible fiscal spending. The yearly progress reports (YPR) will be posted on the University Planning and Assessment Web pages to address issues of transparency.

The strategic planning cycle begins when units review the outcomes and strategies selected to support the accomplishment of the University's goals. When possible, two strategies per goal will be addressed by the units. Throughout the academic year, units track achievement of strategies through one or more evaluation methods or the collection of other pieces of information. The entire process is documented in order to review and analyze all data collected. This analysis occurs during the summer and revisions can be made to any part of the strategy (i.e., evaluation process, timeline, responsible party, budget, etc.). A "revised" plan is ready for the beginning of the next academic year. This process is cyclical and continuous.

The collection of data, changes to the plan, and progress updates will be reported in an electronic application designed by Information Systems. A "preview" of the system can be accessed via the following link: <http://winhttp.nsula.edu/StrategicPlanning/newstrategy.htm>. Reporting information using the e-system will be the responsibility of various unit supervisors. The University's organizational plan highlights those positions with reporting responsibilities.

As a result of this process, each unit will contribute to the overall strategic plan of the University. Plans will be reviewed not only by the unit, but by the supervisors of those divisions. In addition, the University Assessment Committee will review the plans to assist with accountability.





Glossary of Terms

- Goal:** a statement of general purpose and direction—it is the ultimate end result. The goal is the accomplishment toward which all of your effort is directed.
- Outcome:** the result of program operations or activities or the effects produced by the program. Outcomes may be tied to a specific strategy, or may be the cumulative result of several strategies.
- Strategy:** how outcomes will be achieved.



Strategic Planning Teams

G4G Group

Steve Horton
*Vice Provost & Dean of
Arts, Letters, Graduate Studies and Research*

William Housel
Faculty, History & Social Sciences

Virginia Crossno
Former Coordinator, Special Projects

Jennifer Videtto
Director, Institutional Research

Chris Maggio
Dean of Students/Assistant Provost

Mary Edith Stacy
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Reatha Cox
Director, New Student Programs

Veronica M. Biscoe
Director, Planning & Assessment

Education for a New Tomorrow

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Faculty, Criminal Justice

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Faculty, Library

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Faculty, Language & Communication

Dorene Fox
Former Director, ACE

Enrichment for Stakeholders

Chris Maggio
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Strategic Planning Teams (continued)

Drake Owens
Director, Alumni Affairs

Greg Burke
Director of Athletics

Burt Allen
Faculty, Music

Courtney Hornsby
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Programming & Promotions*

Carla Howell
*Associate Director, Research & Sponsored
Programs*

Scott Burrell
Faculty, Theatre

Dion Boyett
*Former Director, Small Business
Development Center*

Steve Gruesbeck
Director, Service Learning

Faculty & Staff Leading Together

Steve Gruesbeck
Director, Service Learning

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ACE Academic Advisor

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Gail Kwak
Library Faculty

Jodie Heinicka
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*Department Head, Health & Human
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Karen McFerrin
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Barry Stoneking
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Strategic Planning Teams (continued)

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Director, Financial Aid

Jamila Maxie
Director, Testing Center

Catherine Fauchaux
Director, Disability Support

Betsy Cochran
Faculty, Louisiana Scholars' College

Veronica M. Biscoe
Director, Planning & Assessment

Successful Student

Mary Edith Stacy
Director, Enrollment Services

Curtis Penrod
Associate Director, Institutional Research

Sonia Kay
Enrollment Services

Katy Hall
Former Coordinator, CALL

Frances Conine
Executive Director, Student Services

Rebecca Boone
Director, Counseling & Career Services

Vicki Parrish
Faculty, Theatre

Virginia Crossno
Former Coordinator, Special Projects

Reatha Cox
Director, New Student Programs

Natalie Laurence
Director, Greek Life

Jacque Mason
Faculty, College of Education & Human Development



Table 1

THEME:

Goal:

Outcome:

STRATEGY:				
Who?	What?	When? (Short, mid-range, long-term)	Why?	How?
Identify unit(s) or person(s) responsible for oversight and accomplishment of the strategy.	Describe what will be done to accomplish strategy. Also discuss budgetary requirements.	Construct timeline	Explain the need for the strategy. Is there any data that supports the need?	How will we know progress is being made? In other words, this is the assessment component. Be sure to look at baseline and target information.