Strategic Plan 2014-2020

UWG Vision Statement:
UWG aspires to be the best comprehensive university in America – sought after as the best place to work, learn, and succeed!

Strategic Imperative #1: Student Success—Enhanced Learning, Access, Progression, and Development

Student success is at the very heart of the University of West Georgia mission. UWG will therefore formalize a culture of completion and student achievement at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. We will recruit students who are interested in UWG as a top-choice institution and whose academic profile suggests a strong likelihood they will thrive in a comprehensive university setting. We will effectively provide essential goods and services that ease the financial burden of attending college and that help students succeed from their initial engagement with UWG through timely progression and graduation and beyond into a successful career. UWG will also provide experiences beyond the classroom that encourage all campus citizens to discover paths to meaningful engagement with various perspectives, lifestyles, and cultures and to understand pressing local and global challenges. Expectations for student participation and achievement will rely on responsibility and accountability shared by students, faculty, and an engaged university community. The ultimate goal is characterized not only by progression towards the degree, timely graduation, and attainment of career goals, but also an enhanced ability to grow and develop into engaged citizens and effective leaders.

Goals:

A. Increase student persistence and timely progression to degree attainment

Objective 1: Implement and continually assess evidence-based strategies that improve retention, progression, and graduation rates; and

Objective 2: Increase student academic performance through focused classroom strategies, support programs, and enhancements to policies and procedures; and

Objective 3: Increase students’ access to and opportunities for academically-related interactions with faculty beyond structured classroom time.

B. Attract students with characteristics consistent with our vision and mission who will choose UWG as a top choice institution

Objective 1: Develop, execute, and assess a University-wide coordinated and strategic recruitment and enrollment plan that drives purposeful enrollment growth using an
analytical approach to identify optimal student profiles within the context of UWG’s mission and available resources; and

Objective 2: Create a comprehensive recruitment plan that will serve as a pipeline for all student populations.

C. Facilitate students’ responsible financial access to UWG

Objective 1: Develop a campus-wide program to coordinate institutional resources to assure that a college degree is affordable for all students; and

Objective 2: Increase opportunities for student employment on campus that provide a supportive, developmental workplace that prioritizes educational pursuits while alleviating financial burdens.

D. Nurture the development of the whole person through student engagement in all aspects of the university experience

Objective 1: Provide quality academic advising experiences with emphasis on effective academic planning, early identification of a major for undergraduates, and a clear pathway to student accountability and self-sufficiency; and

Objective 2: Deliver comprehensive career development, experiential learning opportunities, and career employment services to assist students in securing gainful employment; and

Objective 3: Expand and support the vibrancy of campus life by creating and enhancing high-quality out-of-class experiences supported by an emotionally and physically safe campus environment, and

Objective 4: Engage non-traditional and online students in activities, services, and programs that enhance their personal development and growth.

Strategic Imperative #2: Academic Success—Academic Programming and Faculty Support

As the best place to work, learn, and succeed, the University of West Georgia will assure that all academic programs at all locations and through all delivery modes are designed for student success. Academic programs will meet identified regional, state, and global needs and will provide avenues for students to find meaningful opportunities to serve humanity and find employment upon graduation. At the heart of all high quality academic programs are qualified and engaged faculty members who are active in their area of expertise. UWG will provide faculty support that emphasizes high quality instruction and remains consistent with sustainable academic programs that have the capacity to transform lives.
As we strive to differentiate UWG as a leading comprehensive university, innovation will continue to be a defining strength while we remain committed to individual student engagement and success. UWG will strive to achieve an optimal mix of disciplines, regional expansion of instruction sites, and flexibility in course scheduling and delivery methods of academic programs. It is essential to build on UWG’s leadership in the region through increased recognition of exemplary online and hybrid educational experiences and scholarship. These commitments require purposeful strategic planning and investment in innovative instructional modes of delivery, high-quality faculty trained in these instructional models, and scholarship and research activities that move academic and research programs to greater levels of quality, relevance, and distinction.

Academic success also identifies the University’s efforts to evaluate and improve the quality of academic programs; to recruit and retain a diverse and successful faculty; and to enhance and support teaching, research, and service. UWG will create a culture in which all faculty excel in innovative and effective teaching, creative endeavors, research, and continued professional and personal development - a culture that is further distinguished by employing in all programs innovative pedagogies that engage all student populations in high impact, experiential learning.

**Goals:**

**A. Assure that all academic programs have the capacity to transform lives and address the needs of the region, state, and beyond**

- **Objective 1:** Continually evaluate the quality, productivity, and viability of academic programs, assuring that they are grounded in liberal arts and professional preparation; and

- **Objective 2:** Practice and recognize innovative and effective instruction in all academic programs and develop collaborative new models for academic-program delivery; and

- **Objective 3:** Expand efforts to engage students in high-impact, experiential learning activities such as internships, service learning, practicum placements, study abroad, research, or related professional and creative experiences.

**B. Develop and implement specific initiatives aimed at enhanced recruitment, retention, compensation, and development of high-quality faculty from diverse backgrounds who demonstrate a commitment to UWG values and contribute to UWG’s mission and vision**

- **Objective 1:** Provide a multi-year plan for salary equity that includes faculty salary targets and a plan to fund the achievement of those targets; and

- **Objective 2:** Review, revise, and streamline hiring/search processes to assure alignment with UWG values and optimal HR practices; and

- **Objective 3:** Organize and institutionalize efforts to recruit a diverse faculty and assure that promotion and tenure requirements recognize the diverse interests and capabilities of faculty that advance the mission of the institution.
C. Enhance the support for and recognition of scholarship, research, and creative activities conducted by faculty and students

Objective 1: Identify and implement initiatives to promote scholarship and research that improve teaching and learning; and

Objective 2: Implement a support system that encourages and recognizes research that engages students, solves problems, and advances creativity and knowledge; and

Objective 3: Identify clear scholarly, creative, and research priorities, and allocate resources to drive and support those priorities.

D. Measure and improve the quality of teaching in all academic programs

Objective 1: Develop processes to identify, assess, and improve the quality of instruction at all locations and through all modes of delivery; and

Objective 2: Implement faculty development opportunities consistent with a comprehensive university; and

Objective 3: Increase opportunities for faculty to practice pedagogical research including organizing the resources to host conferences, seminars, and other outreach and development activities.

Strategic Imperative #3: Successful Partnerships—Building Engaged, Mutually Beneficial Collaborations

The University of West Georgia is dedicated to serving our students, faculty, staff, and community in ways that benefit all parties. Value-added partnerships provide a foundation for enhancing the strengths and innovative capabilities of multiple parties and building synergies that go beyond what any one party can achieve on its own. Engaged partnerships create connections that transcend an individual project and provide ongoing collaborations that facilitate achievement of mutually compatible goals. UWG values collaborations across campus and with community partners.

UWG is committed to being the hub of economic growth in the region. With an expanding presence, UWG serves as an economic growth engine for the entire state of Georgia. In collaboration with leaders in areas like health care, business, technology, agriculture, government, media, performing arts, libraries, cultural heritage and preservation, military, non-profit organizations, and P-12 and other educational institutions, UWG will cultivate a strong network of partners dedicated to making the region a better place to live, work, learn, and play.

Engaging in valued partnerships requires development of a culture that supports a diversity of faculty careers and interests. As such, it will be required that such partnerships are clearly articulated in tenure and promotion guidelines and recognized as a valued contribution. This commitment to building mutually beneficial partnerships is consistent with the University System of Georgia’s Strategic Plan and builds on all three of the USG Strategic Imperatives: Academic
Excellence and Degree Completion, Economic Development and World Class Research, and Accountability & Efficiency and Leadership in Higher Education Innovation. UWG partnerships add to educational opportunities and professional development activities for faculty, staff, and students.

Goals:

A. Develop, assess, and sustain a network of mutually beneficial partnerships

Objective 1: Identify the portfolio of existing internal and external partnerships and assess alignment with University strategic priorities; and

Objective 2: Annually evaluate each partnership for its impact and benefit to all parties involved; and

Objective 3: Align institutional resources to strengthen key partnerships.

B. Create and cultivate new partnerships to support strategic initiatives

Objective 1: In consultation with other educational institutions identify and develop opportunities for cooperative activities; and

Objective 2: Partner with business and economic development organizations in activities that benefit UWG, its partner organizations, and sustainable economic and cultural development; and

Objective 3: With individuals, foundations, and other service agencies, identify and develop partnerships and activities that improve our communities.

C. Expand community awareness, visibility, and support of university activities and mutually beneficial partnerships

Objective 1: Develop and implement a sustainable communications plan to inform internal and external communities about UWG’s activities and partnerships, along with the benefits generated by and for all parties; and

Objective 2: Celebrate and reward student, faculty, and staff accomplishments that align with University strategic priorities; and

Objective 3: Support key partnerships via external funding.

Strategic Imperative #4: Operational Success—Effectiveness and Sustainability

Operational effectiveness in an organization necessarily derives from a fundamental position of institutional sustainability. Guided by its shared values and inspired by its vision, the University of West Georgia will actively fulfill its mission in a manner that is sustainable in terms of social, financial, and environmental challenges, risks, and opportunities. This approach is consistent
with the conventional meaning of sustainable business practice, and takes on additional meaning when applied to the values, vision, and mission of UWG.

UWG is committed to providing effective support services and efficient operations delivered by high-quality, dedicated employees within a safe, healthy, and secure work environment. In recognizing the need to invest in outstanding staff, infrastructure, and facilities, UWG commits to providing competitive compensation and benefits for staff and to fostering and encouraging their professional development, training, and growth.

As UWG grows, we will be committed to providing a sustainable campus that is learner-centered, attractive, functional, and safe and that addresses the educational, technological, instructional, research, cultural, social, environmental, housing, recreational, and co-curricular needs that support the academic mission, community activity, and student success. UWG will account for its operational success, effectiveness, and sustainability by building a culture of strategic planning that aligns transparent planning, budgeting, assessment, and accountability processes to support continuous improvement and the strategic and prudent use of resources. As the steward of funds from students, parents, families, public agencies, and donors, UWG will account for the use of those funds maintaining the highest ethics, standards, and efficiencies.

Goals:

A. Create a workplace of choice distinguished by talented, engaged, and diverse staff

   Objective 1: Develop and implement an employee recruitment protocol that has the necessary depth and breadth to attract the best applicants for every position; and

   Objective 2: Implement a market-driven compensation package and a reward/recognition system that attracts and retains the best employees at all levels; and

   Objective 3: Develop and implement a robust program of professional development, which may include research, scholarship and creative activity that is continually improved in all campus units.

B. Create a built environment that is sustainable and relevant to the educational and personal needs of students; the aspirations of faculty and staff; and the economic, social, and cultural needs of the community

   Objective 1: On an ongoing scheduled basis, assess the condition and suitability of campus facilities, technology, space utilization, and campus infrastructure, making sustainability a priority in all new construction, technology investments, and building modification projects; and

   Objective 2: Develop and implement a measured program aimed at achieving and communicating the University’s commitment to lead in the field of environmental and social sustainability; and
Objective 3: From desktop to data center, ensure that the technology infrastructure is secure and meets the teaching, learning, and administrative needs of our students, faculty, and staff.

C. Foster a culture of strategic planning and institutional effectiveness so that University decisions at all levels are collaborative and driven by data, assessment, continual improvement, and prioritization of resources aligned with the stated mission and vision

Objective 1: Embed the strategic plan as a focus point in all campus planning and meeting opportunities to ensure that every funding process and decision is driven by the priorities established through the strategic planning process; and

Objective 2: Assure that all units within the University engage in meaningful institutional effectiveness practices, including identifying expected outcomes, assessing the extent to which outcomes are met, and providing evidence of improvement based on the results.

D. Ensure that future generations will have access to the best that UWG has to offer

Objective 1: Develop, implement, and embed the concepts of social, financial, and environmental sustainability in all action plans developed to achieve the strategic plan; and

Objective 2: Publicize all University achievements that support the aim of sustainability.