Message from the President

We have an extraordinary opportunity at the University of West Georgia. We are entering a new era filled with optimism, energy, and momentum with a stated vision of becoming the best comprehensive university in America. One that seeks to be the best place to work, learn, and succeed. One that honors the past while forging a New West!

To reach this level, together, we have shaped a comprehensive strategic plan that succinctly defines our imperatives, defines our mission and affirms our core values. We believe this plan will transform our university. It is infused with the Go West spirit, represents a major cultural change of evidence-based leadership and a culture of high performance, and broadens our constituency horizons.

The plan begins with new initiatives designed to help our students excel in progression towards their degree, timely graduation, and attainment of career goals. It recognizes the need to responsibly budget these pursuits and asks our faculty and staff to continue to pave the path of opportunity with innovative academic programs that offer an enhanced ability for our students to grow and develop into engaged citizens and effective leaders. The plan calls for the active recruitment and retention of high-quality faculty members from diverse backgrounds and promises to recognize, support, and compensate those who remain engaged and committed to transforming student lives.

We will seek expanded partnerships in academic and economic development and actively pursue robust community engagement. Our programs will address current and evolving educational and workforce needs and remain relevant and aligned with the needs of the community, the region, the state and beyond. To be relevant, we must continue to communicate our distinctives, and innovate and align our programs with the ever changing needs of a complex, technologically driven future. Our partnerships will be mutually beneficial and designed to improve all facets of our operation. We will foster a culture of institutional effectiveness that will ensure our sustainability and growth.

We are currently enjoying record student enrollment, many new and renovated facilities, SACSCOC level VI accreditation, and recognition in a myriad of national settings for academic quality and affordability. We have been acknowledged as an innovative, progressive leader in online curriculum development. Institutional awareness and reputation are on the rise and we are capturing the attention of peers all across the nation. We are well on our way to becoming the best comprehensive university in America as we continue to passionately journey west. Join me in Going West. It changes everything.
Creating an Engaged West

During the past two years, the university has engaged in significant work to better understand the national, state, and regional conditions that have an impact on our work and our future. One of the most notable efforts was the drafting of an Academic Master Plan that provided a roadmap, focused on academic excellence, for our new Strategic Plan. We have now completed a new, updated, University Vision, Mission, and Strategic Plan, 2014-2020.

A working team was assembled in July 2013 to facilitate the update of the University’s Vision, Mission and Strategic Plan and extend goals and objectives into the next six years. In the first phase, the team assumed the role of consultants by reviewing the significant work already done and represented by the existing UWG and University System of Georgia Strategic Plans, the Academic Master Plan, the Campus Master Plan, reports from other internal work groups, review of Peer and Aspirant Institutions, and the development of Key Performance Indicators.

Using this information, the team developed a draft strategic planning document. In this second phase, the team assumed the role of facilitators by seeking reaction to the draft Vision, Mission, and Strategic Plan from various internal and external constituent groups including senior leadership, faculty, Faculty Senate, staff, Staff Advisory Council, students, Student Government Association, alumni, and key external constituencies including the Foundation Board of Trustees. This process included five open forums, town hall presentations, numerous small group discussions, and a feedback email option for those who preferred to comment via email. The feedback collected helped identify some missing elements, influenced certain priorities, and ultimately provided a broad-based consensus for the final plan.

In the third phase, the team assumed the role of editors by revising and polishing the strategic planning documents so that the new Vision, Mission, and Strategic Plan could be presented to the Student Government Association (March 13, 2014), Faculty Senate (March 14, 2014), Staff Advisory Council (April 3, 2014), General Faculty (April 16, 2014), the entire UWG campus (April 17, 2014) for endorsement and finally to the Board of Regents.

The Board of Regents issued final approval at its meeting on August 20, 2014.

For more information on Engage West and to view the Key Performance Indicators, list of Peer and Aspirant Institutions, and Senior Leadership Scorecards visit westga.edu/engagewest.
UWG Vision

The University of West Georgia (UWG) aspires to be the best comprehensive university in America – sought after as the best place to work, learn, and succeed!

UWG Mission

The mission of the University of West Georgia is to enable students, faculty, and staff to realize their full potential through academic engagement, supportive services, professional development, and a caring, student-centered community. UWG is committed to academic excellence and to community engagement, offering high-quality undergraduate, graduate, and community programs on-campus, off-campus, and online.

UWG, a charter member of the University System of Georgia (USG), is a comprehensive, SACSCOC level VI, public university, based in West Georgia with multiple instructional sites and a strong virtual presence. UWG supports students in their efforts to complete degrees in relevant programs, valuing liberal arts and professional preparation. Through effective and innovative teaching, experiential learning, scholarship, research, creative endeavor, and public service, UWG equips graduates to engage with and discover knowledge. UWG is dedicated to building on existing strengths and developing distinctive academic, research, and co-curricular programs and services that respond to economic development and identified regional, state, and global needs, thus empowering alumni to contribute responsibly and creatively to a complex 21st Century global society.

UWG Values

The institutional mission and daily operation of the University of West Georgia are guided by our values that support our vision to be the best place to work, learn, and succeed.

The value of **ACHIEVEMENT** is evident in our commitment to the academic and social success of our students, staff, and faculty.

The value of **CARING** is evident in our consistent concern and regard for our students, staff, and faculty as well as the larger communities where we live and whom we serve.

The value of **COLLABORATION** is evident in our commitment to shared governance, teamwork, and a cooperative spirit that shape our interactions with students, staff, and faculty, and the communities we serve.

The value of **INCLUSIVENESS** is evident in our commitment to celebrating our diversity, our collaborative spirit, and creating a welcoming campus that is emotionally and physically safe for all.

The value of **INNOVATION** is evident in our commitment to fostering a learning atmosphere in which new methods and ideas consistent with our vision and mission are respected and rewarded.

The value of **INTEGRITY** is evident in our commitment to rigorous ethical standards in our classrooms and offices, in our conduct toward each other, and in service to our communities.

The value of **SUSTAINABILITY** is evident in our obligation to maintaining ecological balance in our planning and operations that make possible for future generations the same or better quality of opportunities for success available to present employees and students.

The value of **WISDOM** is evident in our commitment to teaching and learning that emphasizes knowledge for the purpose of positively transforming the lives of our employees and students, as well as improving the world in which we live.
All facets of our plan are designed to work together.

The outer circle represents our Core Values, which we embrace and practice every day in our work. The next circle represents our four strategic imperatives containing the specific goals, objectives, key performances indicators, and benchmarks for success. The center of the graphic illustrates our commitment to Evidence-Based Leadership and a Culture of High Performance under the mantra of “Engage West!”

These Core Values, Imperatives, and Methodology working together in tandem and in perpetual motion will help UWG realize its vision as the best place to work, learn, and succeed!
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.

Strategic Imperative #1
Student Success: Enhanced Learning, Access, Progression, and Development
Increase student persistence and timely progression to degree attainment
Action 1: Implement and continually assess evidence-based strategies that improve retention, progression, and graduation rates
Action 2: Increase student academic performance through focused classroom strategies, support programs, and enhancements to policies and procedures
Action 3: Increase students’ access to and opportunities for academically-related interactions with faculty beyond structured classroom time

Attract students with characteristics consistent with our vision and mission who will choose UWG as a top choice institution
Action 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
Action 2: Create a comprehensive recruitment plan that will serve as a pipeline for all student populations

Facilitate students’ responsible financial access to UWG
Action 1: Develop a campus-wide program to coordinate institutional resources to assure that a college degree is affordable for all students
Action 2: Increase opportunities for student employment on campus that provide a supportive, developmental workplace that prioritizes educational pursuits while alleviating financial burdens

Nurture the development of the whole person through student engagement in all aspects of the university experience
Action 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
Action 2: Deliver comprehensive career development, experiential learning opportunities, and career employment services to assist students in securing gainful employment
Action 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
Action 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.
Assure that all academic programs have the capacity to transform lives and address the needs of the region, state, and beyond

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

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

**Action 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

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

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

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

**Action 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

Enhance the support for and recognition of scholarship, research, and creative activities conducted by faculty and students

**Action 1:** Identify and implement initiatives to promote scholarship and research that improve teaching and learning

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

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

Measure and improve the quality of teaching in all academic programs

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

**Action 2:** Implement faculty development opportunities consistent with a comprehensive university

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

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

**Action 2:** Annually evaluate each partnership for its impact and benefit to all parties involved

**Action 3:** Align institutional resources to strengthen key partnerships

Create and cultivate new partnerships to support strategic initiatives

**Action 1:** In consultation with other educational institutions, identify and develop opportunities for cooperative activities

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

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

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

**Action 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

**Action 2:** Celebrate and reward student, faculty, and staff accomplishments that align with university strategic priorities

**Action 3:** Support key partnerships via external funding
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.
Create a workplace of choice distinguished by talented, engaged, and diverse staff
Action 1: Develop and implement an employee recruitment protocol that has the necessary depth and breadth to attract the best applicants for every position
Action 2: Implement a market-driven compensation package and a reward/recognition system that attracts and retains the best employees at all levels
Action 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

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
Action 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
Action 2: Partner with business and economic development organizations in activities that benefit UWG, its partner organizations, and sustainable economic and cultural development
Action 3: With individuals, foundations, and other service agencies, identify and develop partnerships and activities that improve our communities

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
Action 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
Action 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 results

Ensure future generations have access to the best that UWG has to offer
Action 1: Develop, implement, and embed the concepts of social, financial, and environmental sustainability in all action plans developed to achieve the strategic plan
Action 2: Publicize all UWG achievements that support the aim of sustainability
Honoring the Past...Forging the New West

- Dr. Kyle Marrero