

A Message from the NSU PRESIDENT



The pace of change in higher education over the past three years has been unprecedented. The pandemic accelerated the use of technology to deliver instruction and services. Supply chain challenges impeded the ability to secure critical resources. Students' expectations of what they need, and in some cases demand, from higher education also appear to be changing.

The media mentions micro and stackable credentials more than bachelor's degrees. The "just in case" education is shifting to "just in time" (Levine & Pelt, 2021), and there is pressure to move from a subject and process mastery model to an outcomes-based model. The changing landscape also comes from reductions in state appropriations, inflation, and the significant decline in available high school students due to some of the lowest birth rates in decades. These changes, and many others, form the backdrop of where Northeastern State University finds itself in 2023.

Although change is not always good, and different is not always better, the personality of this historic and beloved institution is one of perseverance, adaptability and nimbleness. Evidence to support this position is found in how NSU shifted the entire academic enterprise in a matter of days in March 2020 as COVID-19 disrupted everything. Resilient as ever, just as when our predecessor campus, the Cherokee National Female Seminary at Park Hill, burned in 1887, plans to replace what was lost began immediately, and the cornerstone for a new building at a new location was laid within a year. And as of this writing, Seminary Hall has been welcoming students for 134 years.

NSU's past, current and future success is vested in the diligence and dedication of our faculty and staff, as manifested in many measures of student success. We cannot and will not lose sight of our primary goal— the

education of each generation of students. The institution's continued success will be measured by how it plans for the future and how these plans are implemented.

NSU: An Institution of Distinction 2023-2028 is supported by four pillars. NSU will be the Educational Partner of Choice, Enhance Workforce Connections, Ensure Student Success and Invest in Employees and Facilities. The plan is appropriately focused on measurable priorities and goals, identifiable targets and key performance indicators.

This strategic plan is the culmination of more than two years of arduous work by the Strategic Planning Executive Committee. Dr. Cari Keller has done an admirable job leading this important work. She has been supported by committee members Dr. Kelly Jo Larsen, Dr. Kimberly Williams, Dr. Richard Reif, Dr. Peggy Glenn and Mr. Brian Manley. This plan truly reflects grassroots processes that garnered input from internal and external stakeholders and an all-call appeal that resulted in over 1,100 unique responses.

I sincerely appreciate the nearly 1,800 NSU employees, students and community members who contributed to this important endeavor. Thanks for your full participation.

As we have done for well over a century, NSU will move forward, and we will do this with a renewed focus and commitment to Our People, Our Place and Our Purpose.

The future is bright!

Dr. Steve Turner, President

A Message from the NSU PROVOST



The work of the university in crafting this strategic plan is focused on shaping the lives of not only students, but it is also shaping the lives of future generations. This is a tremendous responsibility, and it is one that all employees shoulder with pride and determination. The superb efforts and vision

of the strategic planning committee and all of our university stakeholders have captured our best efforts to be successful in achieving our goals.

The world is changing at an unprecedented pace, and so must we. Our strategic plan is designed to propel us forward, helping us to remain at the forefront of education and innovation. It is a blueprint for success, a roadmap that will guide us toward achieving our goals and fulfilling our mission.

I encourage each of you to support the essence of this strategic plan—to embrace the idea that together, we help our students achieve their greatest potential. This plan has measurable goals and outcomes designed to provide rich data as we accomplish the successes identified within.

To achieve our strategic objectives, we must all collaborate and communicate effectively. We can accomplish this by eliminating barriers to progress and fostering an environment of interdisciplinary cooperation. Together, we are stronger, and together, we can achieve remarkable things.

Let us never forget the importance of celebrating our successes, no matter how small they seem.

Each milestone achieved, life transformed and new discovery is a testament to our collective efforts. Our strategic plan provides the tools to be effective in these efforts.

As we embark on this new revision in strategic planning, let us approach it with enthusiasm, passion and an unwavering commitment to excellence. Together, we will create a future that exceeds our wildest expectations—a future where our institution is renowned for its innovation, impact and unwavering dedication to education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debbie Landry".

Dr. Debbie Landry, Provost



INTRODUCTION:

Since fall 2021, NSU's Strategic Planning Executive Committee has gathered feedback on NSU's previous strategic plan, surveyed thousands of stakeholders, hosted town halls on each campus, tasked committee working groups with reviewing, revising and refining the institution's mission, vision, and values and enlisted each of NSU's colleges and administrative divisions to create responsive institutional strategies for the next five years.

The previous NSU strategic plan, "Excellence: The Path to Success," covered eight years (2015 to 2023) in order to implement NSU's 2013 "Destination 2023: A 10-Year Road Map of Distinction through Degree Completion" ("D23"). D23 provided specific goals to increase the number of students who earned degrees from NSU, in response to then-Governor Mary Fallin's Complete College America challenge. While the shrinking demographic pool of potential first-time full-time freshmen was being discussed as that plan was implemented, no one could have predicted a global pandemic that changed the delivery format of all college courses within a few weeks' time in March 2020, leaving rural students without

reliable internet service unable to complete coursework. While many students lost jobs in many service industries, those jobs have returned and are paying hourly rates more than double the current federal minimum wage. Three years later, the impact of the pandemic on higher education is still being felt, analyzed and adjusted to.

It is a solid foundation for a culture of continuous improvement, based on measurable key performance indicators (KPIs) to show where we excel, where we can do better, and how we can achieve that improvement.

At the same time, political and economic forces have focused attention on more than just earning a degree. Skills mapping, badges and micro-credentials have become new buzzwords reflecting what employers are seeking in a productive skilled workforce. NSU, as "Oklahoma's Immersive and Experiential Learning Institution," is already leading the effort to leverage industry advisory boards and workforce connections to create more student internship opportunities and more responsive curricula.

But, we can do more. This new strategic plan, "NSU: An Institution of Distinction 2023-2028," is more than the precisely selected words and enumerated concepts in this document. It is a solid foundation for a culture of continuous improvement, based on measurable key performance indicators (KPIs) to show where we excel, where we can do better, and how we can achieve that improvement.



NSU: AN INSTITUTION OF DISTINCTION

To remain competitive in higher education, and more increasingly, to compete with trade education institutions, NSU must distinguish itself from others with a laser focus on value added through educational achievements at NSU. To achieve this, NSU must focus on ensuring that our students are career ready, no matter where they come from, or whether their ultimate aspirations are a degree, certificate, micro-credential or single course. The recommended Mission, Vision, Values, Institutional Goals and Key Performance Indicators provide a foundation for our path to distinction, and to meet the unmet needs of our communities in three key ways:

A focus on caring about our students and each other;

A focus on experiential and immersive learning; and

A focus on Workforce, Tribal and Community partnerships and engagement.

Through the strategic planning process, these focused principles must be integrated into every facet of our institution.

NSU's new Mission, Vision and Values serve as the foundation to the University's four strategic goals, shown as pillars below.



Mission: Building on our Cherokee heritage, Northeastern State University is committed to student success and a sustainable future for our diverse communities.



Vision: NSU will support our students' success by adapting to a constantly changing, globally competitive environment, by educating today's learners to be tomorrow's leaders, and by being responsive to the needs of our stakeholders and the region's workforce.



Values:

Our People: We are committed to the growth and success of our students, employees and community partners.

Our Place: We honor all who came before us and advance a culture built on diversity, equality, inclusion and belonging.

Our Purpose: We develop a collaborative environment that cultivates a lifelong pursuit of learning, excellence, creativity and opportunity.

INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIC GOALS, OUTCOMES & STRATEGIES

GOAL 1: EDUCATIONAL PARTNER OF CHOICE

Provide accessible pathways to high-quality coursework delivered through flexible modalities to be the educational partner of choice in an ever-changing competitive environment.

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1. Through a student and stakeholder lens, identify, document and remove existing barriers to becoming the educational partner of choice.

- a. Identify policies and procedures impacting NSU's role as the educational partner of choice, including but not limited to: accessible pathways to admissions, high-quality coursework, flexible modalities and workforce partnerships.
- b. Review and revise (as appropriate) these policies and procedures to remove barriers.
- c. Ensure competitive tuition and fee rates to expand our catchment area to potential out-of-state students.



DEGREES & CERTIFICATES OFFERED

60	Undergraduate Degrees
19	Undergraduate Certificates
26	Graduate Degrees
25	Graduate Certificates
1	Professional Degree (Doctorate of Optometry)



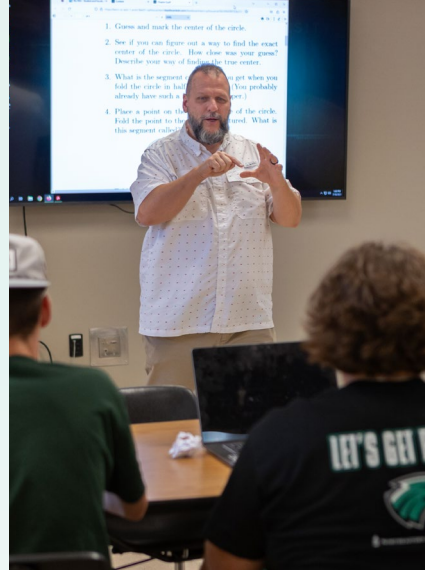
Source: Institutional Effectiveness; Academic Year 2021-2022

2. Implement an institutional integrated enrollment management plan in order to be the educational partner of choice and maximize our potential to meet our enrollment and retention goals.

- a. Identify key stakeholders (including students) in enrollment management, academic and student success, marketing and financial support.
- b. Analyze and integrate strategies for recruitment, admissions, student support, retention, marketing and financial support.
- c. As NSU expands online and flexible programming, ensure the website provides easy-to-find accurate, relevant and current information.
- d. Ensure all majors have corresponding career opportunities and delivery modalities listed on their web page.
- e. Streamline content to facilitate easy access by students, potential students, and stakeholders to current and relevant information and timely support services.

3. Strengthen flexible educational offerings and use digital tools to augment the learning experience.

- a. Invest in technology-enabled student experiences that support the “hybrid campus.”
- b. Ensure we are meeting student needs by evaluating all student-facing digital services for access, functionality and ease of use.
- c. Support high-quality online educational experiences through increased professional development opportunities for faculty and instructional staff to increase utilization of Quality Matters standards and best practices.
- d. Facilitate the transition of existing face-to-face courses to online, hybrid and HyFlex templates.



GOAL 2: ENHANCE WORKFORCE CONNECTIONS

Enhance workforce connections by ensuring our students are career ready.

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EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Students “learn by doing” through engagement in real world applications of knowledge. NSU is committed to providing high-impact experiences for every student.

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1. The institution will prioritize experiential learning to foster learning through action.

- a. Coordinate and develop immersive and experiential learning opportunities through the institutional Experiential Learning Committee.
- b. Partner with employers, stakeholders, career services and alumni to connect students to the workforce through increased availability of engaged learning opportunities.
- c. Develop and maintain a dynamic website dedicated to experiential learning.
- d. Secure funding to develop the Experiential Learning Institute.

2. Programs will identify, develop and sustain relationships with external partners relevant to their discipline or program offerings.

- a. Expand micro-credential and badge offerings that provide our workforce the opportunity to upskill while earning stackable credentials.
- b. Utilize advisory boards to facilitate relationships with workforce partners.
- c. Engage external stakeholders in promoting educational opportunities and the value of higher education.

3. Produce workforce-ready graduates.

- a. Align academic and co-curricular programming with current workforce demands.
- b. Strengthen online education offerings and use digital tools to improve student success and augment the traditional learning experience.
- c. Develop, promote and advertise well-defined career pathways for students.
- d. Increase recognition of the prior learning, skills and knowledge that students possess by awarding appropriate college credit.



4. Create an institutional infrastructure to support workforce development, connections and increased enrollment.

- a. Map workforce development roles and processes (workforce gap analysis) to facilitate efficiencies.
- b. Connect continuing education, professional development and for-credit workforce initiatives to drive enrollment.
- c. Communicate the workforce development plan to all NSU employees.



GOAL 3: ENSURE STUDENT SUCCESS

Ensure student success through genuine concern and support for students, and early intervention by faculty and staff.

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1. Remove barriers to retention and graduation, including structural, administrative and instructional policies and practices which create roadblocks for student success.

- a. Fully implement the Retention Priorities at <https://offices.nsuok.edu/studentaffairs/retention.aspx>.
- b. Improve student-facing processes university wide that impact student success.
- c. Align existing practices with relevant high-impact practices, such as those of the Association of American Colleges & Universities, and ensure continuous improvement through ongoing assessment of student participation.
- d. Ensure all departments are continuously evaluating and improving through a lens of fostering student retention and graduation, including engaging in ongoing conversations (with student feedback) of their contributions to student success.

2. Provide educational opportunities to the campus community regarding student success best practices and student-facing processes.

- a. Provide weekly notifications of student support services and related events.

- b. Increase awareness of services, processes and available resources. Provide faculty and staff training on these topics.
- c. Identify, communicate and provide professional development and training to ensure student success best practices.
- d. Establish a committee to coordinate cross training, customer service training and front-line support in order to minimize phone transfers, student frustration and to be able to better connect students with accurate information quickly.
- e. Review new faculty and new employee onboarding through the lens of ensuring student success.

3. Leverage data more effectively to increase student success and retention.

- a. Share retention data internally, as appropriate, to ensure that departments and programs understand their contribution to fostering student success.
- b. Create an institutional plan to identify the data points that will allow programs to make impactful program decisions to increase retention, including completion of credentials, student satisfaction surveys and course evaluations.
- c. Embed student success and retention data into existing reporting structures, including academic annual reports.
- d. Develop and implement interactive dashboards with key performance data to leverage student success metrics and improve data-informed decision-making.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



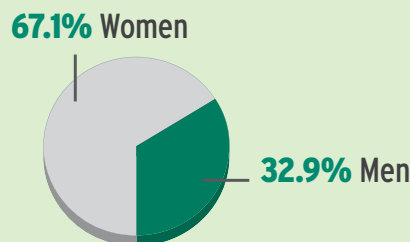
35.5% of NSU Undergrads are 25 Years of Age & Older



91.1% Oklahomans
7.0% Out of State
1.9% International

50.2% Caucasian
20.5% American Indian
 (American Indian or Alaska Native Only)
12.8% Two or more Races
6.4% Hispanic
4.8% African American
2.4% Asian
2.8% Unknown/Other

223 CONCURRENT
High School Students



Unduplicated headcount

*Source: Institutional Effectiveness;
 Academic Year 2021-2022*

GOAL 4: INVEST IN EMPLOYEES AND FACILITIES

Invest in employees and facilities to ensure that both are performing at their best, excelling at their functions, and are outfitted with the tools and technology needed in today's intensely competitive workforce and evolving digital environment.

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1. Increase and improve employee recruitment and retention.

- a. Adjust employee pay based on College & University Professional Association - Human Resources (CUPA-HR) salary review.
- b. Without decreasing productivity or negatively impacting student success, and as appropriate, evaluate select positions for the potential to effectively work remotely.
- c. Evaluate on-call and holiday pay options and procedures for non-exempt employees who are required to work outside of normal business hours.

2. Conduct a university-wide facilities and infrastructure audit and prioritize investments based on need, focusing on those impacting student and employee retention.

- a. Conduct a holistic review of campus infrastructure and determine anticipated costs to eliminate deferred maintenance, as well as savings for unnecessary maintenance, encompassing buildings, HVAC, hot water, safety (sidewalks, lighting, cameras), and invest accordingly.
- b. Evaluate instructional technology to meet 21st century teaching skills and expectations.
- c. Conduct an audit of directional and campus signage to determine what is missing or needs to be updated with appropriate nomenclature.
- d. Upgrade telecommunication, computers and printer technology.



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TECHNOLOGY
GRANT**

Received in 2023

3. Establish and implement a campus safety and accessibility plan.

- a. Analyze and address current security and safety needs (e.g., number of buildings, doors, locks, video monitoring, sidewalks, lighting, Title IX, Clery compliance, ADA compliance, etc.).
- b. Ensure that NSU complies with cybersecurity regulations and protecting the privacy of employees and students.

4. Innovate and automate our processes to improve student success, work efficiency and agility.

- a. Assess and streamline processes across the university.
- b. Develop a digital storage plan across the university.
- c. Increase efficiency by digitizing paper-based processes.

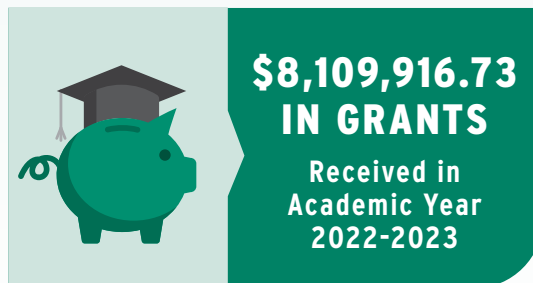
5. Provide professional development and leadership opportunities for employees to improve efficacy and accountability.

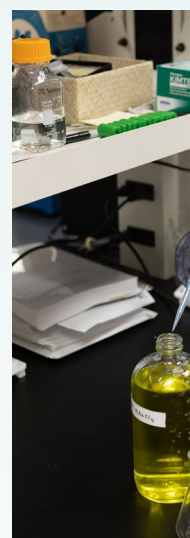
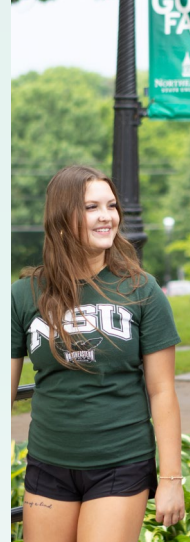
- a. Provide relevant skills-based training for employees, including trades training and potential certifications with pay/ advancement options per certification, license, degree or other training opportunities, considering a commitment to remain at NSU in exchange for such training.
- b. Provide a campus-wide professional development opportunity at least once every two years.

- c. Provide internal leadership training opportunities to qualified employees throughout the university.
- d. Offer and require customer service training for front-line employees, including student workers.
- e. Identify department opportunities for advancement and train/crosstrain current employees accordingly.

6. Ensure a coordinated approach to managing external, private or other alternative funding.

- a. Identify and remove barriers to seeking appropriate external, private or other alternative funding.
- b. Continue improving and streamlining the grants process, from identification to application, and from post-award to final report.
- c. Increase external or alternative funding opportunities by incentivizing grant writers.
- d. Foster improved engagement of stakeholders in both pre and post-award processes through appropriate advisory boards.





The Path FORWARD

For each of the four strategic goals on pages eight through 15, as well as for many of the enumerated outcomes, key performance indicators (KPIs) have been identified to measure change year-over-year. Where data is not currently available, key employees have been tasked with compiling that data in 2023-24 and establishing a benchmark accordingly.

Each academic department and administrative division has already developed its own strategic plan for 2023 through 2028, which ties each departmental or divisional outcome and strategy to one or more of the four institutional goals. As with the institutional outcomes, departments and divisions have identified KPIs to measure change from year to year.

NSU is exploring several software programs that provide dashboards, reports, assignments and other strategic plan inputs and outcomes by role and/or department or division. Once purchased and implemented during the 2023-24 academic year, the Strategic Planning Committee will be able to more easily track progress toward goals using the designated KPIs.



SPECIAL THANKS

to the following NSU employees who contributed greatly to this plan and who are already making NSU an “Institution of Distinction.”



CABINET

Dr. Steve Turner, *President*

Dr. Debbie Landry, *Provost; Vice President for Academic Affairs*

Dr. Jerriid Freeman, *Vice President for Student Affairs*

Dan Mabery, *Vice President for University Relations*

Christy Landsaw, *Vice President for Administration and Finance*

STRATEGIC PLANNING EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Dr. Cari Keller, *Dean of the Graduate College; Executive Director for Planning and Assessment (Chair)*

Dr. Kimberly Williams, *Dean of the Muskogee Campus; Director of Adult Degree Completion*

Dr. Kelly Jo Larsen, *Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management*

Dr. Richard Reif, *Chief Information Officer; Director of Information Technology*

Dr. Peggy Glenn, *Director of Development; Executive Director of NSU Foundation*

Brian Manley, *Assistant Director for Digital Platforms & Marketing*

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE 2022-23

Dr. Cari Keller, *Chair*

Academic Affairs (8)

Dr. Vanessa Anton, *Academic Affairs Representative; College of Education*

Dr. Mike Wilds, *Academic Affairs Representative; College of Liberal Arts*

Dr. Jessica Martin, *Academic Affairs Representative; Gregg Wadley College of Science & Health Professions*

Dr. Dilene Crockett, *Academic Affairs Representative; College of Business & Technology*

Dr. Janet Buzzard, *Academic Affairs Representative; College of Business & Technology*

Dr. Pamela Fly, *HLC Accreditation Liaison Officer*

Dr. Carla Swearingen, *Academic Affairs Representative*

Dr. Nathan Green, *Faculty Council President*

Student Affairs (5)

TBD, *Student Affairs Representative*

Dr. Sheila Self, *Student Affairs Representative*

Dr. Kelly Jo Larsen, *Student Affairs; Enrollment Management*

Whitney Arbaugh, *Student Affairs; Auxiliary Services*

Chelbie Turtle, *NSGA President*

Administration & Finance (4)

Christy Landsaw, *Administration & Finance Representative*

Dr. Richard Reif, *Administration & Finance Representative*

Harold McMillen, *Administration & Finance Representative*

Sydney Nichols Rice, *Administration & Finance Representative; Staff Council Chair*

University Relations (1)

Elizabeth Peterson, *University Relations Representative*

President's Office (3)

James Bell, *President's Office Representative; Public Safety*

Dr. Peggy Glenn, *President's Office Representative; Development*

John Sisemore, *President's Office Representative; Athletics*

Committee Selection (6)

Sara Barnett, *Center for Tribal Studies*

Dr. Eloy Chavez, *College of Extended Learning*

Dr. Michael Jones, *Libraries*

Dr. Roger Collier, *International Programs*

Brian Manley, *University Relations Representative*

Dr. Kimberly Williams, *Workforce Representative*

And we especially appreciate all of those stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, alumni and community members, who took time to provide the data points and viewpoints that form the basis of this plan.



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