

Western Rising
A New Direction for the Future
Strategic Plan 2024 – 2030

Dear Academic Excellence Subcommittee members:

The strategic planning process is moving to Phase II- Envisioning Our Future. During this phase the various subcommittees will meet with university and community stakeholders to develop the critical goals and objectives that stem from the strategic priorities identified through community participation during Phase I.

From the recently completed activities of Phase I- mission/vision/values survey, the strategic planning launch session led by the president, and the open forums, the following have emerged as the six key strategic priority areas: **a) Reframing of the mission, vision, and values; b) Continuous pursuit of academic excellence and student support services; c) Advancing institutional culture that reflects transparency and collaborative decision making; d) Securing sustainable and thriving financial vitality; e) Promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging; and f) Contributing to local and regional community building by strengthening partnerships.**

Please find below information pertaining to your subcommittee and assigned tasks.

Strategic Priority area(s): Academic excellence and student support services

As an integral part of this university's commitment to fostering an environment of academic excellence, this planning exercise presents a unique opportunity to shape our future direction in a way that reflects our core values and academic aspirations. Our university has always prided itself on delivering a high standard of education and nurturing an environment where both students and faculty can achieve their fullest potential. To guide your efforts, I outline the following key objectives for this subcommittee.

Charge:

Enhancing Teaching and Learning: Explore innovative teaching methodologies, including blended learning models and technology-enhanced classrooms, to provide a more engaging and effective learning experience. Investing in faculty development programs to equip our educators with the latest pedagogical skills is also vital.

Promoting Research and Innovation: Explore ways to strengthen our research infrastructure and support systems to significantly enhance our university's contribution to academic and practical advancements. Encourage interdisciplinary research and collaborations with industry partners to lead to groundbreaking discoveries and real-world applications.

Advancing Student Success and Support: Help develop comprehensive support systems for students, encompassing academic advising, mental health services, and career counseling.

Initiatives that promote student well-being and readiness for the post-graduation world are essential components of academic excellence.

Community Engagement and Partnerships: Explore ways to establish stronger connections with the local community and create partnerships with businesses, non-profits, and government organizations to provide our students with valuable experiential learning opportunities and the ability to contribute to the economic and social development of our region.

Diversity and Inclusion: Devising an approach to enhance commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion should be at the forefront of our academic excellence plan. This includes recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty and student body, and creating an inclusive campus culture where all voices are heard and valued.

Sustainability and Global Impact: Exploring practices to integrate principles of sustainability into our curriculum and campus operations can position our university as a leader in addressing global challenges. This approach aligns with the growing importance of environmental stewardship and social responsibility in higher education.

Deliverables: A draft document at the end of this phase that covers the following:

- a. A draft Academic Excellence vision for the university
- b. Goals based on the draft vision
- c. Objectives for each of the goals identified
- d. Key activities and tactical strategies to achieve the objectives and goals
- e. Identify organizational units responsible for implementation of the key tactical strategies

Key expected steps: The subcommittee will undertake the following activities:

- a. Hold timely subcommittee meetings for discussions and ideation
- b. Conduct two open forums to seek stakeholders' input and guidance on the assigned strategic priority areas
- c. Launch a survey to seek stakeholders' input
- d. Consult the office of Institutional Research and Assessment for institutional data needs that will inform the work of the subcommittee
- e. Prepare a draft summary document outlining the findings from the forums, surveys, and discussions

I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead for our university, and I am appreciative of your valuable contributions to this vital planning process.

Warm Regards,
Manohar Singh