2021 to 2023 Strategic Plan

Wilkes University

I.   Introduction

While the end of one strategic plan is typically followed by a comprehensive planning cycle that includes an extensive exploration of the current environment, the *Bridge to the Future* Strategic Plan is designed to serve as a 'bridge' from the relative stability of the last plan to a yet unknown future.

This plan is built on the successes and lessons of the *Gateway to the Future* Strategic Plan and introduces key strategic objectives essential for Wilkes to thrive in the post-pandemic world. It is only two years in duration and is limited in scope, encouraging us to focus our energy and resources on the most crucial issues facing Wilkes University.

Most importantly, the *Bridge to the Future* is grounded in our currently reality. It is likely that throughout the two years of this plan, Wilkes will continue to experience serious challenges as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to prioritize the health and safety of our campus community above all else. This overarching commitment to the wellbeing of our people underscores each of the six goals of the *Bridge to the Future* Strategic Plan that follow.

II.   Strategic Goals

Goal 1: Foster Institutional Efficiency, Agility and a Culture of Entrepreneurship

The events of the past year have proven that organizations must respond quickly and efficiently to rapidly changing circumstances in order to remain viable. We must foster a culture that encourages continual enhancement of institutional efficiency, promotes agility and cultivates entrepreneurialism. As a University community, we need to celebrate risk takers (and learn from occasional failures), challenge traditional ideas, support those who push the boundaries, welcome dissenting ideas and embrace robust discussions.

This goal is the bedrock of the whole Strategic Plan. All potential initiatives should be judged by the degree to which they will enhance efficiency, promote agility and encourage entrepreneurial solutio(b)-3 (ic)1 (h)-1 (o)-4o thichiallinges wcio(b)-3 (f (t)-8 (r)- (io(b)-3

The academic portfolio review process will enable us to focus our resources more strategically on high performing programs. The strength of our traditional academic disciplines has formed the foundation upon which all of our programs have been built. However, it has also created rigidities and silos that do not always serve our best interest. The further development of inter-disciplinary programs will also ensure we are preparing our students for the careers of the future.

Examples of Initiatives to Support Goal 1:

1. Create a *New Initiatives Fund* that will be used to provide seed funds for innovative ideas that will generate additional revenue and/or enhance the student experience, ultimately improving recruitment and retention.
2. Direct resources to high-growth and stable-growth academic programs. Programs that are unable to maintain student demand will be wound-down and ultimately discontinued.
3. Reshape our administrative structures to enhance efficiency, promote flexible work units and focus our limited resources on our key strategic objectives.
4. Develop new partnerships with business and community organizations to ensure our programs meet the needs of the workforce, now and in the future.
5. Recognize and celebrate risk-taking and cultivate entrepreneurial and innovative endeavors.
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For an institution of our size, we have a modest endowment and we will continue to experience increasing demand for financial support for our students.

Examples of Initiatives to Support Goal 6:
1. Invest in technical solutions to better understand donor interest and make data-driven decisions.
2. Staff the unit adequately to support the data-driven results identified above and create donor-specific appeals.
3. Invest in systems that enhance the alumni and donor experience in virtual environments.
4. Implement solutions that connect alumni to campus programming, mentoring and for the benefit of student development.
5. Ensure resource allocation over the next two years that supports the preparation of a new campaign in FY23.

III. Closing

The goals and supporting initiatives outlined in the *Bridge to the Future* plan will guide our decision-making over the next two years, and provide a framework upon which the next plan can be built. Upon the completion of *Bridge to the Future,* the University will return to the more tradi Futur anrr-ritci.4of she UTT4 1 Tf0.003 Tc -0.004 Tw (B)7 FBridge to the Futu