Vision Statement

We are a national leader in educational access, community engagement, and economic impact.

Mission Statement

Lamar University is a diverse and accessible university for life-long learners with a passion for community engagement. We are a vital contributor to the socio-economic wellbeing and resilience of the Gulf Coast Region.

Our Values

Our values are the compass by which we engage with each other and our community:

Accessibility  Integrity
Community  Quality
Data-Supported Decision Making  Research and Creative Activity
Diversity  Service
Innovation  Student-Focused

Measures of Success

By implementing this plan we will meet these key benchmarks by 2025:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>75% Retention Rate</th>
<th>20% four-year Graduation Rate</th>
<th>43% six-year Graduation Rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased Satisfaction of our students, faculty, and staff</td>
<td>Increased Diversity of our students, faculty, and staff</td>
<td>Increased Impact of our research and creative activities</td>
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Commitments

To achieve our vision and fulfill our mission Lamar University commits to:

- **Providing Flexible Student-Centered Learning, One Student At A Time**;
- **Preparing Career and Advanced Degree Ready Students**;
- **Being the Economic and Service Engine of Southeast Texas and Beyond**;
- **Leading in Research & Creativity**; and
- **Ensuring a Sustainable Infrastructure to Meet the University’s Changing Needs**.

Each of these commitments is described in detail below, along with metrics for use in gauging our progress and the strategies and tactics by which they will be achieved.

**Flexible Student-Centered Learning, One Student At A Time**

Lamar University is a nurturing, accessible, academic community focused on the success of all students. The academic and social experiences of students define their time at Lamar University and are foundational to students’ future success. Students experience attentive support from the university’s faculty and staff beginning with the recruitment process, throughout their time as a student, and as lifetime learners.

**Metrics:**

- Increase on-line enrollment by 15% and on-campus enrollment by 5% by 2025
- Increase first-to-second year retention to 75% by 2025
- Achieve a 6-year graduation rate of 43% by 2025
- Decrease average debt of all graduates
- Increase number of Community engagement activities (service-learning, civic engagement and community volunteerism)
- Increase student hours involved in community engagement activities.

**Strategies and Tactics:**

- Promote greater access to Lamar University through the development of focused partnerships and collaborations to identify, recruit and enroll a diverse student body by:
  - Implementing our enrollment plan;
  - Building a strong campus experience program;
  - Offering financial literacy outreach programs;
  - Aligning financial aid and scholarship awarding to attract qualified students;
  - Increasing and enhancing disability resources that support our online and on campus student populations; and
  - Designing and launching flexible learning options including micro-credentials and stackable certificates in every College.
• Ensure that students make timely progress toward a degree and provide educational opportunities that inspire them to lead, serve, challenge, take responsibility, build problem-solving skills, and engage with complex problems by:
  o Engaging all on-campus undergraduate students in at least one High Impact Practice (HIP) by graduation;
  o Designing at least one high impact practice experience for each major;
  o Requiring a first-year experience for all first-time, full-time freshmen, such as participation in a learning community;
  o Designing and implementing interdisciplinary activities and appropriate undergraduate research opportunities in every academic college;
  o Strengthening the student experience through enhancing the personal support faculty and staff provide students;
  o Promoting wellness, diversity, and leadership by expanding resources in physical infrastructure and student programs;
  o Enhancing academic advising, career and wellness support services for students;
  o Reducing withdrawal and failure rates in key gateway and core courses; and
  o Ensuring access to sufficient numbers of student tutors prior to each semester opening.

• Inspire and teach students to be locally responsive while globally engaging the grand challenges facing the international community by:
  o Enhancing service-learning, civic engagement and community volunteerism opportunities to prepare students to contribute, work and lead in local, statewide and global communities;
  o Fostering collaboration between academic colleges, the Office of Sustainability, and the Office of Civic Engagement to enhance community engagement opportunities in selected credit courses and non-credit activities;
  o Expanding alumni partnerships to offer more internships; and
  o Increasing corporate, educational, government and health care partnerships.

  **Career and Advanced Degree Ready Students**

  Hands-on learning is a hallmark of a Lamar education. Students across all levels and disciplines access experience-based learning beginning early in their studies. Through learning inside and outside the classrooms, laboratories, and studios students gain valuable skills such as multicultural competence, working in a team, effective communication, problem-solving, creativity, and entrepreneurship. Lamar students graduate with marketable skills that are a combination of practical, applicable knowledge and power skills. Lamar undergraduate students are career and advanced degree ready, just as graduate students complete their studies ready for professional and academic success.

  **Metrics:**

  ➢ Increase students’ participation in internships and practicums by 10% by 2025.
  ➢ Increase the number of organizations that provide internship opportunities by 10% by 2025.
80% of students obtain degree-level jobs or enroll in graduate programs within one year after graduation by 2025.

100% of academic programs include an experiential learning or career ready component in their curricula by 2025.

Establish a scholarship fund that is dedicated to support access to all Lamar students for experiential learning opportunities with a goal of $XXX by 2025.

Fast-track accelerated graduate programs and new graduate degrees to increase graduate enrollment at LU by 10% by 2025.

Increase number of interdisciplinary, co-taught courses.

**Strategies and Tactics:**

- Coordinate communication on career practices and internship opportunities to close the knowledge gap between Lamar students, businesses and the local community to make students career ready by:
  - Providing timely communications through the Center for Career & Professional Development on job opportunities and internships;
  - Ensuring coordination between academic units and the Center for Career and Professional Development to enhance access to internship and employment opportunities for all qualified students;
  - Establishing and educating key departments with outreach responsibilities on streamlined communication and university activities (i.e.: Advancement, Center for Career & Professional Development, University Marketing, etc.);
  - Coordinating meetings each semester as kick-offs of upcoming planned external communications to assist in reducing redundancy;
  - Coordinating meetings each semester to create alignment with department and advisors in career counseling and UAC work in concert to effectively provide information to students about opportunities;
  - Utilizing current and new faculty advisory boards to assist in increasing our knowledge and understanding of key industry trends affecting the future career readiness potential of students in our academic programs; and
  - Ensuring advisory board member selection and appointment processes yield high-level participation from key partner organizations.

- Expand awareness of the quality of Lamar’s degree programs and students with businesses and communities to create more career and internship opportunities by:
  - Creating research expos in: STEM, the humanities, fine arts, and social and behavioral sciences, to which relevant local and regional businesses will be invited and showcase the research and creative work of students and faculty alike;
  - Establishing an alumni ambassador program for graduates from each academic program to improve the reputation of the programs and encourage internship and career opportunities for students;
  - Increasing the number of students who participate in regional and national professional competitions;
o Identifying the key contacts in specific businesses relevant to Lamar’s academic programs in Texas and neighboring state with the goal of increasing the number of internships and career opportunities; and
o Providing members of advisory councils and boards with up-to-date talking points on the respective academic programs with the goal to build Lamar’s reputation by highlighting excellence in research conducted by students and faculty at all levels.

• Implement a university-wide curriculum focus on experiential learning and career readiness in each academic program by:
  o Designing, implementing, and offering a one-hour seminar/workshop course that is open to all students where each week focuses on career readiness in presentations, such as exploring careers traditionally outside their major or program such as money management; time management and scheduling;
  o Orienting students with experiential learning and career readiness in a planned, sequential manner during the last four semesters of their degree;
  o Increasing the number of interdisciplinary courses, that faculty from multiple disciplines co-teach;
  o Creating a one-credit seminar offered by each department for undergraduate and graduate students in their graduating semester where the faculty serves as a mentor to guide students into a career; and
  o Increasing graduate student mentorship of undergraduate students, resulting in research presentations.

• Create a support system for Lamar students from all backgrounds to have access to experiential learning opportunities by:
  o Establishing a scholarship fund by 2025 that is dedicated to support access to all Lamar students for experiential learning opportunities;
  o Providing financial support to widen access to internships and other external opportunities;
  o Providing students with financial, career, and skill-building insights before, during, and after experiential learning experiences to build and extend their learning; and
  o Providing earlier external opportunities (freshman and sophomore) for all students.

• Increase access to LU courses and certificates for non-degree seeking learners by:
  o Expanding LU certificate programs to support the career life cycles of LU alumni and others in need of career change and/or advancement;
  o Creating alternative certification beyond current traditional certificate programs, e.g. badges, nine-hour modules or merely access to single existing courses;
  o Providing access to career development workshops or lectures/mini-courses;
  o Providing workshops or online modules for professions requiring continued education (CEUs); and
  o Developing new certificate programs in emerging disciplines that have job demand.

• Invest in the access, improvement, growth and production of graduate & professional education for Lamar University by:
Streamlining and easing the process of application to graduate and professional educational programs while maintaining or increasing admission standards;
Developing 3+2 and 4+1 BS+Masters degree options for students already at Lamar University;
Implementing outreach programs to make Lamar graduate and professional programs more well-known;
Enhancing the tools (IT, laboratories, facilities, library, etc.) and resources (advising, tutoring, student services, career consulting, etc.) that promote student success as measured by graduation rate, career placement, and outcomes;
Formulating strategic plans at the program level for increased student success in graduate and professional education leading to higher recruitment, retention, and completion rates;
Providing incentives to recruit and retain high-performing faculty members and students, e.g. start-up monies, top of the line science facilities and labs;
Developing post-graduate programs that have market demand, including continuing education units (CEUs);
Positioning satellite campus facility to meet distant education need;
Conducting outreach to international students to enroll in online coursework/degrees;
Enhancing the facility and training for faculty member to effectively compete for external research grants; and
Fostering a culture of producing excellent research and scholarly work to enhance program visibility and increase impact.

Economic and Service Engine of Southeast Texas and Beyond

Lamar University is the resource for relevant research-based practice enhancing prosperity and civic engagement in communities by providing competent graduates for a changing work force. Lamar through its educational offerings, has a collegial relationship with corporate, public, and non-profit sectors throughout the Gulf Coast Region and beyond. The University, a vital partner and resource, provides communities with an educated work force through unique opportunities for growth and continuing education.

Metrics:

- Develop and launch LU Credentials [see below for details] and provide access for:
  - 10% of entering freshmen by September 2020.
  - 50% of entering freshmen by September 2021.
  - 100% of entering freshmen by September 2022.
  - 100% of LU students by September 2023.
- Access to LU Credentials for 10% of alumni by July 2022, and 10% annual increases thereafter.
- Increase recent in-person alumni retention in the Gulf Coast Region by 5% each year beginning in 2021.
Strategies and Tactics:

- Establish and utilize industry expert panels in every academic college (and/or department, where suitable) to determine the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for relevant professional pathways by:
  - Establishing panels of industry experts and hiring managers for each academic college, or designate existing advisory groups for this purpose; and
  - Querying these panels to determine the most valuable experiences and skillsets for graduates.

- Provide all students with LU Credentials - an accredited degree plus unique credentials that distinguish graduates from their peers. LU Credentials are experiences and skillsets including: power skills, certifications, micro-credentials, portfolios, internships, externships, undergraduate research, applied research, life science research, technical skills, and entrepreneurship that can be listed on a student’s transcript or in their portfolio of work. With these additional credentials, alumni become an integral part of the economic and service engine for the Gulf Coast region and beyond. Accomplish this by:
  - Identifying LU Credentials within each academic unit, suitable to its disciplines and curricula including, but limited to, those listed above;
  - Designating existing curricular elements within each academic unit (courses, minors, etc.) that will deliver its LU Credentials; and
  - Designating co-curricular activities within each academic unit that will deliver its LU Credential skills and experiences.

- Identify at least one LU Credential element in each academic unit related to disaster preparedness, recovery, and resilience by:
  - Developing a marketing plan to showcase those recovery and resiliency LU Credentials together under one focus.

- Develop a degree plan for each individual student to ensure s/he has multiple LU Credential options by:
  - Building capacity for individual degree planning through advisor training and development/adaptation of interactive degree planning tools accessible to students; and
  - Integrating LU Credential planning into academic advising.

- Create and offer life-long learning opportunities for alumni and others to access learning leading to LU Credentials by:
  - Identifying curricular elements suitable for use as non-degree offerings;
  - Developing online and in-person access to these non-degree offerings; and
  - Ensuring non-degree learning aligns with and yields LU Credentials.

- Increase retention of in-person alumni in the Gulf Coast Region to heighten LU’s impact on the local workforce and economy by:
  - Establishing a baseline percentage of recent alumni who remain in the Gulf Coast Region; and
o Utilizing industry expert panels to ensure close cooperation between academic units and regional hiring managers across the industries and communities we serve.

Leading in Research & Creativity

Lamar is the resource for relevant research, creative work, and cultural enrichment that enhances the economic and cultural vitality of the region. Intellectual vitality is foundational for Lamar’s success, and across all disciplines faculty contribute to this culture of excellence with a global reach. Whether in laboratories or libraries, in studios or on the stage, in archives, on the web, or in the field--innovations in research, scholarship, and artistic expression are central to Lamar’s identity and a valued part of the university’s contributions to our community and a diverse society.

Metrics:

➢ Faculty impact on their disciplines (peer-reviewed publications, citations counts, service on editorial boards, etc.).
➢ Faculty impact on the professions (patents, start-up activity, service on industry advisory panels and corporate boards, etc.).
➢ Increases in grant submissions and awards.
➢ Recognition of faculty expertise in media hits and major awards.

Strategies and Tactics:

• Recognize and reward research and creative activity that align with LU’S vision, mission and goals by:
  o Initiating a process to collect information on and market scholarly activities aligned with LU’s vision, mission, goals;
  o Rewarding scholarly activities to enhance the university research profile;
  o Designating faculty fellowships for cross-disciplinary research and creative activity;
  o Ensuring portion of indirect cost is allocated to the principal investigator;
  o Establishing a university-wide process for spotlighting research and creative activity; and
  o Presenting to the president and senior leadership a modification for the criteria for awarding faculty fellowships.

• Increase research activity expectations in each department to enrich LU’s research profile and increase opportunity and access for on-campus and online students and faculty by:
  o Initiating a process to collect information throughout the university and market scholarly activities aligned with LU’s vision, mission, goals;
  o Rewarding scholarly activities that enhance the university research profile;
  o Designating faculty fellowships for cross-disciplinary research and creative activity;
  o Ensuring a portion of indirect cost is allocated to the principal investigator; and
  o Establishing an incentive fund within each college to support research in each college.
• Ensure that LU establishes comprehensive, expedient, effective, and integrated support systems to enhance quality and productivity of research and creative activities by:
  o Establishing an ad hoc group to review, compare, evaluate and recommend research and creative activities processes at LU compared to other higher education institutions;
  o Designating one full-time staff member in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) to support and represent each college; and
  o Expanding services of the ORSP (e.g. pre-award announcements, assistance with proposal writing, post award coordination, electronic documentation, etc.).

• Provide and promote ongoing access to LU scholarly activities for expanded knowledge and collaboration with the region by:
  o Obtaining long-term funding to establish a repository within the library;
  o Establishing a repository for scholarly research and creative activities within the Mary & John Gray Library;
  o Connecting repository to various online resources; and
  o Tracking submissions and usage statistics, comments, and feedback.

Ensuring a Sustainable Infrastructure to Meet the University’s Changing Needs

Every faculty and staff member plays a critical role in LU’s success, just as the university plays a central role in nurturing their professional development. LU’s success also relies on effective operations throughout the university, alignment of organizational structures with its mission and goals, and providing the right infrastructure to support the teaching, learning, research, and other critical activities of LU.

Metrics:

➢ Faculty and staff recruitment success (onboarding of top candidates), and retention.
➢ Increasing faculty and staff satisfaction.
➢ Increasing participation of tenured and tenure-track faculty in online teaching.
➢ Decreasing levels of unmet deferred maintenance year-on-year.
➢ Increasing student satisfaction with academic infrastructure, both physical and online.
➢ Fully keyless campus by 2025.
➢ Fully paperless campus by 2025.

Strategies and Tactics:

• Strengthen university focus on talent acquisition by:
  o Revising recruitment and hiring policies to ensure alignment with the vision, mission and values;
  o Offering annual training for department chairs and other managers;
  o Enhancing yearly access to professional development opportunities for professional staff including support for attending conferences related to their field;
  o Redesigning faculty evaluations to incentivize contributions to the Lamar’s vision, mission, and goals; and
• Enriching support staff training provided on campus.

• Create an Institute of Gulf Coast Industries and Environmental Sciences to include:
  o Center for Advances in Port Management
  o Center for History and Culture of Southeast Texas and Upper Gulf Coast
  o Center for Advances in Water and Air Quality
  o Center for Midstream Management and Science
  o Texas Air Research Center
  o Texas Hazardous Waste Research Center
  o Center for Coastal and Marine Studies
  o Center for Educational Innovation and Digital Learning
  o Center for Innovation, Commercialization, and Entrepreneurship
  o Greater South Park Neighborhood Partnership

• Increase transparency and trust among students, faculty, staff, and administration by:
  o Conducting faculty and staff satisfaction surveys on an annual basis and release the results;
  o Holding annual town hall meetings with President, Provost, and VP for Finance and Operations;
  o Forming a joint faculty and staff committee to meet quarterly to address concerns brought up across campus by fellow faculty and staff with minutes and results published quarterly; and
  o Establishing formal and informal recognition and accomplishments program for all faculty and staff – market information to college and/or university, special parking spot for a month, recognition at athletics events, etc.

• Enable better support of university decision-making at all levels through the collection, management, analysis, access, and communication of institutionally generated data by:
  o Implementing student analytics in Ellucian by Spring 2020;
  o Increasing utilization of dashboards; and
  o Surveying decision-makers annually to ensure data collection and access meets needs.

• Increase the university’s agility and innovation, making it better able to respond to changes in the higher education market by aligning staff and faculty with changing needs by:
  o Providing incentives for faculty to convert face-to-face courses to online, consistent with Quality Matters standards;
  o Ensuring that at least 25% of the classes have an online component (i.e., discussion question, way to turn in assignments, email professor, announcement listing, etc.);
  o Incentivizing faculty attendance at online competency training with Digital Learning via inclusion in annual evaluations;
  o Cross-training staff on administrative tasks within departments and colleges; and
  o Revising the faculty and staff merit raise systems to create incentives for excellence across the range of job duties (e.g., for faculty, primary assignment, scholarly/creative, and service; for staff, assigned duties.).
• Continue maintenance and growth of university infrastructure by:
  o Creating a deferred maintenance process and budget with an inventory;
  o Creating a deferred maintenance committee of those using facilities – faculty, staff, and students - with Facilities and Planning and Construction – annually visit certain buildings on a rotating schedule to assist with updates needed; and
  o Tracking and updating classrooms and labs technology to ensure they are refreshed every five years.

• Ensure access to effective infrastructure for synchronous and asynchronous teaching by:
  o Requiring all videos involved with online classes be closed-captioned within two years;
  o Allocating at least 1% of new building construction to accessibility needs; and
  o Creating a five-year plan to address accessibility impediments across campus and update annually.

Implementation and Accountability

Lamar University is committed to continuously monitoring the implementation of this strategic plan and to making appropriate revisions on a timely basis. To ensure continued alignment with Lamar University’s opportunities and ambitions, the Strategic Plan Advisory Council, a representative group of faculty, staff, and other stakeholders will gather in April and November each year to assess and report the extent to which implementation has been accomplished and propose any necessary revisions to the strategic plan.