

# FUTURE STATE

EXCELLENCE, INNOVATION, PROGRESS

*West Virginia State University's Strategic Plan*



**2023-2028**

*Future State is bold and innovative and drives a shared vision for our university that embraces the urgency of now while remaining true to who we are as a student-centered, doctoral land-grant university that is grounded in its heritage as an HBCU and focused on its future as an inclusive institution of higher learning with nationally recognized faculty, academic programs, and research that supports the emerging needs of students, industry, and the state of West Virginia.*

*Ericke S. Cage, J.D., LL.M.  
13th President of West Virginia State University*





## A LETTER FROM *the President*

Less than a year ago, we started the process to chart the pathway forward for West Virginia State University. Through the hard work and commitment of many individuals working together, we are writing the next chapter in the story of our great institution. I am pleased to present West Virginia State University's strategic plan, "Future State: Excellence, Innovation, Progress," our plan for the future.

More than 600 individuals including students, staff, faculty, administrators, alumni, community and business leaders engaged in listening sessions providing valuable feedback on areas of student engagement and success, academic excellence and innovation, the state of our University and financial sustainability. Taking a comprehensive look at all of these areas, a group of more than 50 individuals developed the five pillars for Future State that you will find in the pages ahead.

These pillars outline a comprehensive, inclusive and profound direction for Future State. Now our work truly begins. The implementation of this plan will require commitment and dedication from all members of the State community to address the broader initiatives identified in each of the pillars.

Future State is bold and innovative and drives a shared vision for our university that embraces the urgency of the now while remaining true to who we are as a student-centered, doctoral land-grant university that is grounded in its heritage as an HBCU and focused on its future as an inclusive institution of higher learning with nationally recognized faculty, academic programs, and research that supports the emerging needs of our students, the industry, and the state of West Virginia.

The future of West Virginia State University requires an ambitious strategic plan that will guide us in reaching our shared vision of moving our university forward today, tomorrow and long into the future.

Go State!

Ericke S. Cage, J.D., LL.M

President

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*West Virginia State University is committed to providing access, equal opportunity and reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities. To request disability accommodation, contact Michael Casey or email [ada@wvstateu.edu](mailto:ada@wvstateu.edu).*

## INTRODUCTION

As one of the original 1890 land-grant institutions, authorized by Congress, and designated by the state for the education of Black citizens, West Virginia State University (WVSU) remains grounded in its heritage as a Historically Black College/University (HBCU) focused on the future, and deeply committed to its tripartite mission of teaching, research, and service. This strategic plan, Future State, is grounded in the context of the University's history, the demands of the current world, and our vision for the future.

## OUR STORY

West Virginia State University (WVSU) has more than a century of proven excellence in preparing students to become strong leaders who develop creative solutions in response to emerging demands in business, government, and community organizations. With the longest continuous accreditation of any public university in West Virginia since 1927, the University offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs under four distinct colleges including the College of Arts and Humanities, College of Business and Social Sciences, College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, and College of Professional Studies. WVSU's location in central West Virginia (near the state capital and largest urban center) makes it an ideal choice for traditional age students, many of whom are the first in their families to attend college, and adults who are seeking to improve opportunities for themselves and their families. As new businesses invest in West Virginia, WVSU is committed to helping develop the educated workforce to meet emerging needs.

Future State will position WVSU to be a leader in an educational and economic landscape that is evolving rapidly. Success will require a shared commitment to our mission of advancing knowledge “through access and opportunity, innovative teaching and learning, interdisciplinary research, and impactful service.”

For 132 years, West Virginia State University has successfully met challenges and opportunities, finding success in an unwavering commitment to our mission. This is the time for WVSU to build upon our strong foundation, taking the innovative actions demanded of higher education's changing environment to become an institution that will drive excellence, innovation, and progress for our students, the region, and the nation.



## MISSION

West Virginia State University is a diverse, 1890 land-grant institution that advances knowledge through access and opportunity, innovative teaching and learning, interdisciplinary research, and impactful service. Our learners are equipped to meet the economic and social needs of the state, region, and nation, and contribute solutions to complex global challenges.

## VISION

West Virginia State University is a doctoral land-grant university, grounded in its HBCU heritage of inclusivity while focused on building nationally recognized programs that inspire student success and facilitate innovative research that drives West Virginia forward.

## CORE VALUES

***Student-centeredness*** — We put students first in everything we do.

***Inclusion*** — We create a climate where all can bring their whole and authentic selves.

***Excellence*** — We strive for a Gold Standard in all we do and say.

***Integrity*** — We commit to ethical behavior and full transparency with ourselves and our stakeholders.

***Accountability*** — We take responsibility for our actions individually and collectively.

***Creativity*** — We draw inspiration from collaborating with others and create space for curiosity and imagination.

***Resilience*** — We are agile, adapt to change, and rise above adversity.

## THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

West Virginia State University's 2023–2028 Strategic Plan, Future State, was developed through a transparent and inclusive process. In August of 2022, President Ericke S. Cage appointed a Strategic Plan Steering Committee that included representation from a broad group of stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, and business leaders. In addition, representatives from the Research & Development Corporation and the WVSU Foundation participated. In order to provide support throughout the planning process, the University engaged a consultant with the Higher Learning Commission.

One of the first actions of the Steering Committee was to review the University Mission, Vision, and Core Values adopted by the Board of Governors in 2021. The Mission and Core Values were affirmed, but it was decided the Vision should be updated to better reflect the future direction of WVSU.

Strategic planning was officially launched with a campus-wide listening session during the opening week activities of the fall 2022 semester. Members of the Steering Committee, along with faculty and staff, gathered to engage in initial fact-finding exercises, working to identify the current state of the University, the participants' aspirations for the University, and the challenges that the University must address in order to achieve those aspirations. Sixteen additional listening sessions were conducted over the course of the fall semester. Sessions were held on campus, off campus, and virtually to ensure wide stakeholder participation. In recognition that not all interested parties were able to attend one of the sessions, a survey was created that asked for the same information.

In addition to the listening sessions and survey open to everyone, input was sought from others who actively support and serve the University, including the Board of Visitors, the WVSU Foundation Board, the National Alumni Association Board, and each of the four colleges' Advisory Boards.

The information obtained from these activities was organized into five key areas, or Pillars, that became the basis for the strategic plan. In November of 2022, subcommittees were formed to develop objectives, tactics, metrics, and benchmarks for each Pillar. Subcommittee co-chairs and members were drawn from across campus as well as key stakeholder groups. This cross-unit model reflected a desire expressed throughout the listening sessions for the University to work collaboratively to improve the overall student experience. Subcommittees completed their work over a six-week time period and submitted their reports in January of 2023.

The Steering Committee further condensed the information to reflect student-focused objectives and sent it forward to the President's Cabinet and University's Board of Governors for further review and refinement. It was then posted on the university website for public comment and presented for approval by the Board of Governors on April 20, 2023.

At all times, the Mission, Vision, and Core Values were central to the process. The final document reflects the importance of student success; the role of academic excellence in teaching and research; a commitment to financial sustainability; the overarching impact of operational excellence; and the significant contributions WVSU makes to the region, state, and nation.



## IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

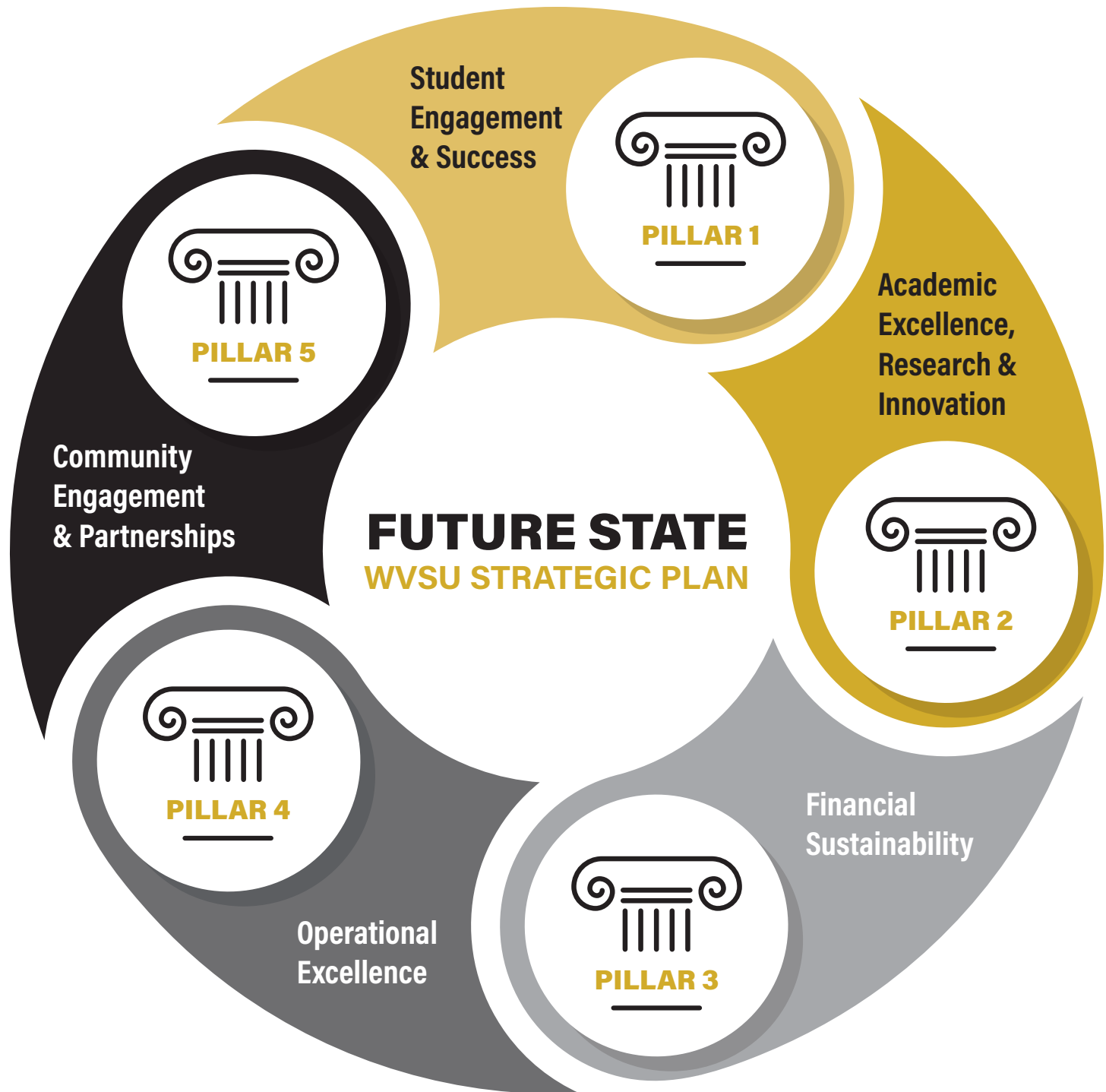
With approval of the strategic plan, implementation has begun. As part of the integrated planning process, each unit within the University will create their plans, and university-wide work teams will address broader initiatives identified in each of the Pillars. The subcommittee reports will be rich source documents for units and teams as they develop their plans. All tactics in these plans will align with objectives identified in the University Strategic Plan and will define the key performance indicators through which progress will be measured.

Through the integrated planning process, each member of the University workforce will see how their work supports student success and how they are an integral part of moving the University to its Future State. Each unit will provide periodic reports to monitor their impact, and progress on the University Strategic Plan will be published at least annually. The plan will be modified to reflect emerging challenges and opportunities.





**OUR PLAN**





## Student Engagement and Success

Deliver a recruitment, retention and graduation plan that reflects the realities of the current higher education landscape.

An effective approach to student success goes beyond academic programs to encompass engaging student life, recruitment of students well-served by offerings, and support services to retain and graduate all students. WVSU is expanding our outreach, tracking enrollment of prospective students while continuing to invest in initiatives that support and promote underserved and underrepresented groups. We emphasize the student experience through growth and engagement opportunities beyond the classroom to increase student retention and graduation rates. WVSU will grow its enrollment by providing opportunities for college access by conveying the value of higher education to prospective students, families, local communities and other stakeholders.



## OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 Recruit diverse student populations focused on academic programs that meet the economic and social needs of our state, region and nation.
- 1.2 Increase retention and graduation rates.
- 1.3 Deliver exemplary student services and engaging programming from enrollment through graduation.
- 1.4 Leverage our competitive athletic program to enhance student life and raise our national profile.
- 1.5 Cultivate a robust co-curricular experience to prepare students to be leaders.



## **Academic Excellence, Research and Innovation**

Offer robust, nationally-recognized academic programs that reflect student interests and workforce needs.

A university must be built on a firm foundation of academic excellence. WVSU offers enriching curricula in wide-ranging academic disciplines, allowing students to develop skills that meet the demands of our time. WVSU promotes outstanding teaching, research, and service by supporting faculty and student research and creative activities across campus. The university strives to make its programs responsive to the emerging needs of our students, helping them to forge a path in the changing social and economic landscape. WVSU will increase its national recognition and expand its reach, enhancing student opportunities through doctoral education, experiential learning, and the establishment of a school of agriculture.



## OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 Maintain strong academic degree programs responsive to the emerging needs of our students, industry, state, and nation, incorporating student research, internships and experiential learning.
- 2.2 Become a doctoral granting institution.
- 2.3 Establish a school of agriculture, food, and natural resources and degree programs.
- 2.4 Expand national recognition for academic excellence.
- 2.5 Support and recognize teaching excellence across all methods of delivery.
- 2.6 Position WVSU as a place that supports thought leaders in the areas of research, creativity, and scholarly activities.





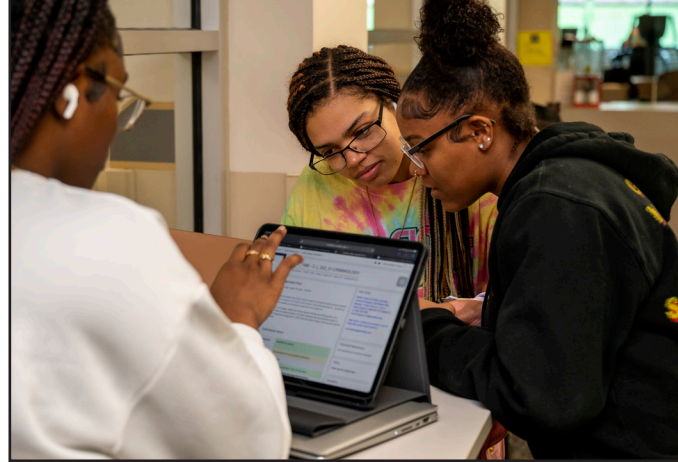
## **PILLAR 3**

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# **Financial Sustainability**

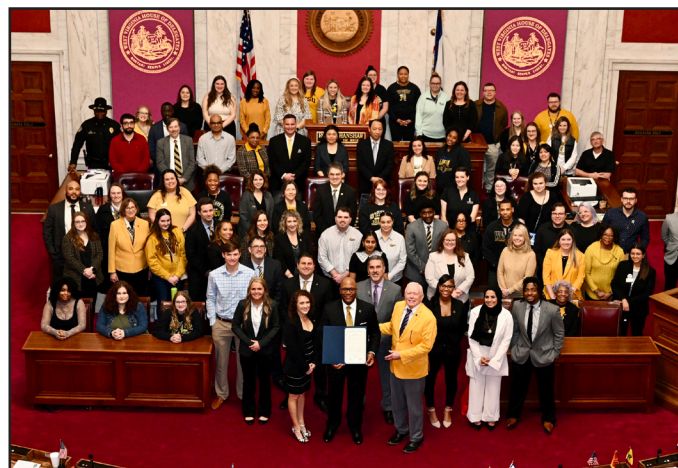
Support long-term growth and sustainability by effectively managing university resources and expanding funding from diverse revenue streams.

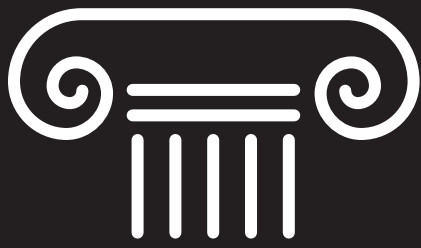
A firm financial foundation is crucial to the university's capacity to fulfill its mission in the dynamic, competitive higher education landscape. WVSU is maximizing state revenue by exceeding the Higher Education Policy Commission's funding formula standards and stewarding resources from all funding sources to benefit students and programs. We develop and maintain campus facilities to provide the highest level of support for current operations and prepare for future growth. We will increase funding from diverse sources and launch a capital campaign to support key strategic initiatives.



## OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 Align budgeting, planning, and business processes to ensure strong financial health.
- 3.2 Ensure the fullest allocation from the state funding model through collaboration between Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and Business and Finance.
- 3.3 Increase philanthropic support of university students and programs through major gifts, planned giving, and annual giving.
- 3.4 Conduct a capital campaign to fund institutional priorities.
- 3.5 Increase revenue through campus facilities, business operations, and business enterprise opportunities.
- 3.6 Expand grant funding to support all areas of the University.
- 3.7 Optimize development, maintenance, and use of campus physical facilities to provide the highest level of support to students, employees, and the communities we serve.





## **PILLAR 4**

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# **Operational Excellence**

Manage university operations, infrastructure, and business with transparency, integrity, and professionalism to support its mission.



Operating effectively in a rapidly changing landscape is essential to the overall success of a university. WVSU is committed to providing efficient services that promote student success. A strong, diverse, accountable workforce, supported from the recruitment and selection phase to retirement, will enable WVSU to achieve its full potential. Today's data-driven environment requires that all employees have access to appropriate technology and software to deliver operational excellence and meaningful academic instruction. WVSU provides safe and relevant physical and virtual spaces that accommodate the needs of a diverse campus community.



## OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 Recruit, onboard, develop, evaluate, and recognize our highly-qualified workforce to support excellence in all facets of the University's operations.
- 4.2 Update policies and procedures to align with the strategic plan.
- 4.3 Maintain a policies, procedures, and compliance library to ensure University operations are conducted in a transparent, ethical, and accountable manner.
- 4.4 Develop an IT Master Plan to support WVSU's digital transformation.
- 4.5 Maintain a safe and secure campus infrastructure to support an inclusive learning, living, and work environment.





## **PILLAR 5**

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# **Community Engagement and Partnerships**

Strengthen the University's impact through effective communication and engagement of stakeholders and community partners.

Land-grant universities have always played a positive and visible role in the communities they serve. Effective communication and engagement of stakeholders and community partners are integral to this mission. WVSU is continuing to grow its significant role and impact in economic development for West Virginia, our region, and beyond. Strategic communication of our story helps us to increase and strengthen partnerships to benefit students, the institution, and the broader community. Thriving outreach programs, dispersed throughout the state, will allow us to better engage all members of our community, both on campus and across the nation.



## OBJECTIVES

- 5.1 Effectively tell our story to local, regional, and national audiences through integrated strategic marketing and communication.
- 5.2 Support the economic development of the state and region through effective outreach programs.
- 5.3 Increase and enhance strategic partnerships to benefit students, increase revenue, and support partner goals.
- 5.4 Engage students, alumni, friends, board members, parents, and volunteers as WVSU ambassadors.
- 5.5 Effectively manage campus events and activities to position WVSU as a premier convening space.

## STRATEGIC PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Clinton Arnold	Dr. Sami Ghareeb	Patricia Schumann, <i>Co-chair</i>
Jack Bailey	Derrick Grant	Roy Simmons
Dr. Jessica Barnes-Pietruszynski	Trey Jones	Dr. Ami Smith
Nate Burton	Dr. Elisha Lewis	Dr. Stacey Sowell
President Ericke Cage	Justin McAllister	Dr. Kerri Steele, <i>Administrative Lead</i>
Dr. Paige Carney	Micah Peggs	Dr. Rob Wallace
Dr. Sean Collins	Dr. Michael Pennington	Deborah Williams, <i>Co-chair</i>
Susan Compton, <i>Administrative Support</i>	Gail Pitchford	Dr. Naveed Zaman
Dr. Leighann Davidson	Maryam Rawash	

## STRATEGIC PLAN STEERING SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS

### ***Pillar 1***

Co-chairs: Dr. Elisha Lewis & Nate Burton

Members: Dr. Stacey Sowell, Dr. Sean Collins, Dr. Jessica Barnes-Pietruszynski, Lindsey Good, Rebekah Redman, Jaleesa Nunez, Cedric Caschetta, Krystal Tolliver, Lahini Wickramsinghe, Billy Lipscomb, Tanesha Weaver, Sue Woodward, Dr. Barbara Liedl, Michael Casey, Derrien Williams, Law Hinamon, Dr. Archit Agarwal, Dr. Kerri Steele, Katie Bentley, Belinda Fuller, Gail Pitchford, Dr. Rob Wallace

### ***Pillar 2***

Co-chairs: Dr. Naveed Zaman & Dr. Leighann Davidson

Members: Dr. Barbara Ladner, Mekhia Day, Dr. Ed Lomax, Dr. Micheal Fultz, Dr. Azam Bejou, Ryleigh Clayborn, Terri Frye, Dr. Sam Bandara, Dr. Eyas Mahmoud, Dr. Anne McConnell, Dr. Paige Carney, Dr. Kerri Steele, Maryam Raywash, Dr. Archit Agarwal, Dr. Rob Wallace

### ***Pillar 3***

Co-Chairs: Justin McAllister & Dr. Ami Smith

Members: Pat Schumann, Dr. Sami Ghareeb, Kim Duff, Gail Pitchford, Amy Postalwait, Dr. Sanjaya, Michael McClung, Debbie Williams, Eric Jackson, Jodi Johnston, Matt Coleman, Samantha Groom, Trey Jones, David Hayes, Dr. Naveed Zaman, Nate Burton, Dr. Archit Agarwal, Dr. Rob Wallace

### ***Pillar 4***

Co-chairs: Clinton Arnold & Roy Simmons

Members: Matt Wood, Justin McAllister, Hope Fout, Zimren Dixon, Micah Peggs, Sydney Prince, Dr. Chris Jackson, Carmen Watkins, Dr. Michael Young, Kellie Toledo, Dan Brown, Krystal Smith, Sean McAndrews, Dena (Michele) Godby, Dr. Carolyn Stuart, Dr. Naveed Zaman, Debbie Williams, Dr. Archit Agarwal, Dr. Stacey Sowell, Dr. Rob Wallace

### ***Pillar 5***

Co-chairs: Trey Jones & Jack Bailey

Members: Maryam Rawash, Katie Bentley, Belinda Fuller, Quintin Joseph, Dr. Michael Young, Derrick Grant, Josh Martin, Mark Akers, Chris Price, Hannah Payne, Adam Hodges, Mark Fuller, Dr. Jasmine Porter, Lena Lambert, Dr. Mary Sizemore, Clinton Arnold, Justin McAllister, Dr. Paige Carney, Dr. Elisha Lewis, Pat Schumann, Dr. Archit Agarwal, Nate Burton, Crystal Walker, Dr. Rob Wallace

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Keyira Curtis  
Lee Greenhowe  
Ian Flores

Charles E. Jones  
Tracy McKibben  
James Payne  
Dr. Jeffrey Pietruszynski  
Lester Raines  
Dr. Lateef Saffore

## PRESIDENT'S CABINET

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Dr. J. Paige Carney  
*Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs*  
Eric L. Jackson  
*Vice President and Chief of Staff*  
Justin McAllister  
*Senior Vice President for Strategic Finance,  
Operations and Chief Innovation Officer*

Dr. Stacey Sowell  
*Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs*  
Patricia Schumann  
*Vice President for University Advancement*  
Dr. Ami Smith  
*Vice President and Dean and Director for Agricultural Research  
and Extension*  
Nate Burton  
*Director for Intercollegiate Athletics*  
Alice Faucett  
*General Counsel*



# ASPIRATIONS

1. West Virginia State University will continue to grow our student body and maximize retention rates by setting clear goals and objectives, implementing strategies to reach these goals, and measuring progress annually.
2. West Virginia State University will launch its first doctoral program in 2024.
3. West Virginia State University will achieve full reaffirmation of accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission by 2026.
4. West Virginia State University will engage in academic programming, research endeavors, and student engagement that supports the optimal allocation of funds under the variable state appropriations model.
5. West Virginia State University will maintain a Composite Financial Index Score that is indicative of a strong financial position and allows for resources to be directed toward transformation.
6. West Virginia State University will achieve sustained growth in total revenue through strategic investments and innovative collaborations.







WEST VIRGINIA STATE  
UNIVERSITY