LEIGHTON UNIVERSITY

University Strategic Plan

Building Leighton From The Ground Up!

TABLE OF CONTENT

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We extend our most sincere thanks to the many "*Friend of Leighton University*" across the country. We thank the many stakeholders among our professional community, academics, business community members, and the Board of Trustees whose efforts and counsel made the development of living documents possible. We extend our sincere appreciation to many individuals and groups who faithfully and tirelessly extended their professional services toward conceptualizing ideas for our first formal Strategic Plan. Their unfailing commitment to this project and the University's mission deserved tonnes of thank you! This collaborative effort will close the gap between intentions and outcomes and connect individuals from diverse professional backgrounds and life experiences to a genuinely inclusive cause. Your labor and support offer Leighton University the opportunity to join both State and private Mississippi institutions to provide access to high-quality education to citizens of Mississippi.

Through growing and strengthening partnerships, the Leighton University community will have complex connections - many being common, others being uncommon, some unexpected, all spanning multiple layers and dimensions, as well as critical intersections; we will continue to build. Leighton from the ground up! We will pay close attention to keeping all those connections strong. We are unconditionally committed to services that will make a difference in the lives of the citizens of Mississippi. We will remain unwavering in our resolve and commitment to both traditional and nontraditional students.

Our projected vibrancy and vitality will be derived directly from our faculty, staff, and students' breadth of talent, training, and professional development for all of the university's constituencies. We will stay strong and effective through the shared excitement of discovery, learning rewards, defining vision, and the collective satisfaction of having a meaningful impact in the broader world. Each of the fourteen University's Strategic Priorities, and their associated goals and actions, will be reviewed annually and updated with current performance metrics.

November 18, 2021

Dear Friends and Leighton Family,

A Strategic Plan is a roadmap to set the direction for the future guide our decision-making processes and resource allocation, enabling an excellent and sustainable quality of life.

As we enter our inaugural year, opening the doors for our students, faculty, staff, and the community, the entire University community, will work in concert to fulfill Leighton's promise of inclusive excellence, accessibility, student-centered, a quality higher education to Mississippi, the nation, and the world, by implementing our maiden Strategic Plan in following pages.

The Plan, which will cover three years from fiscal years 2022 through 2025, will underscore and strengthen our fundamental commitment to access quality education for all. As we birth Leighton University and our future, we will seek to foster relationships and build in us a community that fully embraces and lives its promise. Our success will be a measure of what we project to bring that will extend our vision for access to opportunities, equity, and inclusion; these being an irrefutable pledge and focus to keeping students at the very center of our work and decision-making; financial sustainability based on a model of innovative growth; and, finally and importantly, a collective commitment to working together as in a manner that recognizes our common purpose and mission.

To our community and friends, I encourage you to familiarize yourself with this webpage to learn more about the process and meet our Steering Committee composed of a diverse group of individuals representing the current size of our University, our community, and our friends. Furthermore, please often return to remain informed of our progress!

I appreciate your interest and support in joining us in *Building Leighton from the Ground Up!* and sharing our enthusiasm for the future of education for the Mississippians.

James P. Takona, PhD
Chancellor

INTRODUCTION

The small Strategic Planning Team formally met for the first time on October 27, 2020. At the same time, the Team took an *"ad hoc"* body to a large extent as we repositioned ourselves, most having the advantage to invite talent and expertise into the development process. Our goals and intentions were unified by the zeal we had amongst us "*to build Leighton from the ground up*" and *"build the University in our way."* An early task of the Team was to examine, review, and position the spirit of the University's mission, vision statements, and the approved core values as these components to remain as a pillar foundation that guided for everything we did and will do. The development of the institutional goals for the Strategic Plan and tactics took multiple itineration and stages: data collection, analysis, selection, and consensus. Therefore, these components drove the nature of activities and direction of the Strategic Plan. Through a comprehensive analysis of environmental data and the current embryonic position of the Institution, Leighton thus identified 14 Strategic Priorities of our 2022-2025 Strategic Priorities. The Plan embodies a clear statement about Leighton, *"who we are,"* and *"what impact we project"* as we develop a fully online university in the ever-changing landscapes and trends in higher education and our regional economy.

UNIVERSITY'S MISSION STATEMENT

Focus on meeting students where they are through accessible, student-centered, quality higher education that blends the liberal arts with career-focused degree programs that are marked by individualized attention, civility, and respect for differences within a supportive space where students take ownership of their learning and are motivated to succeed in an environment that promotes inclusive *Excellence.*

OUR VISION STATEMENT

To fulfill its mission, the University strives for quality, innovation, and continuous improvement as it pursues the following goals:

- Promote inclusive Excellence

- Enhance the academic quality and competitiveness of the University.

- Improve teaching and learning.

- Strengthen scholarly research and creative achievement.

- Support and sustain student development and quality of life.

- Broaden global perspectives.

- Advance the University through select, strategic alliances.

OUR CORE VALUES

The institutional core values guide the University's commitment and aspirations to promote student learning and success, faculty scholarship and research, and community engagement. The following seven values what the University stands for and are, therefore, of intrinsic value expressed in its ethos and fundamental commitments:

Academic Excellence: We are a community that pursues Excellence in the academy whose commitment is invested in teaching, learning, and professional preparation to serve the local, national, and international communities. We treasure the institutional autonomy and integrity necessary to uphold the highest intellectual inquiry and academic freedom standards.

Student Success: We are a community that strives to nurture students for success in their academic journey, graduate promptly, and fully realize their academic potential as they benefit from their unsurpassed education and preparation rigor.

Acts of Integrity: We are a community that strives to engage in honest communications, fairness, ethical manners, and accountability for words and deeds in all University activities and decision-making.

Commitment to Inclusivity: We are a community that embraces inclusive Excellence where all individuals' unique attributes and contributions are valued to enhance the richness of our academic environment regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, political beliefs, spiritual perspectives or other ideologies.

Immersion in Innovation: We are a community that dedicates its stakeholder to discovering and applying knowledge in teaching and learning and developing innovative products and processes to form collaboration across disciplines to stimulate and create positive transformation through teaching, research, and service.

Value of Added Engagement: We are a community that encourages and supports its faculty, staff, and students in all forms of scholarship, including discovering and expanding knowledge and truth.

Power of Technology: We are a community that values the enduring power of technology and information systems and the resources entrusted to our care. With vigilance, we will maintain the integrity of these critical assets.

Guided by its mission, vision, and core values, Leighton University is committed to the belief that everyone should be given an accessible, high-quality educational opportunity to acquire, develop and extend his or her innate abilities for successful careers, be responsible citizenship, and be a lifelong learner to contribute and compete, with confidence, in a diverse and global community.

We commit ourselves to provide access to all higher education, respecting differences, and the practice of equity at every level of our infrastructure. The University embraces persons of all backgrounds, defined by, but not limited to, ethnicity, culture, race, gender, class, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, physical ability, learning differences, and political perspectives. As an institution of higher learning, our core values are strengthened when all its members have a voice and representation.

STRATEGIC PLANNING DRIVES DECISIONS

The Strategic Planning process has been in development for several months, and significant progress has been made in preparation for FY 2022 – FY 2025. The planning process, for various components, integrates strategic environmental scanning, goals, and target setting, establishing budgets, and developing action plans - all within the scope of Leighton mission, vision, values, and critical focus areas that include Academic & Student Success, Recruitment and Retention, Financial Viability, Operational Initiatives, Visibility, Strategic Alliances, Excellence, and Workforce Identification and Development. Success and decisions are anchored and associated with these areas. The development of the institutional goals and strategies took several iterations. These include data collection, analysis, selection, and consensus. The Strategic Plan for the University is a living, breathing document that should take a central position among our people. It remains subject to ongoing and regular reviews and revisions to meet the Institutional need of fulfilling its mission and purpose.

Further, the Strategic Plan will guide this infant institution to develop mission-focused programs and initiatives. As such, it will not merely remain as a list of goals and unattended aspirations and rather will exist as a blueprint for a thoughtful and purposeful way to identify our true aspirations and plans for achieving them.

CHALLENGE AND CHANGE

To maintain high-quality academic programs and services and to continue meeting the needs of the Mississippi citizens, Leighton must confront the challenges of rising costs, evolving educational methodologies, and changing economy. Recognizing the nuances of these challenges, Leighton is faced with three significant issues associated with financial resources: the Institution functions in a volatile fiscal environment; it meets the natural financial outlay typical to any new institution; and lastly, the Institution will indeed face increased demand for services, and it will definitely face a more significant direction relative to operational costs and thus a need for higher accountability and stewardship.

Our goal is to serve the people of Mississippi, strive and consider the development of support programs to increase student retention needs, and increase, at a higher level, the number of degree completers in the State of Mississippi. We will be better positioned to increase our program offerings at undergraduate and graduate programs through efforts to attract and build partnership relationships, better internal collaborations, allocation and reallocation of our assets, and careful planning.

OUR FOCUS

How can we develop new academic programs in various disciples that expand the impact of experiential learning and calibrate as often as necessary to enable students to earn more credit toward graduation from experiential learning activities?

How can we increase opportunities for students to engage in faculty-supervised research and projects, creative work, internships, civic involvement, and other beyond-the-course learning experiences and encourage and enable all students to participate?

How can we increase the breadth and depth of available options to give students multiple and better learning pathways and find better means of assessing and measuring the students' learning outcomes?

How can we expose more students to the extraordinary talents of our faculty by, for example, offering signature courses across different majors and developing courses for undergraduate students in our professional schools?

How can we leverage advanced communication infrastructure and information technology to improve access to learning experiences of all sorts and to foster innovation?

Answers to these questions help shape our Strategic Plan that addresses the needs, priorities, wishes, and desires of a strong institution that aspires to meet its mission. This strategic Plan builds on Leighton's current strengths. We have based our Strategic Plan on the foundations of teaching and learning, building a community of learners, understanding globalization, and the need for higher education institutions to connect deeply with the environment in which they are situated. We must ensure that Leighton and its programs are positioned appropriately and adequately supported to reach that realization. As an emerging institution, it must critically assess its strengths and weaknesses and have the courage to make the difficult decision that will allow it to thrive and provide the high-quality education it aspired to provide. Our students must enter a higher education environment that is ready, receptive, exciting, challenging, seamless, well-organized, and academically-rigorous.

In response to these questions knowing the ever-present challenges in high education, we refocus our energies and resource toward the most pressing issues we are distinctively positioned to address. The Plan's structure encourages multidimensional approaches to achieve meaningful goals in four areas critical to the University's future. To make a tremendous difference, Leighton University remains unapologetically persistent and focused on the Strategic Priorities above all else. Our Plan focuses on 14 major Strategic Priorities that are interrelated. Each of these priorities was defined with input from stakeholders and greater communities. These Priorities must serve as guiding intentions at the center of every decision the University makes and every intentional action it takes. More

than ever before, we will integrate student learning with experiences in the world beyond the textbook. Learning by experiential placement is a cornerstone of Leighton's undergraduate education. Whether producing a live TV broadcast or creating a business plan for an Internet start-up, the opportunity to put classroom coursework and academic theory into practice solidifies the learning experience.

Extending the academic experience beyond the classroom for students to derive maximum value from their few years at Leighton, we must ensure a continuum of intellectual growth and personal development that extends well beyond a sequence of classroom courses, academic quarters, and short periods of vacations. Students learn most when they apply knowledge to life, and they derive significant value from academic activities beyond the classroom. The flexibility of our quarter system, our vast array of curricular options, the low barriers for cross-school course enrollment, and our faculty's enthusiasm for teaching beyond their primary departments and schools make all this possible. This Plan offers a framework for emphasizing learning by doing and broadening our students' academic perspectives. It challenges us to integrate seamlessly academic innovation, experiential learning, career advising and development, and cross-disciplinary course work to achieve a more complete and unified learning experience.

SETTING THE STAGE: SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

What are the University's Internal Strengths?

- Our people and our shared focus on student success
- A strong desire to serve nontraditional learners that remains as an underserved community
- An emerging and projected strong partnership within Mississippi and beyond
- A non-profit, non-affiliated tax-exempt institution
- Domicile is the State's third-largest city in Mississippi, located in the metropolitan area of a large city that offers proximity to local and State leaders and corporate business leaders.
- Located within reach of State's major cities with key student recruitment audiences.
- Affordability in comparison with other distance education institutions.

Weaknesses

What are the University's Weaknesses?

- The Institution's unaccredited status during the projected timeline of year one through year five
- No authorization for Title IV financial aid funds year one through year six pending regional accreditation.
- Lack of baseline data to benchmark in a majority of areas.
- The infancy of the Institution
- An untested brand, strategic marketing, and communication strategies
- Minimal resources for facilities, including space to accommodate growth beyond the first 5-7 years
- All recently hired faculty and staff
- Leighton-trained recruitment and retention of staff
- Minimal financial aid/scholarship support for need and merit-based students.

Opportunities

What are the University's Opportunities?

- Growing public interest in educational values and transparent cost of attendance
- Location in a metro area and along the growing I-55 corridor
- Pro-active partnerships with other universities, agencies, and corporations
- Powerful mission statement
- Reach to nontraditional markets, including baccalaureate completion among nontraditional students
- Access to quality and affordable degree programs
- Enduring interest in partnerships and engagement relationships within and outside our communities.
- Faculty involvement with students.
- Diverse student body.
- Partnerships' support of university initiatives
- Interest in academic program expansion to meet Mississippi's job markets.
- Increased demand for mid-career redirections and life-long learning
- The growing number of online learners triggered by the onset of Covid-19 by offering more digital learning objects and increased access to librarians via chat, web conferencing, and the online learning management system (LMS).

Threats

What are the University's Threats?

- Regional online competition for students.
- The Mississippi's ever-decreasing family buying power and high rate of unmet financial needs.
- Lack of a recognized brand identity
- Fiscal uncertainty.
- Higher education's current role in society is less valued while expectations rise.
- The absence of "automatic" pride power of the internal and immediate community(absence of visible and traditional student life).
- Stagnant state and corporate investments in higher education.
- Possible student academic unpreparedness at entry
- Competing institutional pressures of growth
- Negative public perception for online predatory private institutions

Strategic Priority 1: Student Learning & Experiences

The goal is to provide students the best opportunity for success through solid and committed teaching and foster a learning environment that connects necessary academic resources, and student support services at the University

SP1.1: Optimize Student Experiences

Without losing sight of the Institution's vision, admit quality students and provide learning experiences and engagement opportunities to prepare them to reach success and build future career excellence.

SP1.2: Experiential Learning

Without losing sight of the Institution's vision, admit quality students and provide learning experiences and engagement opportunities to prepare them to reach success and build future career excellence.

SP1.3: Assessing Student Learning

Investing in the programs, people, and spaces leads to student learning. Advancing transformative and integrative student learning experiences.

SP1.1a - Engage students in shaping effective and intuitive online courses and programs by soliciting their ideas and ensuring their awareness and access to available services that support online student success.

SP1.1b - Evaluate current systems, policies, and processes to identify opportunities to best optimize university resources by eliminating duplications and unnecessary redundancies and by increasing automation and system functionality.

SP1.1c - Track and document student use of University support systems (Counseling & Advocacy Service, Accessibility Services, Academic Success Center, etc.).

SP1.2a - Ensure all students access the technology and learning tools necessary for their academic pursuit and success.

SP1.2b - Adopt the institutional learning outcomes associated with the CORE Program and use the assessment and product to guide continuous program improvement.

SP1.2c - Develop a one-stop Academic Success Center to improve student academic support services delivery.

SP1.3a - Develop and integrate career preparation opportunities to include internships, civic engagement, and other engagements that build the skills in the student that are necessary to secure gainful employment in a competitive marketplace.

SP1.4b – Design and implement a systematic review of student learning relative to institutional Learning Outcomes [CORE/Major area] and knowledge gained for continuous improvement.

SP1.3c - Assess student learning in the CORE Program, using the knowledge gained for continuous improvement.

SP1.2e – Encourage and engage students in experiential learning opportunities through co-curricular engagement, work-integrated learning, entrepreneurship, and community-engaged learning that prepare them for future professional, academic, and work endeavors.

SP1.2d - Allocate permanent budget outlays to support initiatives that promote retention and student success.

SP1.3d - Develop a plan to systematically take an inventory of general education goals addressed by each course, level of emphasis for objectives, and methods used to assess student learning.

SP1.3d - Ensure that student support programs are systematically, equitably, and efficiently offered.

Strategic Priority 2: Strategic Enrollment Management

Establish and Implement a strategic enrollment management expertise that expands the Institution's reach in building retention and degree attainment.

SP2.1: **Optimize Retention**

Develop a retention plan that reflects national trends and best practices for student engagement and success.

SP2.2: **Optimize Degree Attainment**

Enhance our University processes to Recruit and enroll 100 percent of the students admitted.

SP2.1a - Design and implement an innovative academic advising model.

SP2.1c - Set institutional rates for retention, consistent with the Carnegie classification of institutions and their missions.

SP2.1e - Develop a plan that defines, achieves, and maintains optimal enrollment with short and long-term modalities.

SP2.1g - Develop benchmarks with associated targets to be met or exceeded.

SP2.1b - Seek external funding to assist low-income traditional and nontraditional learners specifically.

SP2.1d - Develop a plan that defines, achieves, and maintains optimal enrollment with short and long-term modalities.

SP2.1f - Initiate developing and adopting a university-wide retention plan and continuously assess progress towards retention plan goals.

SP2.1h - Provide academic experiences to prepare students for success in their chosen field of study.

SP2.2a - Create a more clearly defined process for prospective students to get credit and information about prior learning

SP2.2b - Develop procedures to ensure students declare a major no later than their sophomore year or participate in career exploration.

SP2.2c - Develop an interactive web publication of the catalog to provide students and Leighton's personnel with an effective and efficient reference tool to navigate options toward program completion.

SP2.2d - Optimize academic program offerings during summer months to assist undergraduate students in timely degree completion, remain competitive with peers, and generate modest additional revenue.

SP2.1i - Establish an administrative office wholly charged to oversee enrollment management.

SP2.1k - Recruit strategically to attract and retain highly skilled and diverse candidates to more efficiently serve the needs of students

SP2.1m - Develop and enhance applied and experiential student learning opportunities.

SP2.1j - Develop continued expertise and deployment of strategic enrollment management.

SP2.1l - Develop and implement procedures to conduct a comprehensive academic progress evaluation of students with 50+ degree-earning credits to assess whether they are on track and have a clear path to completing their program.

SP2.2e - Develop, staff, and provide academic support services, which leads students to complete a degree program successfully.

SP2.2f - Deliver sustained professional development and support for students with documented needs staff.

"If strategic planning in higher education is designed carefully, it creates a space for collaborative implementation and becomes the glue that holds the internationalization process together. In other words, it can act to strengthen the culture and enable the university to become the Institution it wants to be."

Fiona Hunter, Higher Education Consultant, and EAIE Past President

Strategic Priority 3: Measured Recruitment Strategies

Leighton's academic programs will be available to all who qualify academically by implementing recruitment strategies that attract an outstanding and diverse student body.

SP 3.1: Design Marketing Tools

Design and develop a marketing campaign that showcases a robust offering of educational experiences for nontraditional/diverse undergraduate applicant pool

SP 3.2: Recruit Non-Traditional Students

Expand recruitment efforts beyond the traditional entering freshman population to include nontraditional students.

SP 3.3: Target Transfers Students

Prospective students are often easily identifiable, but potential transfer students are more elusive. Recruiting and enrolling nontraditional students

---

SP3.1a - Develop and continue refining and implementing a recruitment plan designed to address access, quality, and quantity of enrolled students.

SP3.1b - Develop and implement a comprehensive and coordinated strategy for communicating with prospective students and high school counselors.

SP3.1c - Identify and hire a firm to develop and present a proposal for a multi-pronged advertising and marketing approach that will increase audience share and market penetration and increase recruitment, retention, and development efforts.

SP3.2a - Expand recruitment efforts beyond the traditional entering freshman population to include nontraditional students.

SP3.2b - Develop baseline data to illustrate Leightons's recruitment/retention funnel to gauge and learn more effective stratagems for improving conversion from applicant to student.

SP3.2c - Develop and implement sound follow-up communication activities planned to encourage students' progress through each step of the pre-enrollment process – admission, testing, advisement, registration, payment, and enrollment.

SP3.3a - Develop a comprehensive transfer recruitment plan detailing communication and engagement strategies designed to increase the enrollment of transfer students.

SP3.3b - Create digital marketing tools with target capabilities to potential transfer st students and load them with a message in front of the right students.

SP3.3c - Develop a historical profile of transfer students based on age, gender, geography, previous school, number of transfer credits, the first term of attendance

SP3.1d - Establish partnerships with community colleges within the State and adapt transfer-friendly practices, strategies, and policies to promote growth in general student enrollment.

SP3.2d - Develop content for use across multiple channels that promote academic programs;

SP3.3d - Expand recruitment efforts beyond the traditional entering freshman population to include transfers students other nontraditional students.

Strategic Priority 4: Talent Acquisition and Retention

Maximize efforts to attract, engage, and retain the most talented and diverse workforce through targeted recruitment of the right talent, developing the best performers while ensuring an exceptional employee experience for everyone.

SP4.1: Recruit Qualified Faculty

Create a wide-ranging faculty hiring and development plan that analyzes the current and future needs of the university and hires qualified and effective faculty capable of carrying out Leighton University's mission and ensuring the integrity of its academic programs.

SP4.2: Develop and Retain Faculty

Develop and retain faculty by providing sufficient resources to support dynamic and up-to-date associate, bachelor, and master-level curricula, conduct research and other professional activities, and support engagement with all stakeholders.

SP4.3: Program Strengths

Increase the number of faculty members from year to year with an intentional focus on building disciplinary strength and significance, advancing interdisciplinary discovery and innovation, and elevating the importance of student-centered support goals.

SP4.1a - Evaluate position vacancies based on needs to ensure qualified faculty are hired to meet the program's requirements adequately.

SP4.1b - Pursue and Recruit qualified, effective faculty members who demonstrate the ability and commitment to carry out Leighton's mission and ensure its academic program's quality and integrity.

SP4.1c - Recruit and support a high-quality and well-supported faculty across programs, with strong faculty development programs to enhance faculty's ability to contribute to academic programs and

SP4.2a - Deliver initial onboarding training and activities to faculty that include Leighton's mission, an emerging model, and student learning.

SP4.2b - Attract, recruit, hire and retain quality employees at all levels of the University that reflect the diverse composition of our students and communities serve.

SP4.2c - Increase the number of full-time faculty members from year to year with an intentional focus on building disciplinary strength and significance, advancing interdisciplinary

SP4.3a - Develop and implement university-level retention plans that include student needs and short-, mid-, and long-range strategies to increase student retention and success.

SP4.3b - Establish institutional and individual performance measures to ensure prudent stewardship and support public accountability.

SP4.3c - Support the establishment of cluster hires of faculty who will bring diverse expertise to interdisciplinary initiatives, allowing rapid ramp-up in areas of strategic importance.

research excellence while providing appropriate support staff levels.

SP4.1d - Ensure that appropriate emphasis is placed on academic excellence and making proactive efforts to hire faculty dedicated to and thinking about teaching and mentoring.

SP4.1e - Deliver initial onboarding training and activities to faculty that include Leighton's mission, an emerging model, and student learning

discovery and innovation, and elevating the importance of student-centered support goals.

SP4.2d - Create an institutional diversity plan that develops and implements comprehensive initiatives to promote access, diversity, intercultural competence, equity, inclusiveness, and mutual respect for all Institution community members

SP4.2e - Deliver initial onboarding training and activities to faculty that include Leighton's mission, an emerging model, and student learning

SP4.3d - Implement a candidate experience survey to optimize our recruiting strategy and continuously improve our candidate experience.

SP4.3e - Support the establishment of cluster hires of faculty who will bring diverse expertise to interdisciplinary initiatives, allowing rapid ramp-up in areas of strategic importance.

Strategic Priority 5: Strengthening the Academic Culture

Provide high-quality programs that are responsive to students and market needs, recognized nationally and internationally for excellence, and effectively utilize distance-education delivery modality.

SP5.1: Enhancing Faculty Growth

Encourage and enhance faculty growth and Excellence through scholarship and professional development.

SP5.2: Engaging Students for the Future

Ensure a welcoming, engaging, diverse, and inclusive learning environment and commitment to serve our students and prepare them to contribute to the future.

SP5.3: Expanding Program Offering

Strategically add new programs to degree offerings that complement and augment the existing curriculum.

SP5.1a - Optimize internal and external support to promote teaching and learning activities, service, research, strategic innovation, and other scholarly works.

SP5.1b - Identify methods to integrate inclusion efforts into faculty professional development activities, emphasizing the inclusive pedagogy to support our nontraditional students.

SP5.1c - Establish faculty development opportunities and resources in effective pedagogical strategies, advising, educating diverse populations, mentoring student research, academic leadership, and other areas of faculty engagement.

SP5.2a - Develop and implement programs to promote faculty, staff, and student engagement with all aspects of the University's mission and values.

SP5.2b - Strengthen existing curricular offerings on the undergraduate and graduate levels and create new offerings that link to identified opportunities and needs.

SP5.2c - Emphasize experiential undergraduate and graduate learning and research through integrative services, programs, and courses

SP5.3a - Provide sufficient resources and personnel to support the growth of existing programs and roles.

SP5.3b - Develop and implement an accountable, effective, and helpful assessment program to guide curriculum revision, development, and inform student learning.

SP5.3c - Attract new graduate students by developing new programs and reviewing success in existing programs.

SP5.1d - Celebrating faculty both within the Leighton University Family and beyond - the contributions of our faculty.

SP5.2d - Utilize technology supporting learning, effectiveness, research, and innovation.

SP5.3d - Conduct regular market analyses for each existing academic program and opportunity analyses to identify areas for new programs.

Strategic Planning -
It is a process by which we can envision the future and develop the necessary procedures and operations to influence and achieve that future

Clark Crouch

Strategic Priority 6: *Faculty Development*

Develop and retain faculty by providing sufficient resources to support and service dynamic and up-to-date associate, bachelor, and master-level curricula, conduct research and other professional activities, and support engagement with all stakeholders.

SP6.1: Faculty Growth

Enhance faculty's ability to contribute to academic programs and research excellence while providing appropriate support staff levels.

SP6.2: Faculty Development Resources

Invest in faculty through meaningful and appropriate professional development opportunities that support the required professional growth goals.

SP6.3: Faculty Development and Impact

Support and continually assess the impact and effectiveness of the faculty development programming.

SP6.1a - Develop and service faculty development programs and practice sessions designed using the latest cognitive and learning sciences knowledge on adult learners.

SP6.1b - Train distant learning faculty in Quality Matters standards.

SP6.1c - Develop new ways to enable faculty to interact and exchange ideas.

SP6.1d - Delivery of sustained professional development and support for students with documented needs staff.

SP6.2a - Create and support a structure of professional development that meets the needs of full-time and adjunct faculty throughout their careers.

SP6.2b - Create and fund a professional development model to grow bench strength and assist succession planning.

SP6.2c - Establish professional development programs that assist faculty in the thoughtful use of technology in online coursework.

SP6.2d - Develop comprehensive rewards and recognition program to celebrate faculty and staff accomplishments in teaching, scholarship, and service.

SP6.3a - Develop and implement a training and professional development plan to support faculty others who perform an advising or mentoring role.

SP6.2b - Create and fund a professional development model to grow bench strength and assist succession planning.

SP6.3c - Develop criteria and implement a faculty review process.

SP6.3d - Develop and implement a recruitment plan for transfer students based on best practices, clearly delineating faculty and staff responsibilities.

Strategic Priority 7: Staff Development

Recruit, develop, and retain staff by providing sufficient resources to pave the way for commitment to serve our students in an environment that encourages engagement with all stakeholders.

SP7.1: Staff Recruitment

Ensure a high-quality and well-supported staff across programs, with strong staff development programs to enhance faculty's ability to contribute to the operations of the University.

SP7.2: Optimize Staff Productivity

Develop and implement a systematic approach to enhance employee drive and retention through meaningful opportunities, growth, and professional development and include effective succession planning.

SP7.3: Staff Development and Impact

In support of Leighton's obligation and commitment to meet the accreditation SACS criteria, we will continually assess the impact and effectiveness of the staff development programming.

SP7.1a - Devise process to review staffing needs and formulate solutions through position prioritization, reallocation of resources, or acquisition of additional resources

SP7.1b - Design and implement a comprehensive recruitment and retention plan for diverse staff and University administrators.

SP7.1c - Perform a gap analysis to determine workforce adequacy and positioning (consider gaps or excesses in headcount, skills, and experience) and evaluate potential solutions to address findings

SP7.2a - Delivery of initial onboarding for new staff concerning Leighton's mission, an emerging model, and students.

SP7.2b - Identity, develop, and implement programs to support and recognize continuous learning and growth for staff at all levels.

SP7.2c - Develop multiple opportunities for staff to communicate with each other, note broader concerns, and begin to identify solutions.

SP7.3a - Develop criteria and implement a staff review process and ensure the employees receive detailed, comprehensive performance evaluations and feedback.

SP7.3b - Create and fund a professional development model to grow bench strength and assist succession planning.

SP7.3c - Deliver sustained professional development and support for students with documented needs staff.

SP7.4d - Develop onboarding tools for new employees, including exploring the recommendation of assigning an "onboarding buddy" for all new employees.

SP7.2d - Develop multiple opportunities for staff to communicate with each other, note broader concerns, and begin to identify solutions.

SP7.2e - Annually evaluate and implement changes to the division's New Employee Orientation session(s).

SP7.3d - Develop and service staff development programs, workshops, seminars, informational, and practice sessions designed using adult learners' latest cognitive and learning sciences knowledge.

SP7.3e - Enhance staff professional development opportunities focusing on leadership development, student support, engagement, and providing customer-focused service to all.

Strategic Priority 8: Building a Culture of Transparency

Encourage the sharing, reviewing, and generating ideas through accurate, timely data reporting and respect for innovative ideas to meet our identified constituencies' ever-changing needs.

SP8.1: Financial Information

Ensure transparency and provide opportunities to share financial information to enable our faculty and administrators to make well-informed decisions.

SP8.2: Idea Information

Encourage the sharing, reviewing, and generating ideas through accurate, timely data reporting and respect for innovative ideas to meet our identified constituencies' ever-changing needs.

SP8.3: Successes and Challenges

Generously sharing information using various indicators, ranging from numerical data to more qualitative analysis of students' progress toward program-level learning outcomes.

SP8.1a - Develop and promote employee communication and engagement plan that collects feedback, measures employee engagement, and promotes shared governance.

SP8.1b - Develop and communicate with stakeholders about policies and guidelines regarding successfully conducting fundraising efforts, including gift acceptance.

SP8.1c - Promote continued transparency and accountability with more innovative budgeting systems by providing better data for multi-year planning, estimating the cost of instruction, and evaluating the cost for operations and capital planning.

SP8.2a - Implement effective data governance practices that foster opportunities for increased transparency and availability of quality and timely data and information

SP8.2b - Within a context of transparency, create and welcome opportunities for faculty to leverage their expertise to inform university best practices in operational, curricular, and developmental matters.

SP8.2c - Include genuinely interested stakeholders in an Advisory Committee and promote shared governance. They serve in this way; they will enhance the Institution's services, vision, and mission.

SP8.3a - Engage in collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and disseminating data (e.g., enrollment numbers, number, and placement of graduates in the workplace).

SP8.3b - Promote and enhance internal communication to promote transparency, information sharing, and cross-divisional collegiality.

SP8.3c - Develop and administer a "*campus*" climate survey. Identify specific "campus" climate metrics that impact employees and set goals to explore improvement as measured by the "campus" climate survey.

Strategy Priority 9: *Growing Strategic Alliances*

Expand our influence and effectiveness through solid partnerships with in-state universities and colleges, business corporations, cultural institutions, and government and non-governmental agencies within and outside Mississippi.

SP9.1: Raising Partners

Increase the quantity and quality of internal and external partnerships and collaborations that ignite big ideas with real-world thinking.

SP 3.2: Align and Re-align Effort

Establish strong strategic partnerships with other academic, industry, and private organizations to support student academic development research and workforce development.

SP3.3: Leveraging Partnership

We must seek partners to increase visibility, boost efficiency, improve outreach efforts, and enhance programs and services.

SP9.1a - Identify and hire a firm to develop and present a proposal for multi-pronged advertising and marketing approach that will increase audience share and market penetration indices to enhance the reputation of the University and increase recruitment, retention, and development efforts.

SP9.1b - Pursue mutually-beneficial in-state and out-of-state partnerships for outreach involvements to enhance the communities we serve.

SP9.1c - Attract organizations that share an interest in the University's mission and values, its academic programs, and project outcomes.

SP9.2a - Develop partnerships that provide opportunities for experiential learning in ways that include formalizing internship opportunities for all Leighton's students

SP9.2b - Support faculty in generating grants to expand and support their research, scholarship, and creative expression.

SP9.2c - Engage industry partners and employers in the process of identifying workforce needs and developing programs and curricula.

SP9.3a - Serve as an independent, neutral voice to bring stakeholders together for collective impact (including collaboration, shared vision, and shared measurement of results)

SP9.3b - Increase and strengthen relationships with community members, civic leaders, service organizations, and supporters.

SP9.3c - Connect and unify stakeholders, particularly groups interested in the organization, including those who benefit from our mission

Strategic Priority 10: Strengthening Financial Viability

Goal to achieve a sustainable financial model that allows the University to reach its mission and vision while maintaining quality and affordability for all students it serves.

SP 10.1: Strengthen the Fiscal Position	SP10.2: Enhance Financial Streams	SP10.3: Enhance Resources Utilization
We are strengthening the University's financial position to enhance and diversify supports our commitment to student success through programs that grow our enrollment and improve our retention and graduation rates.	Optimize revenue streams by increasing institutional efforts in pursuing grants and contracts, philanthropy, and any additional services revenue while leveraging third-party partnerships.	Develop and implement systems and processes that maximize Leighton's l effectiveness, continuously improve operations, and achieve the university's strategic commitments.

SP10.1a - Establish early and detailed goals to support annual fundraising plans. Revisit regularly to adjust and make timely changes.

SP10.1b - Develop a University-wide collaborative fundraising plan for more integrated annual giving and structured campaign(s) aligned with the university's strategic priorities, including faculty and staff active leadership/participation.

SP10.1c - Maximize institutional efficiencies and reduce operational expenses to reinvest in programs that support student success and completion.

SP10.2a - Increase FTE production to 4,200 by 2025, with an intermediate target of 600 FTE by Spring 2023.

SP10.2b - Collaborate at all levels to ensure branding efforts support recruitment by Timing advertising efforts to keep the university's recruitment cycle

SP10.2c - Pursue significant strategic external partnerships supporting our mission, aligning with our values, and expanding our reach.

SP10.3a - Promote effective, efficient, and accountable management of all operations and assets.

SP10.3b - Develop multi-year budget plan assumptions that include key budget performance indicators and funding earmarked to implement action items within the University's Strategic Plan.

SP10.3c - Allocate permanent budget outlays to support initiatives that promote retention and student success.

SP10.1d - Translate institution-wide and cost-shared directions into concrete objectives.

SP10.1e - Foster a culture of data-informed decision-making concerning institutional, school, and program-level financial actions.

SP10.1f - Under the Board of Trustees and the Chancellor's guidance, implement cost management strategies and structures while investing in academic instruction and student support.

SP10.1g - Pursue significant strategic external partnerships supporting our mission, aligning with our values, and expanding our reach.

SP10.2h - Create a more transparent budgeting process that evaluates existing funding levels and requires administrative and academic departments to develop multi-year budgets.

SP10.2d - Identify and expand the Institution's Board of Trustees to support a culture of giving and philanthropy.

SP10.2e - External funding opportunities will support academic programs, student opportunities, faculty excellence, and our facilities.

SP10.2f - Establish appropriate student/faculty ratios and faculty/staff ratios, consistent with the Carnegie classification of each University and its mission.

SP10.2g - Redesigning the homepage to serve as a "front door" for prospective students.

SP10.2h - Leverage the latest technology to ensure advertising is targeted to key audiences by:

SP10.3d - Develop clear guidelines that align resources with strategic priorities.

SP10.3e - Promote effective, efficient, and accountable management of all operations and assets.

SP10.3f - Ensure ongoing examination of the portfolio of academic programs best to meet the evolving needs of enrolled and prospective students and employers, expand Leighton's reach, and diversify the general student population.

SP10.3g - Prioritize the Institution's allocation of new funds and the reallocation of current general fund dollars to need-based scholarships and high-growth/in-demand academic programs and the Institution's high-impact practices.

SP10.3h - Prioritize the Institution's allocation of new funds and the reallocation of current general fund dollars to need-based scholarships and high-growth/in-demand academic programs and the Institution's high-impact practices.

SP10.3i - Enhance software and systems (Populi) to optimize productivity, including improving the integrity and integration of Leighton's donor databases and expanding donor prospect research and management efforts.

Strategic Priority II: Quality and Accreditation

Pursue and gain regional accreditation through SACS within four years, manifesting the Institution's quality education and meeting higher education standards.

SP11.1: Resource Management	**SP11.2: Optimize Academic Data**	**SP111.3: Institutional Operations**
Enhance institutional accountability through ongoing compliance with accreditation requirements and proactive solutions to address opportunities for improvement.	Promote the use of valid and reliable data in decision-making through improved integrated planning, budgeting, program review, assessment, and other institutional processes.	Develop and institute a comprehensive data and information collecting structure that assembles and manages institutional data that drive planning to meet accreditation requirements.

SP11.1a - Manage institutional resources in accordance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges' (SACSOOC) standards for resource allocation, planning, and institutional effectiveness.

SP11.2a - Develop procedures for certifying that transfer-level courses contain learning outcomes comparable to lower-division classes.

SP11.3a - Adhere to the Criteria for Accreditation in Institution operations and meet the Southern Association of Colleges – Commission on Colleges (SACSOOC) mandates.

SP11.1b - Translate institution-wide and cost-shared directions into concrete objectives.

SP11.2b - Address accreditation requirements and standards that enhance and support student preparedness for professional fields.

SP11.3b - Implement, monitor, and communicate progress on all strategic plan priorities, objectives, and strategies.

SP11.1c - Allocate resources devoted to accreditation efforts and actions that can be implemented to improve processes, enhance productivity, and develop an operational excellence mindset across all units of the University.

SP11.2c - Implement a comprehensive process to assess student learning outcomes and use the results to improve curricula and instructional programs and services delivery consistently.

SP11.3c - Support and continually improve operational excellence and administrative efficiencies through professional development, greater use of technology, improved communications, and strategic use of data.

25

SP11.1d - Establish timelines for program review completion, including defined goals, strategies, and measures. Evaluation of some findings and actions to respond to them to improve programs.

SP11.1e - Appoint a management team whose members are supported and charged to ensure identified goals and benchmarks are met in the established timeframe.

SP11.1f - Engage in meaningful and regular assessment activities that directly lead to program improvement, making them valuable to students, faculty, and the Institution as a whole.

SP11.1g - Communicate the value of accreditation to all stakeholders

SP11.2d - Establish and implement University-wide processes that regularly assess all programs and services delivered in support of academic programs.

SP11.2e - Strive to build and enhance a culture that utilizes and supports assessment, accreditation, compliance, and strategic planning.

SP11.2g – Establish timelines focused on preparing annual internal reporting of Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs); associated with the General Education (CORE) and disciplinary majors.

SP11.2f - Increase fundraising by $150,000 annually through 2025, where 65% will be earmarked for accreditation activities.

SP11.3d - Link data across administrative lines and provide focused institutional data and information necessary for the concentrated analysis of issues significant to the Institution.

SP11.3e - Implement a comprehensive process to assess student learning outcomes and use the results to improve curricula and instructional programs and services delivery consistently.

SP11.3g - Provide consistent, reliable data, statistics, and reports as appropriate and mandated to external agencies and entities and engage in data exchanges and studies with peer institutions.

SP11.3f - Identify and adapt the decision-making process by utilizing all relevant data sources.

Strategic Priority 12: Institutional Visibility and Recognition

Create and execute an all-inclusive and strategic marketing and communications plan that considers and appropriately balances use print, web, advertising, photography, electronic communications, video, media relations, social media content, and event support.

SP12.1: Outsourcing Considerations	SP12.2: Market Academic Programs	SP12.3: Targeted Communications
Identify and hire a firm to develop and present a proposal for multi-pronged advertising and marketing approach that will increase audience share and market penetration indices to enhance the university's reputation	Review and improve Leighton's brand identity to promote visibility and awareness within the community and beyond and enhance Leighton's reputation as a viable learning institution.	Identify appropriate media vehicles to reach curriculum target market segment (males and females, ages 25 and above) a minimum of three times per campaign flight through traditional and nontraditional media.
SP12.1a - Design and develop branded items to increase the reach of Leighton's story, especially those that are cost neutral such as special license plates.	**SP12.2a -** Develop campaigns and communications that support the Institution's efforts to: attract and support exceptionally talented, diverse, and service-oriented students; recruit and retain excellent and diverse faculty; and attract and support the most talented and passionate staff.	**SP12.3a -** Increase Leighton's visibility among friends of the University, partners, and students through strategic and targeted communications strategy.
SP12.1b - Develop and administer a community-focused survey to assess perception/satisfaction.	**SP12.2b -** Update current taglines to a message that communicates value and builds upon the university's reputation.	**SP12.3b -** Send a periodic (bi-weekly) email newsletter to industry leaders featuring activities and milestones reached. Use social media also to push this news.

27

SP12.1c - Identify the Institution's community characteristics to make Leighton University an appealing space to diverse potential community members.

SP12.1d - Create strategic communications that deepen engagement and develop connections with our audience

SP3.1e - Development of a strategic marketing plan based on data and research that will elevate the University's national visibility and bolster enrollment and recruitment efforts

SP12.2c - Initiate developing a University-wide retention plan and continuously measure progress toward retention goals

SP12.2d - Develop and sustain high quality, rigorous, and competitive academic programs that serve the marketplace and student needs and continue to elevate the Institution's reputation

SP12.2e - Invest, establish, and provide support to Student Support Services and facilities with a vision to enhance student academic experience and ensure their success.

SP12.3c - Create and implement marketing activities to increase student enrollment

SP12.3d - Implement marketing strategies that will target critical external audiences to increase awareness of the value and academic excellence at Leighton University;

Strategic Priority 13: Branding and Identity

SP13.1: Marketing Strategies

Develop, launch and implement a branding/marketing campaign using the services of a third-party firm, including paid and unpaid media.

SP13.2: Brand Awareness

Develop, assess and execute integrated, strategic marketing and communications programs, and internal and external that strengthen, promote and protect Leighton's brand identity and excellence.

SP13.3: Targeting Generation Z

Create and implement a focused university-wide enrollment management plan to ensure retention and increase incoming enrollment.

SP13.1a - Position the University as one that offers distinctive programs and avoid strategies that compete unfavorably with other Mississippi colleges and Universities

SP13.1b - Design and develop a comprehensive marketing plan to position Leighton as the regional provider of online student-centered education based on an intentionally created rich, diverse, and nurturing environment.

SP13.1d - Highlight the university's academic offerings to ensure prospective students can quickly identify and learn more about their programs of choice.

SP13.2a - Establish internal and external data to drive resource allocations decisions and a fund and process to grow enrollment.

SP13.2b - Partner with businesses to increase and market employer-paid credit and non-credit academic programming and training opportunities.

SP13.2c - Develop, staff, and provide academic support services, which lead students to complete a degree program successfully.

SP13.3a - Develop and implement a coordinated plan to promote best practices and foster a culture of high-quality, innovative teaching across Leighton's programs

SP13.3b - Identify and develop communication strategies beyond the traditional search process of buying names from testing agencies to align with how Generation Z students receive information and make decisions.

SP13.3c - Establish interaction channels with resident Mississippi corporations and companies with tuition remission to attract their employees to take distance education courses.

SP13.1e - Developed strategic international partnerships and comprehensive internationalization initiatives.

SP13.1f - Develop a marketing and recruitment plan that differentiates Leighton University from other local universities to increase student enrollment.

SP13.1g - Create and broadcast targeted messages to underrepresented minority students, Mississippi residents, middle-income students, and transfer students

SP13.1h - Create and broadcast targeted messages to underrepresented minority students, Mississippi residents, middle-income students, and transfer students.

SP13.2d - Establish internal and external data to drive resource allocations decisions and a fund and process to grow enrollment.

SP13.2e - Highlight the university's academic offerings to ensure prospective students can quickly identify and learn more about their programs of choice.

SP3.2f - Develop marketing strategies to inform target populations of this alternative option for the degree or certificate completion — greater emphasis on recruiting students from Mississippi.

SP13.2g - Establish internal and external data to drive resource allocations decisions and a fund and process to grow enrollment.

SP13.3d - Developing robust social media campaigns supporting the university's communications, branding, and marketing.

SP13.3e - Develop and implement a coordinated plan to promote best practices and foster a culture of high-quality, innovative teaching across Leighton's programs.

SP13.3f - Engage professional marketing expertise to increase the visibility of Leighton's brand to attract potential students and maximize recruiting efforts

SP13.3g - Implement a continuum of supportive services for prospective students and current enrollees to support their development at each stage of their careers and strengthen their lifelong connectedness to the University.

" Strategic planning is the blueprint for how to build a house, but branding is what makes it a home – the collection of décor, landscaping, atmosphere, etc. that makes people want to spend time in it... in other words, your strategic Plan tells you what you want to achieve and how you want to achieve it. Your brand should attract others to those goals by creating a community around them." - Isaac Shalev

Strategic Priority 14: Expand and Improve the Infrastructure

Continuously strengthen the University's infrastructure and resources and manage internal and external changes.

SP14.1: Physical Plant	SP14.2: Library Resources	SP14.3: Institutional Infrastructure
Maintain and improve the University's infrastructure and resources to keep pace with the Institution'growth.	Ensure the Library remains a vital asset of the Institution to support scholarship and provide opportunities for learning and research.	Improve institutional marketing and communications infrastructure to enhance quality, efficiency, effectiveness, and alignment

SP14.1a - Develop a plan to review and identify the current space's adequacy and project timeline to increase the University's footprint.

SP14.1b - With the identification acquisition of new space allocation must be consistent with the institutional goals and objectives and aligned its planning process.

SP14.2a - Collaborate with peer institutions to provide coordinated access to a global collection of information resources.

SP14.2b - Continue creating and developing strong collaborative relationships with in-state and out-of-state colleges and universities and their libraries.

SP14.2c - Develop a clear and comprehensive vision for the future of the University Library.

SP14.2d – Establish a permanent base-budget investment in the digital Library.

SP14.3a - Improve and enhance IT services and infrastructure to improve access and reliability, and enable greater avenues for innovation in teaching, research, and scholarly activity.

SP14.4b - Increase efforts to improve access and opportunities for learners through technology-enhanced tools, platforms, and practices.

SP14.4c - Increase the availability and capacity of technology options to support online learning, including supporting open-ended experiments to help faculty explore new possibilities.

SP14.4d - Provide operational excellence by leveraging technology to provide informed decision-making, reduce operating costs and optimize the capabilities of our teams.

SP14.2e - Steward the evolving scholarly record and champion new forms of scholarly communication.

SP14.2f - Develop a clear and comprehensive vision for the future of the University Library.

SP14.2g - Enhance the Library resources available by supporting a high quality-integration digital library to support all citizens of Mississippi enrolled

SP14.4e - Invest in and implement efficient technologies to enhance student experiences in distance education.

SP14.4f - Research, discover, and implement the automation of the University Catalog to put program information at the fingertips of the students.

SP14.4g - Develop and implement a new faculty/staff hire feedback process to solicit views about Leighton's recruitment, interviewing, and appointment process; use results to identify areas for continuous improvement.