



Strategic Plan Arkansas State University

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ARKANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY

Overview and Background

Following his first year leading Arkansas State University, Chancellor Kelly Damphousse launched a strategic planning project to engage the university community in establishing critical pathways for the next decade. This inclusive, collaborative project was a convening opportunity to engage the university's key stakeholders – faculty, staff, students, administration, university partners, alumni and other external stakeholders – to discover and define how the university would leverage its opportunities and tackle its challenges for the next five years.

Founded in 1909, Arkansas State University is a Carnegie Research 2 institution and the second-largest university in the state. It hosts the first osteopathic medical school in the state of Arkansas, NYIT's College of Osteopathic Medicine, and opened the first U.S.-style residential campus in Mexico in fall 2017. A-State is the heart of activity for its hometown of Jonesboro, starting with its FBS Division I athletic program, and is the economic and research hub for the region.

Dedicated to teaching, research and service, the university provides students with the broad educational foundations that help them develop critical thinking, decision-making, analytical, and communication skills. With more than 90,000 living alumni, the university is the state's leading provider of nursing graduates, early childhood educators, and agricultural business graduates.

Despite these advantages and growth during the early 21st century, several leadership transitions at the university, demographic changes across Arkansas, and downward state funding brought new challenges to be addressed through a comprehensive strategic vision for A-State's future. Identified as an important need by incoming Chancellor Damphousse, the current Faculty and Staff Senates, and the Higher Learning Commission, the creation of the first comprehensive strategic plan update since 2004 became a high priority for the institution.

Arkansas, like many states, is experiencing “two economies,” with strong population and economic growth in urban areas and with fewer jobs in rural and smaller communities. Further, Arkansas was recently cited among the five states with the highest share of jobs at risk because of automation.

In response, “Momentum Jonesboro,” a local public-private partnership, targeted areas for job growth in changing business sectors requiring new skill sets, such as agribusiness, health care, manufacturing and logistics. Along with the university's more global mindset and the desire for a more dynamic on-campus experience for students, faculty, staff and the community, the university has embraced the need for positive advances in several areas.



The Strategic Planning Process

The formal strategic planning process began in early 2019 as the Chancellor appointed a Steering Committee that represented the primary on-campus constituencies, including the Staff Senate, Faculty Senate, Student Government Association, Chairs Council, Deans Council, Research Office and Administrators in Finance, Enrollment, Student Affairs, Athletics and Advancement. The chancellor charged the committee to incorporate a “university-centric” approach to A-State’s future. Executive Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration and Chief Operating Officer Len Frey chaired the Steering Committee.

The inaugural Steering Committee members

- Chair, Len Frey (Executive Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, and Chief Operating Officer)
- Lynita Cooksey (Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost)
- Maurice Gipson (VC for Diversity and Community Engagement)
- Rob Gordon (President of Staff Senate)
- Russ Hannah (Associate VC for Business)
- Susan Hanrahan (Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Professions)
- Loretta McGregor (President of Faculty Senate)
- Will McLean (Chair of the Chairs Council)
- Terry Mohajir (VC of Intercollegiate Athletics and Athletic Director)
- Jason Penry (VC for University Advancement)
- Tom Risch (Vice Provost for Research)
- Drew Roberson (Vice President, Student Government Association)
- Thilla Sivakumaran (VC for Global Engagement and Outreach)
- Bill Smith (Chief Communications Officer)
- Martha Spack (VC for Student Affairs and Dean of Students)
- Bryan Terry (VC for Enrollment Management)

During the process, Steering Committee members changed to include:

- Alan Utter, appointed as Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs to replace the retiring Lynita Cooksey
- Jon Carvell was elected as the new Staff Senate President, replacing Rob Gordon
- Erika Krennerich Chudy was appointed Vice Chancellor for University Advancement, replacing Jason Penry
- Summer DeProw, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Assessment & Accreditation, was added as a co-facilitator for the Public Forums Phase along with Russ Hannah
- Erika Tuck, SGA President

The project’s opening phases were facilitated by The Napa Group, a national firm specializing in higher education strategy, leadership and organizational design. The firm’s six-phase planning process equips universities to develop strategic solutions, supporting resource plans and an implementation roadmap informed by enterprise thinking and integration.



Summary: Project Activities & Outcomes

Phases 1 and 2 - Project Launch and Organizational Assessment and Compelling Vision: The Steering Committee met to develop strategic themes for the university, based on an internal and external situational assessment of the university's positioning in the state and region, trends driving higher education and employers' needs for the future, aspirational "big ideas" and scenarios for growth, and realistic financial and demographic forecasts for the next several years. Steering Committee discussions were framed by high-level "design thinking," strategic insights about global needs for talent, and career preparation priorities by local business and industry. Underscoring the university's goals was a desire to boldly and distinctively position the institution's impact as a regional university with a far more extensive reach.

Phases 3 and 4 - Realistic Strategies and Stakeholder Engagement: As the Steering Committee developed the plan's draft goals and objectives, constituencies within the university had the opportunity to provide input and perspectives at milestones in the process. These included focus groups in Spring 2019 and expansive deep-dive town hall sessions with internal and external constituencies (students, staff, faculty, alumni and Jonesboro community) in Fall 2019. Feedback from these constituent sessions influenced the next planning sessions and the plan draft. To build out the emerging plan, Task Forces drawn from the university's key stakeholder groups met in late Fall 2019 and developed the emerging plan's tactics, timelines, metrics and resources needed over five years.

Phases 5 and 6 - Draft and Final Strategic Plan, Business Plan and Implementation Framework: The Steering Committee met in early December 2019 to finalize the plan, based on the Task Force recommendations and other stakeholder input. This also enabled development of an accompanying business and financial plan, a five-year implementation framework and a dashboard tracking progress of key performance indicators, with the initial focus on the first two years. These supporting tools are essential to ensuring the Strategic Plan outcomes are accomplished, and also allow for reforecasting as situations change.

Launch Phase: Compiling feedback from the initial phases, the executive committee of the Steering Committee completed final changes and prepared a draft for adoption by the entire committee. Upon return to campus for Fall 2020, the Steering Committee reviewed and approved the plan for issuance to the entire university community for Fall 2020 implementation.

Throughout this interactive and inclusive process, more than 300 individuals representing the university community participated and gave voice to their perspectives about the university's future pathways and the priorities and activities to successfully achieve this Strategic Plan. Throughout the project, opportunities were provided for all stakeholders to submit comments and perspectives through the project's dedicated website and other online vehicles.

Discover 2025: Arkansas State University Strategic Plan

Goals and Objectives

Mission

*Arkansas State
educates leaders,
enhances intellectual growth
and enriches lives.*

Vision

To be a university that is a
recognized leader in the
power of higher education to
transform lives at an
inclusive research institution

Goal 1:

Develop a diverse learning community and innovative environment that provides engaged and continuous support for future and current students to pursue lifelong goals.

Goal 2:

Invest in viable and relevant academic programs designed to meet the needs of our students and their future employers.

Goal 3:

Strengthen the university's engagement with the community through economic and cultural endeavors.

Goal 4:

Invest in academic research, scholarly activities and creative endeavors (faculty and student) that build on academic strengths and leverage regional opportunities.


Goal 5:

Improve campus culture and promote shared values.



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Goal 1:

 *Develop a diverse learning community and innovative environment that provides engaged and continuous support for future and current students to pursue lifelong goals.*

1. Optimize undergraduate and graduate student recruitment in Arkansas and beyond (regional, national, international) through customized, targeted promotion
2. Build an agile system of linked communication and tracking to support undergraduate and graduate student success and improve retention
3. Create opportunities for P-12 students to engage with the university

Goal 1 Performance Goal Statement:

By 2025, the strategic enrollment efforts will result in the following increases in recruitment per program, both at the graduate and undergraduate levels.

Retention from Freshman-to-Sophomore:
79% by FY 22
85% by FY 25

Graduation rates:
4-year graduation rate will be 45%
6-year graduation rate will be 65%

Reconstitute the Graduate School by FY 21



Goal 2:



Invest in viable and relevant academic programs designed to meet the needs of our students and their future employers.

1. Foster and promote general education to expand the learning experiences of students in an ever-changing society
2. Assess the viability and relevance of new and current academic programs that promote excellence in teaching and learning
3. Actively encourage academic programs to utilize interdisciplinary approaches to enhance creativity and critical thinking
4. Increase high-impact opportunities for all students such as study abroad, internships, and student research
5. Create educational programs that are responsive to the employment needs in the region

Goal 2 Performance Goal Statement:

By 2025

- The university will have a redesigned general education program with updated language fully intergrated into the campus culture.
- All programs will be reviewed for viability.
- All degrees will offer at least one high-impact opportunity.
- All degrees will include at least one interdisciplinary activity, course, or co-curricular opportunity.



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Goal 3:



Strengthen the university's engagement with the community through economic and cultural endeavors.

1. Leverage our current role as a cultural center to become the recognized and valued cultural hub for the Jonesboro region and Northeast Arkansas
2. Designate and invest resources in areas necessary to oversee and champion the university's overall role in the community
3. Partner with community stakeholders to advance and create diversity initiatives
4. Increase workforce placement and partnerships through collaborations with business, industry, nonprofit and other educational organizations
5. Create organizational structures to coordinate and centralize community engagement activities

Goal 3 Performance Goal Statement:

By 2025, A-State will strengthen the university's role in the community with these steps:

- Create campus-wide committees to coordinate lectures, concert series and entertainment opportunities thereby increasing community participation on campus by 10%.
- Foster greater coordination between the university's cultural initiatives with organizations in the region.
- Increase internships, cooperative agreements, and business and industry engagement with academic programs by 10%.
- Increase number of MOUs, working agreements and formal interactions with local and regional organizations by 10%.
- Increase participation by students and potential students in diversity initiatives by 15%.
- Establish advisory councils in colleges, departments, or programs that currently do not have them.
- Endorsement by the Carnegie Foundation as a Community Engaged institution.



Goal 4:

Invest in academic research, scholarly activities and creative endeavors (faculty and student) that build on academic strengths and leverage regional opportunities.


1. Invest in faculty research, student research and administrative research capacity
2. Incentivize entrepreneurial ventures through faculty startups, industry partnerships, private sector, government, public and non-profit organizations/spaces
3. Invest in new and innovative research areas
4. Build and equip adequate facilities

Goal 4 Performance Goal Statement:

Create a comprehensive position strategy to leverage academic research investments through encouragement of greater collaboration across all academic areas as measured by:

- 20% increase in total research expenditures
- 25% increase in master's degrees conferred
- 100% increase in doctoral degrees conferred
- 50% increase in student participation for Create@State and internal student funding opportunities

Goal 5:

 *Improve campus culture and promote shared values*

1. Incorporate the Every Red Wolf Counts philosophy in all areas of the campus community
2. Embrace diversity, inclusion, and civility as important values
3. Invest in professional development and recognize employees for their commitment to campus service
4. Encourage increased health and wellness program participation
5. Foster a greater commitment to environmental impact and sustainability

Goal 5 Performance Goal Statement:

By 2025, an increase in overall satisfaction expressed among key campus constituencies as measured by:

- Increase participation in campus health and wellness programs by 10%
- Annual campus climate surveys conducted by FY 21 as a baseline analysis
- Annual workplace satisfaction surveys conducted by FY 21 as a baseline analysis
- Achieve improvement of 15% in identified surveys

Implementation Framework

Upon completion of the work of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, the Strategic Plan will launch in Fall 2020, and the first two years' of the five-year framework will be supported with an implementation roadmap and human and financial resources. It is understood that some of the Strategic Plan resources will be developed through a variety of means, including repurposing current programs, capturing new philanthropic and other funding opportunities, and sunsetting programs no longer viable or future-focused. These decisions will be part of the initial implementation planning following the Strategic Plan's final approval by the chancellor.

To steward, track and measure a predictable and disciplined implementation process, Implementation Champions (two per goal) will lead small task forces that oversee progress toward the goal's overall outcomes. These task forces will also determine the annual Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that will be measured on the Strategic Plan dashboard and reported to the A-State community each year. The implementation teams will meet at least quarterly for the first two years and provide detailed project plans to the chancellor.

[the final dashboard image with KPIs could go here; it could also be in the Appendix below]

The Strategic Plan Dashboard will be published on the university's Strategic Plan website to continue the transparency of the project as it creates greater and greater impact for Arkansas State University in the coming years. Implementation is a process of "strategic planning in action" and the plan will be reviewed each year to ensure that new opportunities and challenges are explored and considered and that the plan continues to be relevant in the dynamic environment affecting A-State and all higher education.

Our Strategic Plan – "**Discover 2025**" – is an ambitious but achievable means of uniting A-State's campus, alumni, community and regional constituencies to collectively fulfill our educational mission, build community, strengthen our identity and increase impact as an economic, cultural and educational engine for Northeast Arkansas, the Delta and the Mid-South.



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