



EVOLVE

WEST LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

Building a Transformative Future



2019-2024 Strategic Plan

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INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE

Established in 1837, West Liberty University, the first institution of higher education in the state of West Virginia, is fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and by the state of West Virginia. Ranked as #8 among most diverse colleges and universities in the state (NICHE.com), and one of the most affordable universities nationwide. With a 15:1 student-to-faculty-ratio, West Liberty University provides quality education to a diverse, inclusive, and equitable student body, offering 82 academic majors, leading to baccalaureate and master degrees. West Liberty University's Hilltoppers are proud members of the NCAA Division II Mountain East Conference with over 400 student athletes involved in 18 intercollegiate sports on campus. As West Virginia's trailblazing rural-serving postsecondary institution, West Liberty University achieves its mission to provide students with a comprehensive education from undergraduate to advanced degrees while serving the region's leading advocate for the arts, education, research, and economic opportunity.

West Liberty University has graduated more than 30,540 degrees— 27,473 bachelor degrees; 2275 associate degrees; and 792 master degrees since its inception. West Liberty University's Alumni Association represents more than 20,000 diverse alumni, leading the way in leadership roles in politics, healthcare, the arts, professional sports, journalism, and more. West Liberty University is one of the most diverse and largest rural-serving institutions in the state of West Virginia with an incredible spread of over 290 acres of land on the hilltop. In 1996, West Liberty University was named to the National Register of Historic Places its historic building on campus, Shaw Hall.

West Liberty University is proud to offer rigorous academics under our Academic Affairs Division, which includes the following areas: the College of Education and Human Performance, the College of Liberal and Creative Arts, the College of Sciences, the Gary E. West College of Business, and Graduate Studies.



WEST LIBERTY UNIVERSITY IS EVOLVING

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As the 37th President of West Liberty University, I would like to thank our esteemed Adhoc Committee, students, faculty, and staff for your commitment and contributions to igniting a robust and revitalized strategic plan. **Evolve West Liberty University: Building a Transformative Future** plan consisting of transparency and a coalescence of devoted stakeholders that met on an ongoing basis— both face-to-face- and virtually, to brainstorm, plan, and produce this pathway towards continued innovation, excellence, and growth during this quintessential era at West Liberty University, 2019-2024.

Throughout this journey towards evolving in preparation for a transformative future at West Liberty University, our strategic plan serves as our blueprint to build a legacy of preeminence among our nation's rural-serving postsecondary institutions. In addition, our plan serves as a symbol of our commitment and dedication to investing into our mission and vision. Moreover, our strategic plan aids as a rubric to assess and develop a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive institution that establishes an amalgamation of students, faculty, and staff devoted to cultivating excellence in academics; enhancing community engagement; and strengthening operational and financial excellence. Together we strive to evolve on an ongoing basis towards the greater good for our institution.

“Together we strive to evolve on an ongoing basis towards the greater good for our institution.”

EVOLVING LEADERSHIP

Our mission was mapped out into six phases for the strategic plan. During Phase I on September 13, 2018, a Planning Task Force met for a training to develop a methodology for a workplan to begin developing a new strategic plan. Then, Phase II began September-November 2018. During this time the Task Force collected data through research, surveys, and face-to-face meetings from students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Next, during Phase III on November 29, 2018 the team drafted four goals: Academic Success, Branding, Operational Efficiency, and Student Experience, and the rough draft was shared with all students, faculty, and staff for comments, feedback, and suggestions. Then, during Phase IV on March 29, 2019 the team hosted a Vision Conference to present the draft to all stakeholders. During Phase V on May 3, 2019 a meeting was held, and the team created a set of strategic objectives and action plans for each strategic goal. Finally, during Phase VI in 2022 a Strategic



Plan Adhoc Committee was formed, which all students, faculty, and staff had access—to revise and expand the goals, objectives, vision, guiding principles, and core values. During this phase, the team met four times, including ongoing virtual meetings through our shared documents to strengthen the approved plan from 2019. As a result, within this booklet you will find a stronger, expanded, updated and innovative strategic plan that positions West Liberty University ahead of the curve towards our continued journey towards evolving.

LEADING THE PATH TOWARDS SOLUTIONS FOR CROSS CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

In our society today we have dealt with a plethora of invisible barriers from the novel COVID-19 to a global crisis for the need to diversify, include, and practice equity in higher education and beyond. West Liberty University, known for being the first for many initiatives—leads once again by placing trust in me as the first African American President in our 184 years of existence—to lead us up the path towards evolving and excellence. Many invisible barriers were dismantled during this monumental moment in our rich history, and many more will continue to be deconstructed and rebuilt for a transformative future at the Hilltop. Through a recommitment towards unity, excellence in academics, partnerships, teambuilding, diversity, equity, and inclusion—West Liberty University is preparing to lead among our nation's rural serving postsecondary intuitions while representing a beacon of hope for all. To the first generation; the international students; the women; people of color; the disabled; those that suffer from mental health; the LGBTQIA+; those who are challenged by socioeconomic barriers; those who have dealt with invisibility, and the list goes on—West Liberty is on a mission as the gatekeepers on the hilltop to build strong bridges for cross cultural connections.

CARVING OUT A NEW IMPRINT OF LEGACY

As an ongoing work in progress, our 2019-2024 Strategic Plan marks a new evolution where we are officially carving out a new imprint of legacy in preparation for a transformative future to those who dare to join us on the journey towards continued excellence for our students, faculty, staff, and the communities at large. Today, as we “stand on the shoulders of giants” as the great Sir Isaac Newton once said, it is our mission to climb even higher. West Liberty University is prepared for the audacious journey that awaits, for as long as we remain committed to working together inclusively, our institutional legacy and the great reputation we have built over the years will revel with the best of the best! Join us on our journey towards evolving collectively into a transformative future of excellence!

W. Franklin Evans, Ph.D.
President of West Liberty University

OUR MISSION

MISSION STATEMENT

West Liberty University, established in 1837, was the first institution of higher education in West Virginia. Today, we are a dynamic, inclusive, student-centered community that cultivates scholarly exploration, experiential learning, creative expression and global citizenship.

WLU is a public university committed to providing students with a comprehensive education from undergraduate to advanced degrees while serving as the region's leading advocate for the arts, education, research, and economic opportunity.

VISION

WLU aspires to be a model of innovative, inclusive, and transformational education accessible to all and that positively impacts society.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In order for West Liberty University to build a strong foundation towards the advancement of the vision, and goals, West Liberty University will adhere to a planning process that ensures standards set for excellence in behavior and attitude at the university. West Liberty University will engage in the following planning process:



DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS INCLUSIVENESS

WLU planning process is transparent and open to all faculty, staff, student, alumni, and the global community.



ONGOING TRANSPARENCY AND COMMUNICATION

WLU will provide ongoing effective communication, updates, and strategic decisions with all students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the global community through transparency.



DATA DRIVEN DECISIONS

WLU will collect data to inform decisions collectively with all stakeholders involved.



SYNCHRONIZED STATED GOALS

WLU plans will align with the State of West Virginia's Higher Education Agenda



ACTION ORIENTED OUTCOMES

WLU's realistic operational plans will be action oriented and ignited.



INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

WLU's plan will hold all stakeholders accountable for expanding initiatives from the past and include ongoing measurable performance metrics on a yearly basis, providing outcomes in alignment with the university's mission and strategic goals, including assurance that the annual budget process (Procedure 10) supports all strategic initiatives.

CORE VALUES

West Liberty University's core values serve as a guide to promote success among students, faculty, and community engagement.

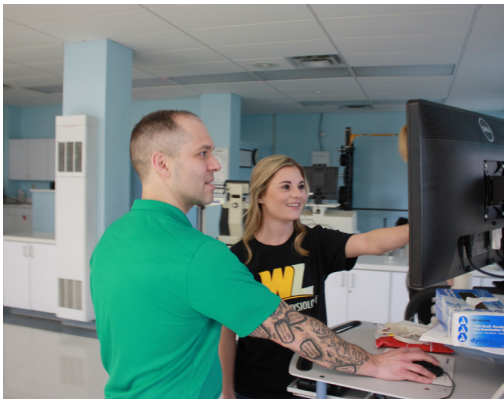


AFFORDABILITY

WLU remains focused on providing excellent education for students at an affordable price.

CARING

WLU is dedicated to exemplifying a caring environment for all students, faculty, staff, and the global community through respect, a sense of belonging, and equity to all.



DIVERSITY

WLU is committed to recruiting a diverse body of students, faculty, and staff where ideas are welcomed and inclusive to provide excellence in a high impact educational and community engaged experience.

EXCELLENCE

To guarantee institutional effectiveness, WLU provides excellence and quality in education, research, service, arts, and humanities.



INNOVATION

WLU cultivates innovation in teaching, learning, projects, and service among students, faculty, and staff.

RESPECT

WLU will always respect everyone with dignity and professionalism, both on and off campus.



West Liberty University

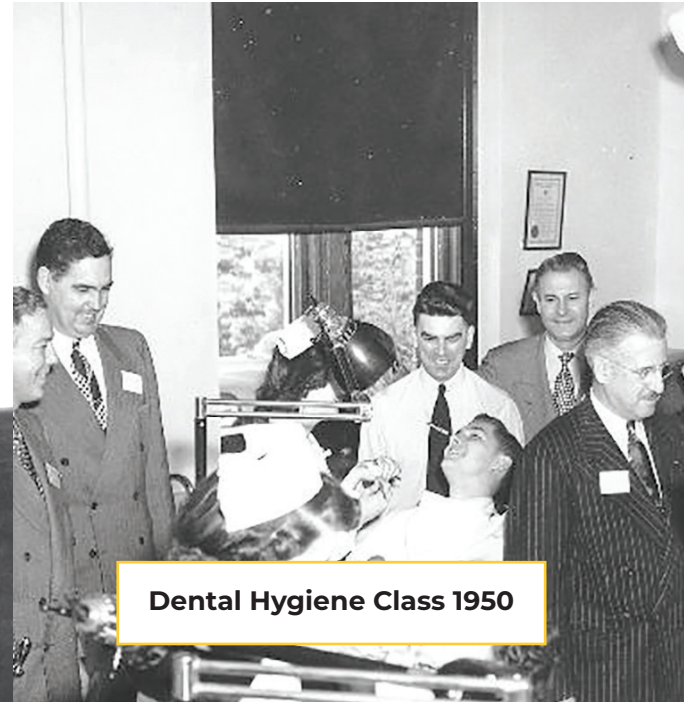
To acknowledge participation
in the Commencement Ceremony
Nov. 14, 2014

An aerial, grayscale photograph of the West Liberty University campus. The image shows various academic buildings, a large central structure with a distinctive roof, and surrounding greenery. A yellow rectangular border frames the text on the left side of the image.

BUILDING ON OUR RICH LEGACY



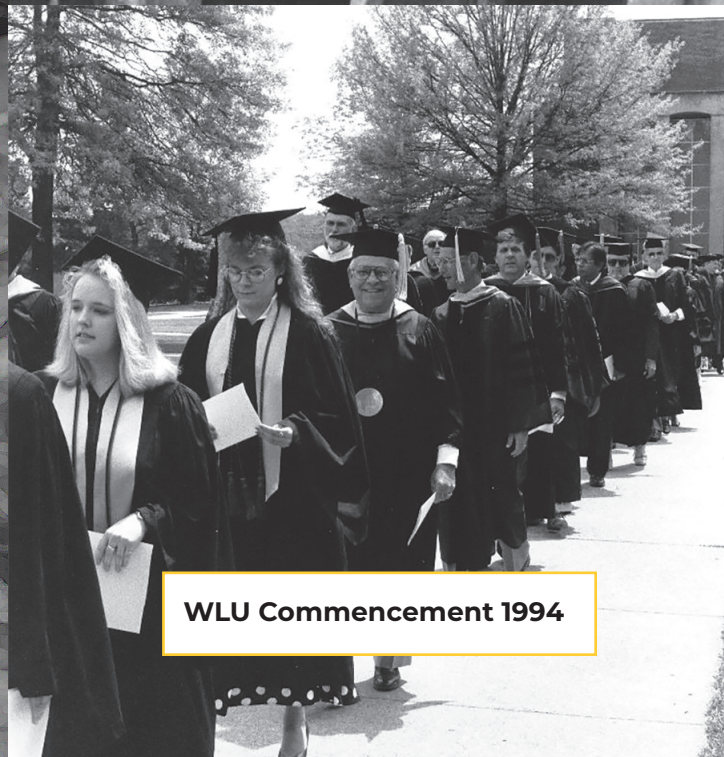
President John F. Kennedy's visit to WLU during the 1960 primary



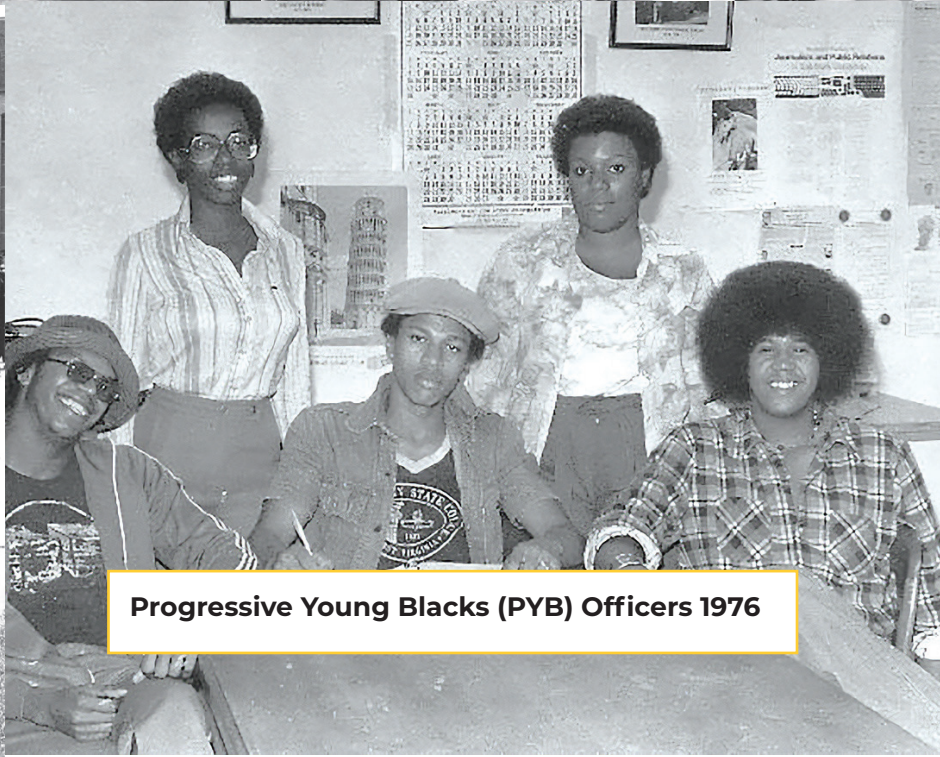
Dental Hygiene Class 1950



Greek Week 1980



WLU Commencement 1994



Progressive Young Blacks (PYB) Officers 1976



STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2024



GOAL 1

DEMONSTRATING ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

1.2
1.3

We aim for West Liberty University to be nationally recognized as a dynamic destination for academic excellence, an institution that encourages scholarly exploration, experiential learning, creative expression, and global citizenship across degree levels and disciplines.

West Liberty University will demonstrate academic excellence by implementing the following strategic initiatives:

- 1.1 Attract and retain students at every level—traditional age and adult, transfer and first-year, graduate, and non-degree-seeking.
- 1.2 Attract and retain an outstanding and diverse faculty.
- 1.3 Pursue innovative, viable, and relevant program development.
- 1.4 Develop high-impact practices for learners through a range of innovative learning platforms.
- 1.5 Foster a vibrant co-curriculum that addresses the whole student experience.
- 1.6 Increase the number of students exemplifying academic excellence through enrollment, retention, and graduation rates.
- 1.7 Affirm and expand national, regional, and specialized accreditations
- 1.8 Pursue continuous improvement through consistent, data-driven assessment and analyses of student learning.



GOAL 2

CULTIVATING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

We will cultivate an environment that supports an equitable, inclusive, and diverse population.

West Liberty University will cultivate diversity, equity, and inclusion by implementing the following strategic initiatives:

- 2.1 Develop and implement ongoing D.E.I. workshops.
- 2.2 Establish recruitment initiatives that target diverse student populations.
- 2.3 Create retention strategies that support a diverse student community.
- 2.4 Provide programs that build and strengthen inclusive teamwork.



GOAL 3

BUILDING AN INNOVATIVE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

We work to create a vibrant and engaged student experience, no matter where or how students attend West Liberty University—undergraduate or graduate, residential or commuter, online or on campus.

West Liberty University will build an innovative student experience by implementing the following strategic initiatives:

- 3.1 Engage students in experiences that extend beyond the classroom.
- 3.2 Develop a student culture that fosters a true sense of belonging.
- 3.3 Provide holistic support for the whole student experience—financial, wellbeing, career, and physical support.
- 3.4 Provide resources that foster an innovative, safe, and nurturing student experience.



GOAL 4

ENHANCING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We envision WLU as a regional, national, and global leader in preparing a diverse student population to be impactful in society.

West Liberty University will enhance community engagement by implementing the following strategic initiatives:

- 4.1 Sustain and grow the university's image as a leader in the region by effectively telling our story.
- 4.2 Provide services and learning opportunities for all on- and off-campus constituencies.
- 4.3 Create, expand, facilitate, and sustain dynamic partnerships and relationships that serve all stakeholders.
- 4.4 Enhance communication practices to strengthen our brand and share information.



GOAL 5

STRENGTHENING OPERATIONAL & FINANCIAL EXCELLENCE

We see WLU as a future oriented institution, rooted in a successful past, pursuing continuing excellence with a strong workforce.

West Liberty University will strengthen operational and financial excellence by implementing the following strategic initiatives:

- 5.1 Support the university mission through solid business decisions and ongoing campus maintenance
- 5.2 Provide an outcome-driven culture with accurate data, best practices, and feedback
- 5.3 Develop an efficient business climate of ongoing employee evaluations, while offering learning and professional development opportunities
- 5.4 Continue to enhance technology to meet the changing needs of the University
- 5.5 Strengthen collaborations with the West Liberty University's Foundation and other donor prospects
- 5.6 Comply with local and state regulations for efficiency in finances



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Chief Information Officer/Chief Operations Officer

JAMES ULLOM

Athletic Director



Evolve West Liberty University: Building a Transformative Future is our story; our brand. As we embark on this journey together on the Hilltop, our Strategic Plan for 2019- 2024 embodies our roadmap towards building upon the legacy of excellence and the future of our great institution.

The current Strategic Plan is an ongoing process towards achieving our goals and objectives under the auspices of our mission. Together, West Liberty University will work on building a stronger, diverse, and inclusive team that respects everyone as we continue to collectively build a pathway of excellence for generations to follow and expand.

*... His eyes look out on the world,
On the great wooded world,
On the rich soil of the world,
On the rivers of the world.*

*The eyes see there materials for building,
See the difficulties, too, and the obstacles.
The mind seeks a way to overcome these obstacles.
The hand seeks tools to cut the wood,
To till the soil, and harness the power of the waters.
Then the hand seeks other hands to help,
A community of hands to help-
Thus the dream becomes not one man's dream alone,
But a community dream.
Not my dream alone, but our dream.
Not my world alone,
But your world and my world,
Belonging to all the hands who build...*

Excerpt from Langston Hughes "Freedom's Plow"