

University of Delaware Strategic Plan: A Living Document

Our Strategic Vision

The University of Delaware traces its lineage to the academy founded by the Rev. Francis Alison in 1743, making this one of the oldest educational institutions in the nation. For nearly three centuries, the University has distinguished itself through achievement and impact in science, the arts, the humanities, engineering, health, technology, business, public service and more. We stand upon a strong legacy of innovation and the powerful pursuit of knowledge, discovery and understanding.

Always evolving, the University is built to connect with a dynamic generation through progressive planning and global engagement. With no time for complacency, we are reimagining the capabilities and opportunities of our institution and our people to have a transformational impact on the world. We heartily embrace our unique role as the flagship of the First State, a powerful economic engine in the state of Delaware and the mid-Atlantic region, and the educational home of 24,000 students from around the world, driven by our relentless pursuit of knowledge and its application. We are committed to planning for the future to give holistic attention to the campus experience as a critical intersection of excellent teaching, research and service.

The need is urgent for an even more creative, curious, interdisciplinary and interconnected University of Delaware, with global reach to help shape our shared future. We envision a University of Delaware characterized by ever-increasing levels of distinction and achievement in student success, discovery and innovation, engagement and impact. Our dedicated community of students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends is vital to the success of the University, so it is essential that we work together to articulate a clear path forward.

Under the leadership of President Dennis Assanis and building on previous campus-wide strategic planning processes, the University is guided in these endeavors by five key priorities. Our first and most important priority is to **enhance the success of our students**, since this is fundamental to everything we do. We will **build an environment of inclusive excellence**, guided by the values of diversity and equity. The future depends on minds that are open and collaborative, so we will **strengthen our interdisciplinary and global programs**. Throughout the University, we will **foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship** to develop creative solutions to the world's most complex challenges. To fulfill all of these aspirations, we will **invest in our intellectual and physical capital** within a culture of operational excellence.

Ongoing dialogue is essential to ensure that UD remains a preeminent research institution dedicated to student success with relevance and impact, reinforced by our exceptional faculty and staff. Hence, we will continue to seek and value everyone's input to our strategic planning as this strategic plan is a living document, particularly as new opportunities emerge on the horizon. But one thing will always remain constant: our quest for lasting excellence and recognition while serving our core missions and extending our impact on the world.

Enhancing Our Students' Success

Students come to the University of Delaware in pursuit of the knowledge and skills necessary for success, both personally and professionally. Our responsibility is to prepare them to be competitive, collaborative, curious, informed and inspired so they can navigate our increasingly complex world. We expect our students to be engaged citizens who are aware of their intellectual strengths and interests, as well as their ethical values and commitments. Our students must be adept at thinking critically, communicating effectively, working both independently and cooperatively, interpreting meaning from the world, and reasoning clearly in whatever discipline they pursue.

Activities

- We will ensure that academic programs at all levels — undergraduate, graduate, professional, certificate and non-traditional — rigorously challenge students to be excellent scholars, promote interdisciplinary thinking and collaboration, and meet the needs of students and society. Formal and informal assessment practices will allow us to continually improve our programs.
- We will promote and support high-impact opportunities for students, such as research, fieldwork, internships, study-abroad, service learning, entrepreneurship and cultural programming, to provide rich and unique experiences that set them apart from their peers.
- We will seek ways to revitalize our Honors curriculum to attract, challenge and support high-achieving students so they can fulfill their intellectual aspirations.
- We will leverage our outstanding location between New York and Washington, D.C., to develop exceptional academic program and internship opportunities (e.g., financial technologies, civic engagement, health sciences, the arts, libraries and museums).
- We will employ the comprehensive Finish in Four initiative to encourage and support on-time degree completion for undergraduate students, employing such proven tools as predictive analytics, intensive advising, tutoring services, financial assistance and more.
- We will continue to bolster and centralize our academic advising services and employ predictive analytics to guide and mentor students along a productive path to graduation.
- We will continue to build strong partnerships with the state of Delaware to increase access and affordability for students and to apply UD's knowledge, expertise and community connections to improve the lives of Delawareans.
- We will reinvigorate our financial aid program for Delaware-resident students so that it clearly and concisely promotes UD's commitment to access and affordability, especially for low- and middle-income families and transfer students.
- Working with partners in the K-12 education system, we will continue to expand and strengthen academic and social pathways to UD, especially for Delaware-resident students.
- While increasing the diversity and academic excellence of the student body, we will grow undergraduate enrollment by 1,000 students.

- We will ensure an enriching student-life experience through practices and programs that promote a strong campus community, foster safe and healthy behaviors, and encourage student engagement in athletic and social events so all students understand they are valued and connected members of the Blue Hen family.
- Recognizing the evolving needs of our students, we will create and strengthen resources to promote student well-being and expand mental health services, including professional counseling and peer support programs.
- We will continually evaluate space needs throughout campus and optimize areas for students, such as new and more efficient study areas in the Morris Library and other common areas.
- We will provide excellent programs, facilities and support for student-athletes — for example, at the Whitney Athletic Center — to lead to success both in and out of competition, promote campus spirit, and cultivate the values of teamwork, sacrifice, perseverance, health and respect.
- We will support students and alumni in their career needs and goals, as well as their pursuit of lifelong learning, so the University of Delaware’s impact extends around the world and well into the future.

Building an Environment of Inclusive Excellence

We are committed to building a campus community that reflects the rich and complex diversity of the human experience, and we will nourish a campus culture that promotes and celebrates excellence for every individual. Diversity strengthens UD, benefits all students and promotes a society that respects differences in identity, belief, ability, background and perspective. Our pursuit of inclusive excellence will enable success by bringing the work of diverse teams to bear on the most complex challenges we face as an institution and as a society. As a university, we are dedicated to the ideals of personal freedom, free speech and free inquiry, and we must always live out those ideals with civility toward one another.

Activities

- We will increase the diversity of our student body by increasing recruitment of students from underrepresented communities and providing them with the support to make a UD education accessible and affordable.
- We will incorporate the lessons and benefits of diversity throughout the curriculum, teaching students to apply a broad range of perspectives to their studies and work across cultures to address complex challenges.
- We will increase the diversity of our faculty ranks, especially in signature areas of strength, and of our non-academic staff through strong recruiting, hiring and retention practices.
- We will comprehensively evaluate our diversity infrastructure and efforts at the institutional level and develop a robust organizational structure and leadership plan, so the University speaks and acts efficiently and with singular focus to ensure inclusive excellence.

- We will continually gauge the culture and climate of the University to assess the impact of our diversity-focused policies, programs and other initiatives to ensure that they are having their intended effects.
- We will ensure that the UD community remains a safe place for all people to learn, work, live and visit.

Strengthening Interdisciplinary and Global Programs

The most complex problems facing society do not adhere to national and geographic borders or the boundaries of single disciplines; nor can our attempts to address them. We must be fully engaged in the challenges of our world and contribute our expertise in an integrated manner in order to find solutions. UD's Graduate College will enable greater cross-disciplinary collaborations, development of dynamic academic programs and extraordinary achievements in discovery, creativity and scholarly productivity. Excellence in graduate education benefits undergraduates by connecting more students to research opportunities and other high-impact experiences. As the University of Delaware approaches the 100th anniversary of its pioneering study abroad program, the University recognizes the transformative impact that travel and global study of diverse cultures can have on our students. We are committed to creating even more opportunities to cultivate global citizens who value peace, cooperation and human rights, in alignment with our values for inclusiveness.

Activities

- We will instill in students the capacity to apply knowledge from multiple fields of study by advancing cross-disciplinary collaborations in teaching and research at all levels.
- We will develop the new Graduate College as a vehicle to expand, improve and promote excellent graduate programs and support the financial, academic and career needs of graduate students, who play an essential role in today's global knowledge economy.
- We will apply UD's strengths in the social sciences to develop workable solutions to the nation's most challenging domestic problems and elevate our programs to be among the best in the nation. The Joseph R. Biden, Jr. School of Public Policy and Administration and the Biden Institute provide unique opportunities to accomplish this goal.
- We will enhance community and global engagement with the University through the synergistic strengths of the visual, literary and performing arts, and the expansion of our performance and exhibition programs throughout the campus, from the Roselle Center for the Arts to the STAR Campus, and across the state and the world.
- We will expand our cross-disciplinary scholarship to educate the workers and leaders who can help communities become healthier and more resilient in the face of ongoing challenges.
- To develop our students as global citizens, we will expand our efforts to internationalize UD and consider ways to grow and diversify our international enrollments, extend global partnerships with higher education institutions and strengthen study abroad programs.

- We will translate UD’s scholarship into practice through meaningful engagement with the community, so that our work meets the public’s needs and is pursued with urgency and authenticity.

Fostering a Spirit of Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Throughout the University, our students and faculty must be able to develop innovative solutions to difficult challenges and apply entrepreneurial thought and approaches in everything they do. We will build the ideals of innovation and entrepreneurship into the entire curriculum, as well as extracurricular programs, so students learn to question the status quo and embrace opportunities to develop creative and sustainable solutions to the complex challenges they identify. This mindset is essential for preparing our students to succeed in the global knowledge economy. As an economic engine for our state and region, the University is committed to attracting world-class talent, producing novel technologies and driving meaningful partnerships with scalable impact. We are in the unique position to enrich society with a fresh culture propelled by people who innovate, create, embrace change and take risks.

Activities

- We will establish national prominence in biopharmaceuticals through our leadership role in the National Institute for Innovation in Manufacturing Biopharmaceuticals (NIIMBL), headquartered at the Ammon Pinizzotto Biopharmaceutical Innovation Center on the STAR Campus.
- We will continue to develop UD’s signature Horn Entrepreneurship program as the primary catalyst and coordinator for entrepreneurial education initiatives throughout the University.
- We will develop, implement and continually refine entrepreneurship certificate programs available to students in every college, promoting the value of entrepreneurial skills and thought processes throughout the University.
- We will grow UD’s Maker Initiative to advance the entrepreneurial culture of the University, providing grants for equipment and training and equipping inspirational maker spaces on campus to spur innovation and enable students’ entrepreneurial education.
- We will encourage and support UD’s inventors and their inventions, and we will strengthen our capacity for technology transfer and business development related to their innovations. In order to promote product development and commercialization, we will continue to develop ecosystems and incubator facilities both on campus and in partnership with others, e.g., Delaware Technology Park and Delaware Innovation Space.
- We will build strong and mutually productive relationships with government, industry, nonprofit and academic entities, including U.S. national laboratories, to advance our capacity for cutting-edge research and impactful scholarship.
- We will apply our knowledge and discoveries in the service of building a more robust, resilient and sustainable economy for the region.

Investing in our Intellectual and Physical Capital

To fulfill the University's ambitions, we need excellent people, and they in turn need excellent facilities and resources. We will continue to grow the faculty in strategic areas, both within and across the disciplines, and cultivate an ethos that values education, research, scholarship and engagement, as well as their integration across the University. We are investing in our University facilities on the Newark Campus, by building our Science, Technology and Advanced Research (STAR) Campus, while also expanding our academic and athletic facilities on the South campus and breathing new life into our buildings around the historic Green. We are also planning strategically on enhancing our presence throughout the state. We are committed to the principles of operational excellence, beginning with a commitment to sound stewardship of resources, compliance and effectiveness in all of our academic and non-academic units. To this end, we will continually evaluate our administrative structures, policies, models and practices so we can implement changes when necessary to align with our priorities.

Activities

- We will develop and implement a comprehensive strategic faculty hiring plan to guide the growth of full-time faculty members in signature areas of strength, both within and across the disciplines, bringing our faculty body to 1,500 and adding fresh perspectives to our distinguished ranks.
- We will include interdisciplinary cluster hiring among our strategies for building faculty, technology and institutional strength.
- We will develop and implement a capital master plan that guides our use of space, architecture and culture to connect, amplify and translate our scholarship on both a human and institutional scale.
- To provide attractive and affordable student housing options, we will evaluate our current portfolio and explore public-private partnership opportunities that could allow greater flexibility and control of the student life experience.
- Guided by a bold vision for the STAR Campus as an economic engine and a hub of teaching, research, innovation and service to the community, we will develop this unique asset to feature the programs, facilities and infrastructure necessary to promote interdisciplinary opportunities.
- We will approach all of our work with a focus on operational excellence and an unwavering commitment to institutional integrity.

Our Vision for the Science, Technology and Advanced Research (STAR) Campus

The STAR Campus is a burgeoning community of innovators driven by cutting-edge discovery. It is integral to our mission as a 21st century research university, a place that is both intellectual intersection and economic engine fueled by an urgent commitment to advance knowledge in service to others.

At the STAR Campus — as throughout the University of Delaware — we are dedicated to providing our students with a top-notch education that enables their success. This means providing hands-on learning experiences in interdisciplinary labs, in our community health clinics, and in internships and research projects

- We will continue to pursue sustainability action plans for reducing carbon emissions by implementing energy-saving and alternative energy source technologies towards a carbon-neutral future.
- We will pursue a fundraising and engagement campaign to build deep relationships with philanthropic donors and prospects, support the University's institutional priorities and secure the resources necessary for future growth and stability.
- We will build a strong team to pursue strategic external opportunities and explore engagement with corporate entities for potential public-private partnerships.

Reaffirming Our Commitment

As an institution with a nearly 300-year history, the University of Delaware is deeply woven into the fabric of life in the First State, the Northeast region, the nation and the world. We are proud of our excellent scholarship, our beautiful campus and, most importantly, our dedicated people. This strategic plan — brought to life through our daily efforts — will guide our work to continue building the University of Delaware of the future.

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