



Excellence: The Path to Success

Strategic Plan

2015-2023



NORTHEASTERN
STATE UNIVERSITY



NORTHEASTERN STATE UNI
TAHLEQUAH, OKLAHO

EXCELLENCE: THE PATH TO SUCCESS

The faculty and staff of Northeastern State University are united in our commitment to student success. Immersive learning opportunities that enhance the value of our degrees are embedded in the instructional programs, in numerous service projects and in the ways we interact as a university community on a daily basis. Perhaps the most direct evidence of our commitment to students is found in the foundational documents that guide us as we advance our mission.

During the past 13 months, a university-wide Strategic Plan Steering Committee, approved by the President's Cabinet and led by Dr. Cari Keller, has worked unselfishly to complete this strategic plan. On Aug. 24, 2014, my charge to the Committee was to: (1) embrace the free expression of ideas to increase buy in, (2) not compromise on vital goals and objectives, (3) stay the course through implementation and (4) have fun.

Through diligence and perseverance, the committee adopted and embraced an inclusive process where all voices were heard. Ideas and concerns were freely shared and vetted in a professional and collegial manner. Most importantly, consensus was garnered in the development of the mission statement, vision statement, core values and institutional priorities.

I'm certain that all NSU employees join me in conveying sincere gratitude to Dr. Keller and the Strategic Plan Steering Committee for their hard work. Our institution will be successful in the years ahead because they gave their time, intelligence and leadership to this task.

In addition to the basic elements of the strategic plan, it also includes quality service standards that enhance student success. NSU is committed to **safety**, **consistency**, **timeliness** and an atmosphere of **caring**. I appreciate the boldness shown by the committee to memorialize these quality service standards in this document.

True to our origins as the Cherokee Female Seminary that opened on May 7, 1851, we remain strongly committed to advancing learning through creativity, discovery and innovation. The tapestry of this great university has been developing for more than 164 years and now will expand to reflect the challenges and opportunities of the 21st Century.



Public higher education is experiencing change. It is critical that we continue to provide our students with degrees that they will value by delivering rigorous academic programs that prepare them for their careers and a fulfilling life.

Northeastern State University must be nimble and proactive to meet the rapidly evolving expectations of the students and communities we serve. This strategic plan provides us with a pathway that we will follow through 2023.

Gather Here. Go Far.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'STH', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Steve Turner, President



The essence of any university is its academic pursuits. Regardless of location or origin, the university's raison d'être is to enrich the community in which it serves. This is accomplished in many ways, foremost among them is the discovery, dissemination and application of knowledge through teaching, research and integration within and across disciplines. A focused emphasis on enhancing life at NSU and beyond led the steering committee to put forth the ideals of the strategic plan contained within this document. While the plan serves as a foundation for the future, the collective acumen of the faculty, staff, students and our community will fulfill the plan's objectives in ways unseen at present. It is an exciting proposition to fathom.

To ensure that the University stays the course, the plan insightfully included a reinforced emphasis on measuring NSU's successes and documenting its efforts. The effectiveness of the institution as it continues to grow and influence the lives of its communities must be observed and studied to ensure the services provided are those needed and to guarantee stewardship of its entrusted resources.

As the future of NSU is filled with opportunities, the caretakers of the University's vision are diligently working toward seizing those potentials. Those caretakers include this committee's membership. This plan also reflects the collective goals and passions of the institution's citizenry. With dedication, talent and diplomacy, the goals will be realized to the benefit of all that NSU has the honor of serving.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Arant". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Dr. Mark Arant, Provost/VP Academic Affairs





NORTHEASTERN
STATE UNIVERSITY

Excellence: The Path to Success

Strategic Plan

2015-2023

As Northeastern State University moves forward, it does so with the intent of creating and sustaining an institutional environment that supports continuous assessment and improvement. We embrace cultural diversity and a spirit of innovation that honors our Native American genesis while serving our multicultural and global population. Identified strategic goals for the University seek to nurture and drive the University's mission and vision while supporting economic development of the University's region.

MISSION

Founded on the rich educational heritage of the Cherokee Nation, the campuses of Northeastern State University provide its diverse communities with lifelong learning through a broad array of undergraduate, graduate, and professional doctoral degree programs. With high expectations for student success, the University provides quality teaching, challenging curricula, research and scholarly activities, immersive learning opportunities, and service to local and professional communities. The institution's dedicated faculty and staff offer a service-oriented, supportive learning environment where students prepare to achieve professional and personal success in a multicultural and global society.

VISION

Northeastern State University shapes the future of its region as the educational partner of choice, setting a standard of excellence by serving the intellectual, cultural, social and economic needs of the University's diverse communities.

VALUES

Integrity: NSU models integrity through ethical and intellectual behaviors and practices by advancing honesty, human dignity, and accountability.

Collaboration: NSU engages in collaboration through partnerships to create learning opportunities and promote educational and economic success.

Creativity: NSU advances creativity through exploration, innovation, critical inquiry, and intellectual freedom.

Leadership: NSU inspires leadership through its commitment to prepare and serve others.

Excellence: NSU pursues excellence by continually improving individually and as a community.

Communication: NSU advocates communication through the free flow of information and ideas.

Diversity: NSU values diversity and empowerment by promoting the rights of individuals and equal access to educational and enrichment experiences, respecting cultural differences, and ensuring equal opportunity.

HONORING OUR HERITAGE

Originally founded as the Cherokee National Female Seminary in 1846, Northeastern State University has maintained close ties with the Cherokees throughout its history. Distinctive Cherokee interests in education, community health and well-

being, economic and ecological sustainability, and Cherokee language and culture are reflected in NSU's curriculum and cultural engagement. As the regional university located in the Cherokee capital, NSU contributes directly to the Cherokee Nation's mission-based goals of "preserving and promoting Cherokee culture, language and values, and improving the quality of life for the next seven generations of Cherokee citizens."

With its original campus in Tahlequah, Northeastern State University nurtures sustainable partnerships with the Cherokee Nation and United Keetowah Band of Cherokee Indians. Campuses in Muskogee and Broken Arrow are located within the Muskogee Creek Nation. These two campuses embody a growing, and vital partnership with that nation.

Beyond the Cherokee and Muskogee peoples, Northeastern State University serves a region that includes citizens of dozens of American Indian nations. This is reflected in NSU's student body, which consistently has the largest number of American Indian students of any public university in the United States, representing approximately 30 different nations. Northeastern State University seeks to continue and enhance this distinction as a university of choice for American Indian students.



DEDICATION TO QUALITY AND SERVICE

Northeastern State University is an institution of higher learning that is diverse, collaborative, service-oriented and engaging. The University is a culturally rich and historically important place both regionally and nationally that allows for myriad experiences and points of enrichment for the whole of the NSU community. This community is comprised of all those who engage with the University; be they students, faculty, staff, campus communities and friends of the University. As a community, the University advocates and practices the following:

Care

I care therefore I will inspire students, faculty and staff to achieve academic, career and life goals through individualized guidance and advising.

- Enable success and remove any barriers that obstruct success
- Promote financial literacy, proper decision making, stability, and balance of work, life and family
- Be a gateway to a successful college experience, career and life

I care therefore I will promote diversity and enhance multicultural experiences.

- Encourage open-mindedness and acceptance
- Be courteous and respectful to each member of the NSU community in ways that demonstrate value and empowerment

I care therefore I will project a positive image and attitude.

- Smile and keep conversations positive and professional
- Aspire to exceed expectations whenever possible (my 1 percent more in every situation)
- Be approachable, engage, and interact with the NSU community
- Give individual attention to members of the NSU community in such a way as to demonstrate no other person is more important than they are at the time of service
- Facilitate connections, relationships and a sense of belonging in every interaction with others
- Empower, encourage and support each other consistently so that all aspects of the University are infused with a positive sense of esprit de corps

I care therefore I will use policies to enable and assist each member in the NSU community to accomplish their goals.

- Advocate for policies and practices to promote progress
- Strive to find ways to provide solutions and resolve problems

Safety

I care therefore I will practice safe behaviors in everything I do.

- Know and follow all safety policies and procedures
- Be proactive in reducing potential hazardous situations

I care therefore I will always put safety first and hold students, faculty and staff accountable.

- Promote and encourage physical and emotional health
- Identify, correct, and immediately report safety concerns
- Provide effective, efficient, and timely crisis response
- Provide appropriate resources for desired student, faculty and staff outcomes
- Educate the NSU Community on safety issues
- Eliminate shortcuts that are inconsistent with the “Safety First” priority

Timeliness

I care therefore I will look for ways to be responsive to the NSU community in a timely manner

- Provide timely and desired responses and follow-up
- Ensure my area is ready to serve the NSU community at all times
- Be prepared and anticipate needs of the NSU community and offer assistance
- Provide accurate and timely information to each member of the NSU community
- Stay aware of new technologies and best practices to support the success of the university

Consistency

I care therefore I will facilitate consistent processes and information

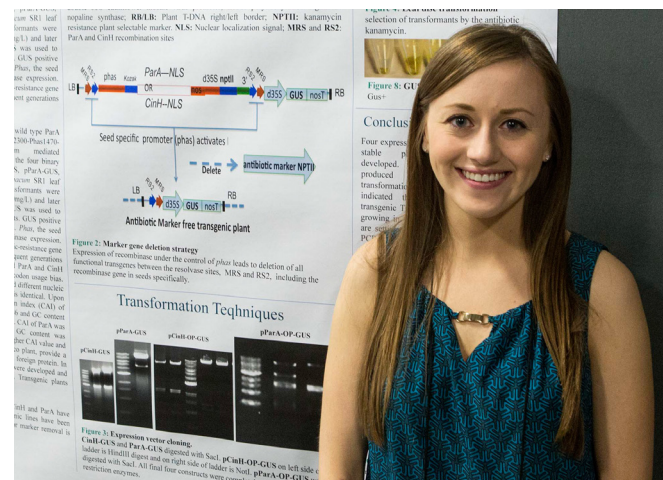
- Ensure philosophy, messaging, and actions that continuously project an ethic of care
- Pledge to maintain accessible and transparent communication and processes
- Work as a team and build partnerships to maximize effectiveness and efficiency
- Develop transformative assessment and measurement in all processes
- Be consistent in the application of all institutional policies

I care therefore I will take responsibility for the efficient use of university resources and inspire others to do the same.

- Share opportunities to improve the NSU community and the university
- Be prepared and anticipate operational plans of action
- Promote and implement sustainability

INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES

Northeastern State University embraces a mission that empowers its constituents to reach their full intellectual and human potential. The University facilitates this mission by sustaining a culture of learning, discovery and diversity. Student success is NSU's paramount concern. The institution provides a transformative educational experience preparing students to excel in a globally competitive, culturally diverse, and changing environment. The University also



serves as a cultural destination for its region. To sustain the standard of excellence upon which NSU's mission was developed, the following are identified as institutional priorities:

1. Academic and scholarly excellence
2. Student development and success
3. Enrollment, persistence and successful completion
4. Campus facilities and resources
5. Funding and advancement
6. Economic development and community stewardship
7. Honor institutional heritage
8. Institutional effectiveness through dynamic assessment and measurement

Globalization and a technology driven economy changed the employment landscape for NSU's constituents. This impacts the manner in which the institution moves forward in educating its students and preparing them for careers in the 21st century. Under the direction of the previous strategic plan, NSU began a shift in emphasis from teaching to learning, research to innovation and service to shared leadership. Driven by identified institutional priorities, the University now moves forward with the following strategic goals establishing a planning infrastructure to sustain excellence in the 21st century through a culture of assessment and continuous improvement.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1

Advance a culture of academic excellence and student success.

Northeastern State University's mission and vision promote the continuous pursuit of knowledge and acquisition of skills, inspiring our community to fulfill their personal and scholarly goals. By embracing the teacher-scholar model and high expectations for student success, NSU provides quality teaching, challenging curricula, immersive learning opportunities, quality library resources and services, service to local and professional communities, and supports faculty development through research and scholarly activities. The University recognizes faculty engaged with and current in their fields are indispensable to the teacher-scholar model.

The University seeks to develop the whole person, enhance engagement and support services in order to achieve and sustain student persistence, completion and career readiness. To that end, NSU will maintain a focus on achievement and transformation. The institution believes the most productive path to this environment will be derived from the exploration, identification and responsive adoption of evidence and research based practices and strategies, thereby fully evolving into a data-driven institution. The ultimate outcome will be an institutional mindset and culture that supports faculty and staff while advancing a culture of academic excellence and student success.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2

Secure and sustain the resources necessary to maximize the University's capacity for excellence.

The mission and vision of Northeastern State University emphasize serving the intellectual, cultural, social, and economic needs of its region. NSU has identified an overarching institutional priority to increase enrollment, student persistence, and degree completion. To meet the needs of the university community and address this institutional priority, the University must ensure physical, fiscal, and environmental responsibility. In so doing, the University provides a competitively excellent and affordable education by engaging in responsible stewardship of its resources, embracing cost containment and cost avoidance practices. The foundation of NSU's institutional excellence includes a healthy, safe, and environmentally sustainable campus, supported through campus security and efficient operations throughout all functional units. A thriving campus enhances individual and community health and well-being, positive educational experiences, and environmental stewardship. These institutional commitments require the pursuit of increased funding for scholarships, programming, facilities and professional development opportunities. Additionally, NSU recognizes that it must actively seek and cultivate relationships with alumni, community partners and philanthropists while promoting the benefits of investing in Northeastern State University. To maximize the return on these critical investments, NSU must also provide adequate infrastructure and funding while meeting the evolving needs of its students and region.

STRATEGIC GOAL 3

Support economic development and community stewardship at the local, tribal and regional levels.

NSU's mission and vision articulate the institution's unique role and responsibility in developing its communities and serving its citizens. The annual economic impact of Northeastern State University is one of the largest in the region. The University understands that by working together and facilitating partnerships, regional communities can and do thrive. NSU's three (3) campuses serve as educational, cultural and social hubs for the northeastern section of Oklahoma. The University will continue to enhance the quality of life in northeast Oklahoma by contributing its expertise, experience, and leadership to collaborations with its community, tribes and regional partners.





STRATEGIC GOAL 4

Honor our heritage as the cultural center of the region.

The University's mission and vision are not only clarified statements of purpose, but engaged calls to action for NSU to directly serve the intellectual and cultural needs of the University's many and diverse communities. For generations, the institution has addressed the social and economic needs of northeastern Oklahoma by acting as a communal hub; bringing people together and attracting visitors from around the world.

As a regional partner, Northeastern State University works to enhance the area's quality of life and rich cultural fabric by providing varied points of access. The resources the institution brings to bear are represented vis-à-vis the performing arts; artistic and educational exhibits; cultural and academic symposia, conferences, and lectures; athletics events; intellectual service by its faculty; and the provision of library and archival resources. While NSU strives to bring a global, multicultural perspective to its region, the University also highlights the unique contributions it makes as a university with Cherokee roots, distinctive American Indian curricular interests, and the largest Native American undergraduate student population in the nation. The University continues to progress on its mission as a living, data-driven institution, while remaining committed to its history as the premier cultural champion of northeast Oklahoma.

STRATEGIC GOAL 5

Engage in creativity and innovation.

The University's mission and vision have been developed to promote the growth, evolution and eventual actualization of the individual so they may reach their full academic and personal potential; ultimately extending outward to the community and global society. NSU's high expectation of student success builds and supports a culture of learning and discovery by championing an environment of creativity and innovation. This framework is therefore built into all disciplines; reaching beyond the classroom to prepare students for tomorrow's global society.

STRATEGIC GOAL 6

Ensure institutional effectiveness through continuous improvement.

The University's mission and vision call upon NSU to maintain the highest expectation of student success and community service. The institution will shape its region by serving the educational, cultural, social and economic needs of the University's communities. It is in this spirit of servant leadership that NSU has dedicated itself to academic and scholarly excellence. The University is committed to serving its communities and expanding a culture of learning, discovery and diversity.

To sustain this high standard, NSU will be innovative and responsive to competitive, market and economic conditions. Therefore it is understood that the University must embrace a mindset of continuous assessment and measurement as it documents the institution's effectiveness and demonstrates evaluated progress towards achieving institutional excellence.

The University is committed to data-driven decision making and continuous improvement. All institutional units must create and maintain dynamic plans aligning their goals and outcomes to NSU's mission, vision and strategic plan. Data and evidence will inform and guide institutional decisions, strategies and initiatives at every level. The University is unilaterally focused on continuous improvement of operations, policies, and practices in response to outcomes-based assessment and alignment to its mission, vision and strategic plan.



"We empower students, faculty, staff, and the community to reach their full intellectual and human potential by creating and expanding a culture of learning, discovery, and diversity."

— Focused Mission



NORTHEASTERN
STATE UNIVERSITY

www.nsuok.edu/StrategicPlan

