



Northern Illinois
University

NIU Strategic Action Planning Framework 2020

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VISION, MISSION AND CORE VALUES

Northern Illinois University's vision is to be an engine for innovation to advance social mobility; promote personal, professional and intellectual growth; and transform the world through research, artistry, teaching and outreach.

The mission of Northern Illinois University is to empower students through educational excellence and experiential learning as we pursue knowledge; share our research and artistry; and engage communities for the benefit of the region, state, nation and world.

In pursuing our vision and fulfilling our mission, we value and practice:

- Curiosity and creativity.
 - We provide our students active learning experiences.
 - We champion innovation.
 - We commit our resources to supporting students, faculty and staff in their research, artistry and professional development.
- Equity and inclusion.
 - We seek and are strengthened by the diverse perspectives and experiences of our university community members.
 - We use an inclusive decision-making process.
 - We appreciate and respect every member of our community.
- Ethics and integrity.
 - We prepare our students to become global leaders who work to build a better society.
 - We model ethical behavior in, and out of, the classroom.
 - We are transparent and accountable to our stakeholders.
- Service and stewardship.
 - We serve society and confront local, national and global challenges through collaborations that improve our learning, teaching and research.
 - We make accessible the knowledge and resources we create.
 - We promote our students' success through advising and mentoring.

To achieve our mission, vision and values, we will pursue outcomes aligned with the following strategic themes and guiding principles.

1 EMPOWERMENT AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

1.1 SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERS

We are committed to developing our leadership capabilities and to embedding good leadership practice in all that we do.

1.2 COMMUNICATE TRANSPARENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY

We communicate with each other in a respectful, transparent and supportive manner. Information is shared that supports collaborative decision-making and shared governance.

1.3 CREATE A CULTURE OF SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Faculty and staff understand and embrace NIU's goals, and are committed to the mission, vision and values of NIU. Our daily work on campus reflects the pursuit of our goals.

1.4 INSPIRE ACTIONS THAT DRIVE SUSTAINABILITY

We commit to building sustainability into the fabric of what we do, and to fostering a culture of awareness and engagement around issues of environmental, social and economic balance.

2 STUDENT RECRUITMENT, STUDENT SUCCESS AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE

2.1 TAKE A STUDENT-CENTRIC APPROACH

We strive to put the student at the center of our academic programs and support services, as well as the opportunities made available outside the classroom. We encourage student well-being through programs, policies and partnerships that focus on the health, safety and resiliency of our students. We offer academic programs that respond to the needs of our region, state and nation. We aspire for all students to succeed in their chosen majors and graduate on time.

2.2 FOCUS ON INCLUSIVE SOCIAL MOBILITY

We recruit and retain students with diverse backgrounds and different lived experiences. We aspire to be a leader in supporting diverse students to achieve their academic, professional and personal goals, and to eliminating equity gaps.

2.3 SUPPORT GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

NIU will provide educational and cultural experiences that prepare our students to be global citizens and leaders. We aspire to be a destination for students from around the world and to expand our educational offerings beyond the U.S. to establish a global footprint for NIU. Our international engagement initiatives will advance learning and discovery and prepare students for the global economy in which they will live, learn, work and thrive.

3 ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND CURRICULUM INNOVATION

3.1 FOSTER A CULTURE OF INNOVATION

Innovative ideas do not just appear – they are cultivated in spaces where taking risks is encouraged and where people are committed to finding better ways to do things, solutions to complex problems and new ways to make the world a better place. We provide opportunities and support for students, faculty and staff to be innovative, entrepreneurial and forward-focused. We are not afraid to fail in the pursuit of innovation. We are prepared for both anticipated and unexpected transformation.

3.2 SUPPORT TRANSDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS, RESEARCH AND EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

We push the boundaries of academic disciplines to meet the needs of today and tomorrow through transdisciplinary degree programs, research centers and outreach initiatives where we mutually define problems and seek solutions.

3.3 COMMIT TO A NIMBLE AND INNOVATIVE CURRICULUM

Our curriculum supports our mission, vision and values, and responds to the needs of our students and a changing environment. We focus on engagement, relevancy and innovative pedagogy. Using relationships as resources, we develop pioneering programs and experiential learning opportunities that speak to the critical issues facing the region, state and nation.

4 DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

4.1 CULTIVATE EQUITY

We create and foster equity-minded practices that support the academic success of our students as well as the professional development and career progression of our faculty and staff.

4.2 BUILD AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

NIU strives to create a welcoming, inclusive and equitable community where all people are treated with dignity and respect. We are committed to safeguarding every individual's constitutional rights to free speech and assembly, as well as to addressing incidents of bias that might negatively affect individuals and communities.

4.3 PROMOTE EDUCATION, AWARENESS AND ACTION

We provide our students, faculty and staff with timely and effective education and discussion around issues of equity, diversity, social justice, implicit bias and other topics. We are committed to civil discourse and conversation that is intended to enhance understanding. We work toward creating an equity-minded community that challenges and eliminates exclusionary practices so that all of our faculty, staff and students succeed.

5 RESEARCH, ARTISTRY AND ENGAGEMENT

5.1 PREPARE NORTHERN ILLINOIS FOR A CENTURY OF CHANGE

We promote and support research, innovation and engagement to prepare our students and region for a century of change in the environment, demographics and technology. NIU will utilize its significant expertise to become a regional and national leader in creating sustainable communities around the world.

5.2 DEVELOP A ROBUST RESEARCH AND INNOVATION PORTFOLIO

We pursue ideas and creativity within the disciplines and at the intersection of disciplines. Transdisciplinary programs and research centers will bring expertise across campus to address broad and complicated problems.

5.3 PROMOTE PARTNERSHIPS THAT STRENGTHEN OUR MISSION

We leverage connections with northern Illinois and the greater Chicago region to build, nurture and enhance partnerships with a broad range of entities, including educational institutions from K-12 through university, municipal governments, non-profits, governmental laboratories and state agencies, as well as the private sector, to identify challenges and develop collaborative solutions. These initiatives have a positive impact on the region and create research, scholarly and artistic opportunities for students and faculty.

5.4 PROMOTE RESEARCH, ARTISTRY AND ENGAGEMENT

We draw upon the knowledge, talent and energy of our faculty, staff and students to extend the boundaries of our campus. We take on significant societal challenges. We collaborate with the communities around us for mutual benefit and to affect lasting positive change. Our students, both undergraduate and graduate, actively participate in research, artistry and engagement initiatives led by our faculty and staff, enriching their experiences and preparing them to be lifelong learners and responsible citizens.

6 RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

6.1 ENCOURAGE AND CELEBRATE EXPERIMENTATION AND INNOVATION

We encourage entrepreneurial action to improve our processes, procedures and policies. We reimagine and streamline what we do in light of new technologies, external environments and the needs of our students, faculty and staff.

6.2 ESTABLISH FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

We recognize the importance of stewardship in our deployment of our financial resources. We deploy resources to meet our strategic goals and live within our means. Relationships and partnerships are resources we mine and develop in support of our goals. We identify strategy partners to add value and speed in achieving results.

6.3 CREATE A DATA-INFORMED AND TECHNOLOGY-SUPPORTED DECISION FRAMEWORK

We base our decisions on well-curated, understandable data. We use technology platforms to create efficiencies and support data-informed decision-making.

KEY REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The above themes and guiding principles are woven throughout existing goals and strategic planning documents, including:

- [Presidential Goals](#)
- [Strategic Enrollment Management Plan](#)
- [ILEA Equity Plan](#)
- College strategic plans – [College of Education](#) and [College of Business](#)
- [A DEI Diversity Plan](#)
- [A DEI Annual Report](#)
- [Research Vision & Strategy](#)
- [Engagement Networks](#)