

SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION

Southwestern University, under the auspices of the United Methodist Church, is committed to undergraduate liberal education involving both the study of and participation in significant aspects of our cultural heritage, expressed primarily through the arts, the sciences, the institutions, and the professions of society. As a teaching-learning community, Southwestern encourages rigorous inquiry and scholarship, creative teaching and the expression of free human life. The University seeks to involve the student in finding a personal and social direction for life, developing more sensitive methods of communication, cultivating those qualities and skills which make for personal and professional effectiveness, and learning to think clearly and make relevant judgments and discriminations.

CORE PURPOSE

Fostering a liberal arts community whose values and actions encourage contributions toward the well-being of humanity.

CORE VALUES

- Cultivating academic excellence
 - Promoting lifelong learning and a passion for intellectual and personal growth
 - Fostering diverse perspectives
 - Being true to oneself and others
 - Respecting the worth and dignity of persons
 - Encouraging activism in the pursuit of justice and the common good
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VISION, DIRECTION, AND GOALS FOR SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY April 28, 2016

Vision: Think, Create, and Connect... To Make Meaning and Make a Difference

Southwestern University is a leader in innovative undergraduate education, offering a life-enriching residential liberal arts and sciences experience for talented individuals who share a passion for intellectual exploration, engagement, and growth. Discovery and creation are intentionally fostered throughout a diverse and inclusive community of students, faculty, staff, and alumni, empowering all to advance research, scholarship, and the creative arts and lead fulfilling lives that contribute to the well-being of humanity.

Strategic Direction for the Next Five and Ten Years

Southwestern University commits to empowering students to think, create, and make meaning through intentional connections, innovative academic pursuits, and a vibrant residential community. This ongoing commitment to the rich experiences essential to intellectual, personal, and professional success in the 21st century requires institutional financial sustainability achieved through collaborative innovation and creativity.

Goals (The bullet points are institutional objectives to achieve each goal.)

Goal 1: Enroll and retain students who have significant potential for academic excellence.

- Increase the enrollment of students from the top 10% of their high school graduating class to 35% of the first-year class in 5 years and 40% in 10 years.
- Increase our first- to second-year retention rate to 88% in 5 years and first-to third-year retention rate to 85% in 10 years.
- Achieve a 6-year graduation rate of 75% in 5 years and a 4-year graduation rate of 75% in 10 years.
- Recruit transfer students of similar academic quality, comprising 15% of the student body.
- Increase the percentages of out-of-state students to a minimum of 20% in 5 years and 30% in 10 years.

Goal 2: Foster the highest standards of scholarship, academic quality, and differentiated educational and co-curricular experiences focused on thinking, creating, and connecting.

- Enhance our collective efforts to secure external funding for both faculty and faculty/student research.
- Align the general education curriculum with Paideia principles to foster intentional connections that bridge ways of thinking and acting across diverse ideas and disciplinary knowledge. Assess the general education program and outcomes over a 5-year period.
- Over 5 years, enhance our existing strength in STEM by prioritizing more intentional disciplinary and interdisciplinary connections that deeply integrate the humanities, fine arts, and the social sciences with the natural sciences.
- Redefine the residential experience to enhance and sustain intellectual engagement, offering students a variety of co-curricular programs that support leadership; entrepreneurship; creativity; and physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.
- Continue our commitment to inclusive pedagogy and relationship building across our diverse community.

Goal 3: Cultivate the culture and practices among faculty and staff necessary to sustain institutional excellence and a community focused on student success.

- Build and sustain a diverse, inclusive community grounded in mutual trust and respect that promotes shared commitments, accomplishments, accountability, and responsibility for achieving institutional goals.

- Implement ongoing programs and activities that educate members of the Southwestern community—students, faculty, staff, alumni, and parents—about the University’s vision and goals.
- Foster shared accountability and facilitate broad community engagement and awareness of institutional priorities and decisions through the committee and governance structure.
- Encourage students, faculty, and staff to support, lift up, and engage with one another, with our alumni and friends, and with Southwestern as an institution.

Goal 4: Continue to develop and implement a sustainable financial model that reflects the new realities for higher education generally and for liberal arts institutions specifically.

- Continue to pursue new opportunities for lowering costs and increasing revenues—including net tuition revenue that exceeds inflationary cost increases; a discount rate of 50% or less in 5 years; and new gifts to fund financial aid, academic chairs, deferred maintenance, and endowment growth.
- Achieve an endowment spend rate that safeguards the future while providing stable budget support.
- Enhance our collective efforts to secure new funding to support our commitment to being an inclusive and diverse intellectual community.
- Implement predictive analytics and data-informed decision-making that ensures that institutional efforts and resources, and targeted initiatives, are directed toward advancing goals aligned with the strategic direction, such as the continued commitment to Phase II of our Science Center project.
- Practice focused and integrated marketing and communications activities that target specific audiences whose knowledge of Southwestern University can lead to increased revenues and institutional visibility.
- Continue to educate and inform all Southwestern community members to promote understanding of and engagement with our financial reality and strategic direction.