Washington State University
TRI-CITIES

# 2020-2025

## A FIVE-YEAR LOOK-AHEAD AND THE PATH TO OUR PREFERRED FUTURE

# Chancellor's Introduction

I want to thank everyone for taking the opportunity to participate in our strategic planning process. Faculty, staff, students, and community members played a pivotal role in helping us craft a plan that will guide Washington State University Tri-Cities over the next five years and beyond. The resulting strategy will help us determine our priorities, including budgeting, and act as a bellwether for imagining and bringing to fruition our desired future.

As I write this, I am at home under the State of Washington's *"Stay Home, Stay Healthy"* orders, modified phase 1.  Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, there are many more unknowns in the future. We know that higher education will be impacted and that we will recover from the economic realities of the pandemic, but there are many positive outcomes, as well.  Lessons learned from the change from face-to-face instruction to virtual learning will help us keep best practices in pedagogy.  Student Services have changed as well as providing greater access for students.  We will continue to implement the positive aspects and efficiencies gained during this time. Our research tells us, however, that demand for higher education will remain strong in our region. We will scale-up to serve the needs of a diverse and fast-growing population, address the local degree gap and accommodate the needs of a rapidly diversifying industry base. We will focus on our strengths in research and continue to grow around key areas.

With that in mind, we will still need to adjust along the way.  We have adopted a continuous improvement model for our strategic plan and as a campus and community, we will monitor our progress, hold each other accountable, reevaluate our environment annually, and make the appropriate adjustments as we go. In this way, we will maintain a relevant five-year look ahead period.

I want to give a special thank you to the many members of our planning teams. A big thank you to our leaders Sarah Tragesser, Ray White, and John Mancinelli, who skillfully guided us through this process. They received support from the other members of the steering committee, Kate McAteer, Zach Harper, and Paul Carlisle. They were joined by the planning team, Eadie Balint, Christopher Cree, Patrick Jensen, Brian Moreno, Mohamed Osman, Anna Plemons, Jordyn Creighton, Maegan Murray, and Oscar Carrillo, all of whom volunteered many hours to sift through data and help set the objectives. Their work was augmented by input from our strategic advisors, Naidu Rayapati, Manuel Garcia-Perez, Joan Giese, Michael Mays, Farion Williams, Thomas Henick-Kling, Christine Portfors, and Vicki Gordon. We had a great mix of faculty, staff, and community members, and their commitment, authentic engagement, and thoughtful discourse has driven this ambitious project to its successful completion.

Through this process, and the planning documents it has produced, a bright future was revealed for WSU Tri-Cities. We have so much to be proud of and we will do what it takes to enhance a sense of pride in what we do as the only public land-grant, R1 university in the region. We are a valuable part of the Washington State University system and have much to contribute to the Drive to 25. We know we have what it takes. Working together, we will create our preferred future.
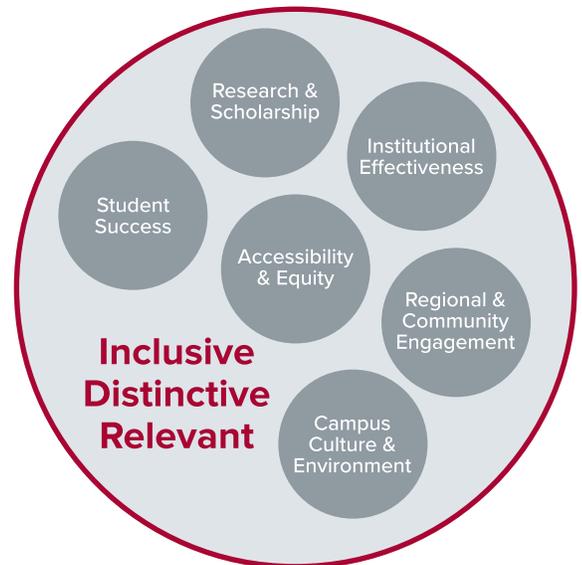
**GO COUGS!**

# A Continuous Improvement Process

WSU Tri-Cities has adopted the Society for College and University Planning (SCUP) continuous improvement model. This integrated planning approach considers both internal and external factors and aligns planning both vertically and horizontally to:

a. Gain an accurate picture of our environment
b. Ask hard, but necessary, questions
c. Build actionable plans



## This Model at Tri-Cities

At WSU Tri-Cities, the chancellor leads the iterative planning effort as the executive sponsor, providing guidance for faculty co-chairs and planning teams at each phase of development.

**Phase I -** A small steering committee did the preliminary "planning to plan" work, conducting internal and external environmental scanning, focus groups, town halls and preliminary surveys. They also prepared the Baseline Study - an inventory and analysis of the institution's environment key functional areas. Through this work, three common values and six distinct themes were identified.

The overarching values of **distinctiveness, relevance and inclusiveness** were integral in all of our conversations and are woven throughout this document. Within this environment, six broad strategic themes emerged, which were refined into our strategic goals.

**Phase II -** A strategic planning team studied the data and developed broad goals for each of the strategic themes. Team members (20+) represent faculty, staff, students and community partners. Through a series of workshops and presentations, they synthesized and prioritized the collected information. Broad goals were crafted to become our institutional priorities for the next five years.

**Phase III -** An implementation and planning support team develops strategic objectives for accomplishing our goals. They also work with academic and operational units to identify the specific strategies and metrics to track in each area. This standing committee is charged with supporting, tracking and reporting progress toward strategic goals. They also facilitate the annual refresh of the rolling five-year strategic plan.

## Five-Year Rolling Plan

Unique to WSU Tri-Cities is an implementation process that reviews and rewrites the plan annually through an inclusive and transparent planning process. It is a rolling five-year look-ahead that is monitored and reviewed each year. This strategic planning process leads directly into the local budgeting process at WSU Tri-Cities, thereby informing critical resource allocation.

# Outlook and Environment

Conducting a thorough environmental scan, planning teams considered relevant trends affecting higher education from five lenses: social, technological, economic, environmental and political (STEEP analysis). From this analysis, fifteen trends were prioritized for the WSU Tri-Cities to address in this five-year plan. In addition, local economic, demographic and political environments were analyzed and yielded important data and insights about continuing demand.

## Economic Trends and Forecasting

### Population will grow

**350,000**
population in next 10 years

### Strong demand for baccalaureate degrees

**56%**
of local job postings expect a bachelor's degree

**36%**
of people ages 25-64 hold a bachelor's degree or higher

Presents a large deficit of work-prepared employees

### Diversification of regional industries drawing tertiary industries

**Current regional industries:** agriculture, healthcare, energy, science, education, and technology

**Drawing industries:** hospitality services, distribution, information centers and community services.

Benton-Franklin Economic Trends data suggests that WSU Tri-Cities explore strategies that engage adult learners and high school graduates differently. Significant growth and shifts inworkforce demands will require WSU Tri-Cities to adapt. While this may sound ominous, in reality, adaptation is the strength of liberal arts education. WSU Tri-Cities' ability to develop critical thinkers who learn and adapt will be key to meeting industry demands.

## WSU Tri-Cities pipeline of students is shifting

### Overall population getting younger

Number of youth in Pasco and Kennewick is increasing

Number of youth in Richland is decreasing

**28%**
of first-year high school graduates select to attend community college

**15%**
of first-year students select to attend a four-year university

**57%**
**Remaining population:** Either leaves the state or gains employment without credentials or degrees.

The **improved economy and the ability for students to enter well-paying jobs** contribute to the decrease of enrollment in both community and technical college and four-year institutions - **matching the national higher-education enrollment decline of 17% annually.**

## Fifteen trends affecting WSU Tri-Cities in the next 5 years

| Category | | Trends |
|---|---|---|
| **Social** | | Less value placed on traditional higher education |
| | | Need for robust wrap-around services supporting first-generation, minorty, and LGBTQ |
| **Technological** | | Keeping pace / staying current (funding, support, etc.) |
| | | Preparing students for 21st century careers |
| | | Fully connected digital workplace and personal environments |
| **Economic** | | Affordability will be critical to access as the cost to deliver education rises |
| | | Must address weak enrollment and build a stable undergraduate base |
| | | Rapid demographic changes (aging population, widening income gap) |
| **Environmental** | | Physical campus (buildings and infrastructure): maintain/renovate/replace |
| | | Redesign learning spaces and creative spaces |
| | | Shifting demographics and increased diversity of all kinds |
| | | Increased awareness, regulations and commitment for environmental sustainability |
| **Political** | | State support for higher education not recovering from pre-recession levels, pushing costs to students |
| | | Legislative focus and funding moving away from liberal arts education toward job skills |
| | | Shifting state politics and resulting funding priorities |

# Goal One
## Student Success

Foster an inclusive environment supporting academic achievement and comprehensive student success.

**Objectives**

1. Create a safe and welcoming learning environment for all students.

2. Support a holistic approach and robust campus experience that support students' academic and personal success.

3. Promote civic engagement to prepare students for participation in a diverse democratic and global society.

## Our preferred future...

WSU Tri-Cities students report a strong sense of belonging, multiple and relevant pathways for student success and an environment of support through academic achievement and education in their career life-cycle. A holistic approach (academic, co-curricular learning, student development, career and civic engagement) fosters the student experience and cultivates an inclusive environment.

# Goal Two
## Research & Scholarship

Elevate research and creative work as a
public land-grant, R1 WSU institution.

**Objectives**

1. Leverage WSU's R1 status, the Washington
State University system, its assets and brand
to enhance and grow a scholarship identity
unique to the mid-Columbia region.

2. Capitalize on campus core competencies,
strengths, and community resources to
distinguish key programs as world-class
centers for research.

3. Expand creative and accessible research
opportunities for faculty and students.

## Our preferred future...

WSU Tri-Cities is known as a center for
research excellence in signature areas of
science with national and global reach. The
world views WSU Tri-Cities as an engine
for cutting-edge research and scholarship
that capitalizes on our local and regional
strengths. We are further known for our
unique model of engaging undergraduate
students in meaningful research and providing
opportunities to contribute to our world
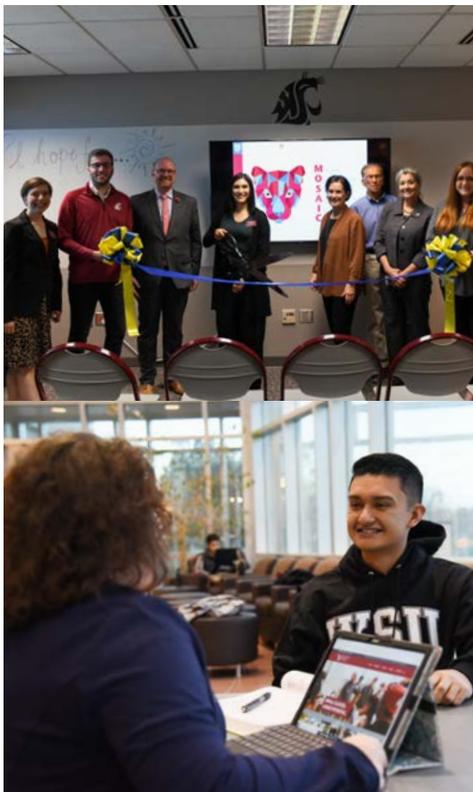through local and regional partnerships.

# Goal Three
## Accessibility and Equity

Promote access to and inclusivity within the campus community.

### Objectives

1. Reduce barriers to academic access, degree completion, and continuing education across the education and career life-cycles.

2. Provide support for students and employees to promote enhanced engagement, access, and representation.

3. Maintain a physical campus design that promotes and encourages an inclusive and equitable learning environment.

## Our preferred future...

Students in the mid-Columbia region see WSU Tri-Cities as their first choice and their most affordable, four-year degree option. Staff are well-known for reducing barriers and accommodating each student's unique needs. They are experts in reaching underserved and underrepresented populations and maximizing access to high-quality education, regardless of physical, socioeconomic, or geographic limitations. Flexible scheduling, robust support services and affordable options for attendance present the best opportunities for student success.

# Goal Four
## Regional and Community Engagement

Demonstrate our value to the community and leverage the distinctiveness of the region through engagement by students, faculty, and staff.

### Objectives

1. Make campus expertise available to the broader community by serving as a steward of resources, knowledge and history and as a center/hub for lifelong learning.

2. Enhance visible and reciprocal partnerships that put WSU Tri-Cities at the center of community leadership.

3. Develop and grow community relationships to advance the land-grant mission via engagement and philanthropy.

## Our preferred future...

The people and organizations of the mid-Columbia region regularly utilize the resources of our campus (talent, knowledge, data, facilities and equipment) to advance community interests and better understand our region. WSU Tri-Cities holds a reputation for serving community needs and integrating students and research with community partners. Community leaders value our work, actively partner for strategic opportunities and support our cause. Our students, faculty and staff are embedded in and contribute to local initiatives that help our communities and serve our WSU mission to advance, extend and apply knowledge.

# Goal Five
## Campus Culture & Environment

Provide a vibrant culture of pride and an inclusive environment that promotes both collective and personal achievement.

**Objectives**

1. Maintain a workplace where employees feel safe, acknowledged, and able to do their best to achieve professional objectives in line with the mission and strategic plan of the campus.

2. Build pride in the WSU Tri-Cities brand and actively support "lifelong Cougs" within our community.



## Our preferred future...

WSU Tri-Cities is home to a culturally-diverse population of students, staff, and faculty. The distinction of being a Tri-Cities Coug brings a sense of pride and comradery to our students, alumni and community. Faculty and staff are invested in the strategic direction of the campus and are proud of their affiliation with WSU Tri-Cities. The work environment supports individuals to pursue professional goals and achieve their potential. An overall inclusive environment connects individuals in meaningful ways, fostering a sense of belonging for all.

# Goal Six
## Institutional Effectiveness

Prioritize the strategic and efficient stewardship of resources.

### Objectives

1. Establish and maintain sustainable operations and mechanisms for generating critical resources for growth.

2. Create processes that are transparent, consistent, and inclusive of the campus community and the WSU system.

3. Refine and establish inclusive processes and procedures to promote a culture of accountability, efficiency and growth.

## Our preferred future...

Resources are managed through a comprehensive annual process that engages the entire campus community. Campus core operations are fully supported by the revenue they generate. New initiatives, selected through the annual planning process, are tied directly to strategic initiatives. Funding is clearly identified and tied to the performance of these programs and reevaluated annually. Each unit tracks key performance indicators that contribute to our culture of planning, accountability and data-informed decision making.

# Acknowledgement of America's First Peoples

WSU Tri-Cities is located on shared traditional homelands of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation.