



UPIKE
Strategic Plan
2022

Narrative Preamble for the Strategic Plan:

If we could only choose one thing on which to focus as an institution, what would it be?

This question haunts my days and causes me to stare, sleepless, at the ceiling at night. There are so many competing priorities that we have as a university - teaching, research, athletics, fundraising, student development, student life, residence life, medicine, politics, community relations, business creation, and financial management - just to name a few. I am deeply involved in each of these things and many, many more. Sometimes my involvement in so much leaves me with little time and energy for other important things. Consequently, I have been thinking increasingly about institutional priorities and I have come to a personal realization.

At the center of everything we do is hope.

Education is in the business of hope, and hope is embodied in the students we teach. More than anything, the region, the city, the parents, and the alumni hope for one thing - they hope our students will be successful. They invest both their money and their time in ensuring that our students will have the best possible chance for achieving success. Their hope must be our goal, or something is seriously misaligned.

Of course at UPIKE, we go one step further, we invest our lives. Every job at the university must be filled by someone who believes that investing in the lives of students is the most important thing that we do. We dare not fail; the results would be too devastating. Appalachia needs people who have been successfully educated. Every ill that affects us - poverty, diabetes, blindness, unemployment, and drug addiction - can be improved as, educated students become successful, educated adults.

There are many ways we might measure whether we are successful. Enrollment, grades, test scores, retention, and graduation rates are imperfect indicators about which we must care. We will have failed in our mission if our students are not able to be successful in completing their education. However, the trouble with these aggregated measures is they do not take into account the important, personal level of student success. If Mary got a D on her midterm report did her faculty member, student success advisor, tutors, RA's, and peers come together around her in a way that was supportive enough for Mary to receive a C? Sure, the effort required to learn is still up to Mary, but the hope we offer is that the environment we create will help Mary see that she can get a C and maybe even more.

Therefore, we will define student success as occurring when each student achieves the goals they have set for themselves. For most students, that means the successful completion of the degree, program, or certificate they have chosen to pursue. Additionally, we believe our students are successful when they are engaged within the UPIKE community in activities which allow them to explore profession, vocation, and leadership. They are successful when they understand the social, cultural, and political context within which they live and work. While we

realize that much of any person's success depends on them, we have a responsibility to do everything in our power to create the kind of proactive and supportive instructional environment where students can be successful.

We could give them degrees. Perhaps we should give them A's and just call it a job done.

Fortunately, that would be diametrically opposed to our students' ultimate success. Making things easier is not the answer; they do not need an easy pass. At this point, some might think that I am speaking only of our undergraduate population. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our graduate schools are far more selective, but some of our professional students still struggle to learn. Many of them memorize in isolation and struggle on their board exams, clinical application is difficult, and depression is a real problem. Our graduate students need to succeed as much as our undergraduates.

Our students need to be challenged, guided, and helped. They need an environment that is supportive, safe, and attractive. They need an outstanding curriculum that reaches into the past and prepares them for the future. They need outlets for their energy that are engaging, offer opportunities to try new things, and carry them into the world. They need healthy food, social support, and financial assistance. More than anything, they need great teachers, mentors, and friends.

These are things we are equipped to provide, but we must focus.

Not everyone will make it all the way through four years, so they need places to step out with credentials and skills that will help them find work. Our degrees must prepare them to live life well, which includes finding work that will support lives of meaning. Not everyone will want to stop at a bachelor's degree, so we need outstanding graduate programs in medicine, optometry, education, business, and whatever else we believe will help our students become successful. Indeed, our University Mission speaks to our desire to provide intellectual, cultural and economic opportunities:

The University of Pikeville is the leading higher education institution of Central Appalachia. Founded in 1889, UPIKE remains steadfast in our commitment to preparing students for the future while creating intellectual, cultural and economic opportunities for Appalachia. Maintaining our commitment to Christian principles, UPIKE recognizes the infinite worth of each person, respecting a variety of religious expressions.

As I read the SWOT analysis, pondered on the hopes and dreams our community offered, and let your thoughts wash over my mind again and again, I kept returning to this one thing.

We must concentrate all of our attention on the things that will empower our students to be successful.

It is with this at the forefront of our thinking that we propose four goals that will help increase the likelihood that our students will succeed. These goals will need the flesh of objectives, strategies, and metrics. One person should not articulate every detail of our plan, no matter who he or she might be. Each campus unit should look at their work through the lens of student success and these four goals to identify the things they must do to help the university fulfill our most important task - the success of our students.

Strategic Vision: At the University of Pikeville, we will concentrate all of our attention on engaging and empowering students to be successful learners and leaders.

Goal 1 - While honoring our tradition as a school of opportunity, with an eye toward our status as a leader in health professions education and in the belief that our future as a leader in eye care is of critical importance, we will enhance the reputation and brand awareness of UPIKE as a leading Appalachian university by building innovative curricular and co-curricular programs, guided by educational outcomes, that attract, support, and empower students to be successful in the twenty-first century.

To support this goal, we propose the following objectives:

- Develop the highest quality, most innovative and adept educators by investing in the professional development of our faculty and staff across the university.
- Implement a systematic approach to assessment that recognizes and rewards excellent teaching, facilitates growth, and identifies areas of concern
- Build learning communities in academic programs, residence halls, and on athletic teams
 - Create a co-curricular honors program
- Create a comprehensive approach to supporting the academic success of our students - tutoring, ACE, student success, disability services, testing, etc. (Consider the creation of a center for teaching and learning)
- Build or rebuild our academic and co-curricular programs with a focus on student success
 - Structure (or restructure) our curriculum to increase first-time pass rates on board exams
 - Improve our transfer processes
 - Redesign the university transcript to include the learning outcomes of curricular and co-curricular programs
 - Craft a general education curriculum that thoroughly articulates knowledge, skills, and dispositions within the context of the liberal arts.
 - Consider moving remediation to the summer before the first year
- Consider increasing our international programming - internal and external

Goal 2 - Recognizing that we are situated in a beautiful location, we will develop facilities, programming, and technology that leverage our environment to effectively attract, empower, and retain students through the completion of appropriate credentials.

To support this goal we propose the following objectives:

- Prioritize the renovation of existing facilities - classroom and laboratory facilities, residence halls, student life spaces, and maintenance facilities
 - Plan and execute the renovation of two to three facilities
- Prioritize the construction of new facilities - student center, residence hall, and athletic complex,
 - Plan and execute the construction of two facilities
- Create a variety of outdoor programs that take advantage of our rural location
- Utilize technology to deliver face-to-face, online, and blended classes that meet the learning needs of our students, wherever they may be located.
- Consider the creation of new academic programming related to our rural location - tourism, appalachian culture, environmental science, brewing/distilling, high tech agriculture
- Consider the creation of stacked credentials, changes to the academic calendar, and changes to the way we charge for an education

Goal 3 - Building upon both our Christian heritage and pluralistic tradition as a family-oriented institution, we will intentionally create a variety of pathways that empower students to explore career, vocation, and leadership.

To support this goal we propose the following objectives:

- Create a center for vocation, calling, and career exploration
- Create and implement a new student summer experience that is required, significant and builds a desire to learn and grow
- Create numerous opportunities for students to take on increasing levels of service and leadership at the university and in the community
- Create a communication plan for families of students that informs them on the best ways to help their student succeed
- Work with local K-12 and BSCTC to create pathways to the bachelor's degree
- Consider revising and expanding OMSP, articulation agreements, and similar programming to create seamless admission and completion of OD/DO degrees
 - Build a peer mentoring program that incorporates KYCO/KYCOM students with undergraduates interested in pursuing callings in the health professions
- Articulate and include habits of the mind and habits of the heart as explicit components of the curriculum
- Help students develop an appreciation for Appalachian history and culture

Goal 4 - Realizing that a successful college must also be sustainable, we will strengthen the financial capacity and long-term sustainability of UPIKE through strategic program development, establishment of a strong sense of UPIKE identity with our current students, re-establishment of relationships with our alumni, cultivation of grants and donors, and effective stewardship of our resources.

To support this goal we propose the following objectives:

- Select new degree programs carefully that fit our identity and expand the range of possibilities for our alumni to be successful
 - Consider the creation of a center for entrepreneurship, business incubator, or start-up center
 - Consider the creation of a two-year Master's degree in Medical Science that would prepare students to be successful in Medical or Optometry School
 - Explore which programs might be offered in a high quality manner in online or hybrid formats
 - Research and identify academic programs that UPIKE should consider offering with special focus on programs in the health care related professions
- Engage alumni by every means possible
- Achieve appropriate medians (AIKCU or CUPA) for employee salaries and benefits
- Build the university endowment as we add facilities and student scholarships
- Explore the feasibility of a capital campaign related to facilities expansion, scholarships, and endowment
- Increase energy efficiency across the campus
- Empower faculty, staff, and administrators to implement change at the unit level
- Invest in our faculty and staff by creating a robust assessment and incentive program that includes teaching, scholarship, service, and student success
- Establish an active risk management program where we continually evaluate and monitor risks.
- Enhance our processes and procedures to create a more seamless approach to registration, financial aid, and student accounts from inquiry to commencement and beyond.

Conclusion:

Strategic plans in higher education come and go, often with little real impact on the day to day operations of the institution. This reality causes me to ask, how will this be different? Said another way, how will we know we are successful?

I propose a different path.

Our first task will be to complete the strategic plan by adding more detailed strategies and metrics to our goals and objectives. What we determine to be important, we will then measure and report. The majority of this work will be done by summer's end, but I anticipate that a few of the objectives and strategies will change as we walk through the implementation of the plan.

In order to hold ourselves accountable to the fulfillment of the plan, I propose the UPIKE community and Board of Trustees consider reorganizing their committee structures to align with the objectives of the plan. At each meeting of the faculty or staff, UPIKE committees can report on progress relative to the strategic plan. Likewise, at meetings of the Board of Trustees, the administration and faculty can be held accountable for their progress relative to the strategic plan.

As we pass milestones in the strategic plan, we must pause to celebrate and recognize the people who have helped to bring success to pass. Each person in the UPIKE family must know the plan, each person must own their part of the plan. As we concentrate all of our collective attention on the success of our students, the importance of our individual contributions increase in significance. We paint our residence halls to set the conditions for learning, we clean our buildings to remove distractions from learning, we organize our billing and financial aid to empower learning, our coaches, advisors, student development staff and faculty all have the same agenda - learning. Everything we do must be focused on this core task. Every person in the UPIKE family is an *educator* concentrated on one thing, empowering the successful learning and growth of our students.

At UPIKE we are in the business of hope and we are concentrated on the success of our students because it is only in them, that hope fulfilled, becomes mission accomplished.

Succinct version:

UPIKE Strategic Plan

Vision: At the University of Pikeville, we will concentrate all of our attention on engaging and empowering students to be successful learners and leaders.

We will:

Goal 1 - Build innovative curricular and co-curricular programs, guided by educational outcomes, that attract, support, and empower students to be successful in the twenty-first century.

Goal 2 - Develop facilities, programming, and technology that leverage our environment to effectively attract, empower, and retain students through the completion of appropriate credentials.

Goal 3 - Create pathways that empower students to explore career, vocation, and leadership.

Goal 4 - Strengthen the financial capacity and long-term sustainability of UPIKE.