

# DAKOTA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

## Wesleyan Strategic Plan

### Executive Summary

### 2006

*In 2002, at the directive of President Bob Duffett, the DWU community embarked on an extensive strategic planning process. In June 2004, President's Council established a series of strategic imperatives which were based on the work of the entire campus. Each imperative has a lengthy tactical plan, but the basic goals are set forth in this executive summary.*

**Our Mission:** Dakota Wesleyan University aspires to excellence in the liberal arts and professional programs, preparing students for meaningful careers and lifelong intellectual adventure. The university affirms its relationship with the United Methodist Church and fosters diversity in an inclusive atmosphere. DWU encourages the dialogue between mind and soul, simultaneously building relationships, developing whole persons, and promoting service to God and humanity.

**Our Vision:** Dakota Wesleyan University aspires to be a leading university that educates students to identify their individual talents for successful lives in service to God and the common good.

**Our Values:**

*Learning* – We affirm the power of ideas, the pursuit of excellence, and a personal and collaborative approach to liberal arts education.

*Leadership* – We challenge our students, faculty and staff to be leaders of character who will maximize their talents for the common good.

*Faith* – As a faith-affirming community, we embrace John Wesley's model of uniting knowledge, reason, and vital faith in curricular and cocurricular activities.

*Service* – We inspire and empower our students, faculty and staff to use their talents to serve God and humanity.

*Strategic Imperative #1*

**Deliver academic quality and rigor in our students' pursuit of a liberal arts education.**

**Narrative summary**

Quality education is the heart of a university and the most effective way to attract and retain students, leading to “meaningful careers and lifelong intellectual adventure.”

Based on market research, employment forecasts and student interest, faculty and administrators have identified several signature programs on which we will focus our resources in the coming years. Those signature programs are:

- the McGovern Center for Public Service and Leadership;
- the Kelley Center for Entrepreneurship;
- the department of business;
- the department of biology and related sciences; and
- the department of nursing.

Focusing on these priority areas will allow us to enhance the quality of instruction and facilitate enrollment growth.

**Goals**

- Enhance academic quality and facilitate enrollment growth.
- Prioritize the next phase of academic planning.
- Align faculty resources with academic priority areas.
- Develop science labs, classrooms, faculty offices and technological resources to better foster a learning community.
- Implement a culture of academic planning and assessment.
- Successfully gain 10-year reaccreditation.
- Seize academic opportunities as they arise.

*Strategic Imperative #2*

**Provide a vibrant, student-centered experience.**

**Narrative Summary**

The department of campus life will expand programs in the areas of community building, leadership development, servant leadership and talent identification. Through enhanced programs in campus ministry, residential life, career planning and placement, campus health and wellness, and student support services, day-to-day life on campus will be enriched.

We will better develop our intercollegiate athletic program and wellness/recreation activities and facilities for students.

We will continue to create opportunities for students to lead, serve, explore their own faith, and lead healthy lives. When they graduate from DWU, they will have the tools to be leaders in their careers and communities.

## Goals

- Enhance programs in these priority areas: community building, leadership development, servant leadership, and talent identification.
- Implement campus life tactical plans.
- Plan for expansion of athletic/wellness facilities as a means to provide a more positive experience for students.
- Develop opportunities to integrate classroom learning with cocurricular experiences.

### *Strategic Imperative #3*

## **Unite knowledge, reason, Christian faith and a commitment to service in curricular and cocurricular activities.**

### **Narrative summary**

Dakota Wesleyan University has enjoyed a long and successful relationship with the Dakotas Conference of the United Methodist Church. As a United Methodist institution, we recognize the importance of embracing John Wesley's model of uniting knowledge, reason, Christian faith, and service in all aspects of our campus community.

We are a Christian community and we challenge our students, faculty and staff to be servant leaders. We embrace the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church and we are committed to being mindful of them in our day-to-day actions in the classroom, on campus, locally, and in the global community.

We recognize that quality people are the greatest resource at Dakota Wesleyan University, and we will continue to develop faculty and staff profiles which enhance our ability to achieve our outcomes.

## Goals

- Foster the relationship with the Dakotas Conference of the United Methodist Church.
- Establish a service-learning element for all majors.
- Hire faculty and staff who embrace our educational vision and values, South Dakota location and connection with the United Methodist church.
- Develop a scholarship model that reflects our values of learning, leadership, faith and service.
- Emphasize the NAIA Champions of Character initiative as a way for coaches and student-athletes to demonstrate a commitment to respect, responsibility, integrity, sportsmanship and servant leadership.

### *Strategic Imperative #4*

## **Build a population of students that complements our academic profile.**

As a tuition-driven institution, we recognize the importance of having a growing student population. However, we are committed to maintaining academic standards in the recruiting process to ensure that those students who are admitted to DWU have the highest probability of succeeding.

We will continue to gather data on those students who persist so that we can use that data to establish target markets for recruiting.

#### **Goals**

- Increase the full-time enrollment to 800 students by 2013 – 2014.
- Identify and monitor key enrollment benchmarks.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the current financial aid model and determine whether the model effectively leverages our dollars to prospective students.
- Improve the retention of traditional-age undergraduates to achieve a six-year cohort graduation rate of 60% or better by 2013 – 2014.
- Continue to implement and evaluate our comprehensive plan for recruiting and retention.

#### *Strategic Imperative #5*

### **Align a comprehensive advancement effort with the institutional vision of the university.**

#### **Narrative summary**

Through creative marketing tactics we will better tell our story, creating a growing passion for the transforming affect of a DWU education. Ultimately, this will inspire new and existing donors to increasingly support Wesleyan's vision for the future.

For DWU to achieve its strategic imperatives, effective volunteer leadership is critical. We will identify and recruit persons with the expertise, influence and affluence to serve on the university's board of trustees, alumni board and other key positions of leadership.

We will finalize a campus master facilities plan which is integrated with our academic, enrollment and cocurricular strategic plans. The plan will be communicated to key constituents and stakeholders for feedback and support.

We will engage the right advancement staff to build growing programs for alumni, parents, United Methodists and friends.

Giving by alumni and others for the Wesleyan Fund, scholarships, endowment, capital priorities and future estates will increase.

#### **Goals**

- Develop internal and external communication plans to enhance the DWU academic reputation.
- Attract an increasing number of volunteers in leadership positions.
- Finalize a campus master facilities plan for Phase II capital priorities.
- Revise the "Preparing the Way" campaign or create a new campaign to accomplish goals of the strategic plan.
- Increase giving by alumni and others for the Wesleyan Fund, scholarships, endowment, capital priorities and future estates.

*Strategic Imperative 6*

**Enhance the financial position of the university.**

**Narrative summary**

In order to accomplish this strategic imperative and, indeed, the entire strategic plan of the university, we must enhance the financial position of the university. Therefore, we will track the three key areas of financial stability. They are the operational budget, the endowment and our overall financial position.

The use of the following ratios and analyses will allow us to review, align and allocate resources to our priority areas, while maintaining a solid financial foundation.

**Goals**

- Operate with a consistently positive budget without using one-time gifts.
- Implement a university-wide compensation plan.
- Continue the current endowment investment and spending policies, with review of these policies completed during the 2006 – 2007 fiscal year
- Report quarterly financial results to the board.
- Analyze the overall financial position of the university through the following ratios:
  - Change in net assets
  - Net income
  - Return on net assets
  - Net tuition dependency
  - Financial viability
  - Leverage
  - Primary reserve
  - Secondary reserve
  - Growth in the unrestricted endowment

*It is important to note that extensive effort has gone into the strategic planning process at Dakota Wesleyan University, but it is an effort that never ends. While we expect our institutional values to remain the same far into the future, our strategies and tactics to provide a transforming educational experience for students must be flexible and dynamic to meet the changing needs and expectations of the marketplace.*