

# MISSION, PURPOSE, AND CORE VALUES

## Mission

Western Kentucky University (WKU) prepares students of all backgrounds to be productive, engaged, and socially responsible citizen-leaders of a global society. The University provides research, service, and lifelong learning opportunities for its students, faculty, and other constituents. WKU enriches the quality of life for those within its reach.

## Statement of Purpose

WKU is engaged in internationally acclaimed, student-and-learning-centered academic programs. The WKU experience occurs on several unique campus environments and through an overarching spirit which attracts an intellectually exciting and diverse family of the nation's best students. WKU provides students of all backgrounds with rigorous academic programs in education, the liberal arts and sciences, the health sciences, and business, with emphasis at the baccalaureate and master's levels, complemented by relevant associate and doctoral level programs. The University places a premium on student learning; WKU is committed to ensuring value in a holistic learning experience through high standards for student achievement and conduct, a strong faculty, technological innovation, personalized attention, broad access, and public accountability for actions and outcomes. Out-of-the-classroom and study abroad experiences enhance learning, promote diversity, and contribute to the success of students.

The University encourages engaged research and public service in support of economic development, quality of life, and improvement of education at all levels. WKU faculty contribute to the identification and solution of key social, economic, scientific, health, and environmental problems. An inspiring and talented faculty promotes a high level of creative activity and diverse scholarship and an entrepreneurial attitude designed to expand knowledge, improve instruction, increase learning, and provide applied solutions toward high-quality service to the state and nation. The University directly supports its constituents in its designated service areas of Kentucky with professional and technical expertise, cultural enrichment, and educational assistance.

Maintaining a campus of distinctive history and character, WKU sustains a student population of increasing quality. WKU fulfills its responsibility for access through its main and regional campuses, and through extensive distance learning opportunities. WKU recognizes that its mission continues to evolve in response to regional, national, and global changes, and the need for lifelong learning.

## Core Values

Shared purposes and beliefs drive the decisions and actions of any organization or institution. The core values that undergird the foundations of WKU are reflected in the University's vision, mission, and purpose statements, and in the goals of the strategic plan (<https://www.wku.edu/strategicplan/>).

The rich heritage that is WKU's has been built upon a foundation of shared values that have withstood the test of time and the challenges of many changes. These values are deeply embedded in the words of WKU's first President, Dr. Henry Hardin Cherry, as he set forth a vision for this University:

- to be a live school and to impart to its students a burning zeal to do and be something;
- to be progressive, to use modern methods and equipment, but reject all worthless educational fads;
- to let the reputation of the school be sustained by real merit;
- to "ring the rising bell in the human soul" by inspiring all students who come in touch with the work of the institution.

This vision is further reflected in Dr. Cherry's often-quoted reminder that "It's what's above the rim that counts" and in the two University ideals expressed in the University seal: "Life More Life" and the University motto: "The Spirit Makes the Master."

Building upon these long lasting values, the following core tenets represent a reaffirmation of the shared purposes and beliefs upon which this strategic plan is built:

- Emphasis on cooperation, teamwork, and mutual respect for individual differences in scholarship, diversity, and culture.
- Expectation for all conduct to be characterized by integrity, honesty, and commitment to high moral and ethical values and principles.
- Commitment to assuring quality of programs, competence of graduates, and opportunities for lifelong learning.
- A view of scholarly endeavors that includes teaching, research, and creative activities as mutually supportive.
- Encouragement of meaningful and active partnerships among students, faculty, staff, and constituents to strengthen the learning environment.
- Nurturing of innovative and creative activities of faculty, staff, and students that advance University mission and goals.
- Dedication to the importance of achieving excellence in all programs and for adding value to the degrees and credentials of our students.
- Commitment to providing a collegiate experience that prepares students to be informed, engaged, and dedicated citizens.
- Commitment to contributing to improved quality of life and economic well-being of Kentuckians, especially those in our primary service area, as well as other constituents and stakeholders.
- Commitment to developing empowered, informed, and responsible learners who recognize both the personal and shared responsibility to actively participate in university life by upholding the principles of the University Creed.

## WKU 2018-2028 Strategic Plan: *Climbing to Greater Heights*

Climbing to Greater Heights: The 2018-2028 Strategic Plan (<https://www.wku.edu/strategicplan/>) for Western Kentucky University is a carefully defined roadmap that will guide the University through 2028. It focuses on student success and ensuring that our campus environment attracts the highest quality faculty and staff, and it renews our commitment to being fully engaged in our region and the commonwealth while providing a global context to the WKU Experience.

The landscape for public higher education is ever changing and may at times feel like an uphill climb. We will prepare ourselves to meet the challenges that lie ahead by pursuing innovation in teaching and delivery, connecting what we do to the region and the commonwealth, and ensuring that the WKU Experience transforms the lives of our students, employees, alumni, and friends and elevates the communities we serve -

both in our region and beyond. These are the principles that will guide us in our climb to greater heights.