



“Actions are the seed of fate. Deeds grow into destiny.”

– attributed to HARRY S. TRUMAN

2026-2030 Strategic Plan

Approved by Board of Governors on December 6, 2025

Introduction

The introduction to the 2021-2025 strategic plan began with:

In this ever more rapidly changing world, Truman State University’s overarching purpose has remained—to provide a high-quality liberal arts and sciences education to academically talented and intellectually engaged students from every corner of Missouri and all parts of the world. We exist to open opportunity, promote access and social mobility, foster excellence and enable every student to pursue and achieve their unique goals.

Through a renewed liberal arts and sciences curriculum that is deliberately built for the modern world, we are dedicated to each of our student’s individual pursuits and ensure their engagement in learning and discovering their personal and professional purpose by providing intentional curricular and co-curricular opportunities which are applicable to real-world challenges.

Four years later, this purpose is more important than ever. The challenges of uncertain state and federal support, societal devaluation of the liberal arts, the disaggregation of higher education, and increased competition continue, and are now coupled with rapid and unanticipated changes both inside and outside of higher education. To enhance Truman’s ability to be positioned as effectively as possible to successfully meet these challenges and rapid changes, annually a think tank/intelligence gathering group, comprised of alumni and leaders, will be convened to provide insight into what is currently happening in their sectors/industries, what is projected for the future, and what trends should garner Truman’s attention. Armed with this knowledge, Truman can determine where we need to make changes in the present to be strongly positioned for the future.

This strategic plan will continue to employ a slightly modified version of the 4 Disciplines of Execution (McChesney et al., 2012) and SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timely) foundational metrics for three primary initiatives and enhanced institutional effectiveness. Resource allocation will support the implementation of the initiatives and institutional effectiveness.

The grounding for the initiatives and metrics continues to be in our three overarching commitments - Organizational Excellence, Student Success and Achievement, and Professional and Societal Impacts. These three commitments are the basis for realizing our mission and vision.

TRUMAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Mission Statement

The mission of Truman State University is to offer an exemplary undergraduate education to well-prepared students, grounded in the liberal arts and sciences, in the context of a public institution of higher education. To that end, the University offers affordable undergraduate studies in the traditional arts and sciences as well as selected pre-professional, professional, and master's level programs that grow naturally out of the philosophy, values, content, and desired outcomes of a liberal arts education.

Vision Statement

Truman will demonstrate its public liberal arts and sciences mission by developing educated citizens needed to protect our democracy and offer creative solutions to local, state, national and global problems. It will do so through transformative experiences that foster critical thought, daring imagination and empathetic understanding of human experiences at home and around the world. Truman graduates will be citizen-leaders committed to service; globally competitive; able to thrive in the complexities of an advanced, technical and multicultural world; and inspired to live healthy and meaningful lives.

THE 3 OVERARCHING COMMITMENTS

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

STUDENT SUCCESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

PROFESSIONAL AND SOCIETAL IMPACTS

What are our key objectives?

Foster an inclusive and supportive environment where all community members feel valued and encouraged to reach their highest potential. This requires recruiting and sustaining faculty, staff and students who will thrive and grow in this environment.

Optimize and sustain a clear, coherent and inspiring academic environment for all students, supporting their journey from orientation to commencement and on to employment. These efforts should focus on innovative strategies that ensure timely graduation, excellent academic performance, and the launch of successful careers.

Produce graduates who are highly sought after throughout their careers and who will make ongoing, meaningful contributions to their professions, their communities, and society at large.

How will this make us distinctive?

The personal and professional development of employees is greatly enhanced through a healthy work environment, and the way students experience this healthy campus environment influences both their learning and developmental outcomes.

As evidenced by their academic portfolio, graduates will be well prepared for the workforce or for continued study in graduate and/or professional programs.

Substantiate the advantages of a liberal arts and sciences education in the ability to adapt and thrive in the complexities of an advanced, technical and multicultural world.

THE 3 INITIATIVES

CAREER READINESS THROUGH THE LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES

Truman remains committed to our Liberal Arts & Sciences values, our mission, and our vision, and to providing our students the resources they need to develop their professional identities as an inseparable part of the skills, knowledge, and perspectives they acquire in pursuit of their degree. Our students have the space to learn those skills deemed essential in the world of work while also learning about the richness of the world and their place in it. We embrace cultivating career readiness as a vital component of the collegiate experience, with the knowledge that Truman's Liberal Arts & Sciences education gives our graduates an invaluable advantage throughout their lives. Selected tactics include:

- Determine Core Career Competencies and/or Transferable Skills that will provide the foundation for a comprehensive career readiness program.
 - Develop digital fluency, including the use of Artificial Intelligence, as a transferable workplace skill in order to graduate students who are “practice-ready” as they enter their profession or graduate school. This will require ongoing training and resources for faculty to lead the development of student fluency with AI and other digital tools, recognizing AI's impact on the development of the transferable skills deemed vital to their academic and professional success.
- Grow opportunities for experiential learning on and off campus to provide opportunities for all students, regardless of major.
- Integrate career development throughout the curricular and co-curricular student experience to enhance students' career readiness. The integration will:
 - support the faculty as they demonstrate the value of the Liberal Arts & Sciences curriculum in career readiness.
 - aid students in understanding how their degree requirements prepare them to be global citizen-leaders.
 - engage alumni to help students navigate the professional world.
 - support students in articulating to future employers the transferable skills they acquire in pursuit of their degree.

ENROLLMENT AND ACADEMIC STRENGTH

Truman's ability to meet its mission and vision remains linked to its ability to effectively recruit and retain a multidimensional student body, including first-time undergraduate, transfer, graduate, and international students. Due to forecasted demographic declines in many of these areas, new populations of students must be reached with novel programs and recruiting approaches. To accomplish this, we must ensure that our academic portfolio is innovative and responsive to current demographic and societal realities. Utilizing data-driven strategies for both recruitment and program development, we seek to strengthen our academic offerings so that we may attract new students, retain existing students, and continue to provide a high-quality education for all. Selected tactics include:

- Employ data-driven insights from research and enrollment dashboards to inform recruitment goals and opportunities, marketing strategies, merit-based scholarship and need-based aid allocation, and retention initiatives.

- Continue the optimization of recruitment plans for recruiting first-time undergraduate students, transfer students, graduate students, international, and online students that are based on best practices and changing markets and effectively integrate contemporary software solutions. Recruitment plans will include communication strategies that highlight Truman's distinctive academic experience and how it prepares students for their careers.
- Expand, develop, and employ targeted marketing for micro-credentials, certificates, and/or other non-traditional program options that will attract students from outside Truman's typical demographic profile.
- Enhance integration of academics in the admissions process to increase recruitment and facilitate prospective students engaging with their academic interests earlier.
- Utilize data-informed decision-making to review and assess academic programs and determine areas for growth, consolidation, or discontinuance.
- In parallel with the career readiness initiative, determine the knowledge base/academic competencies of the university-wide curriculum (Dialogues) that students will need in order to thrive in the complexities of an advanced, technical, and multicultural world, both now and into the future.

ENGAGEMENT OF COMMUNITIES

Welcoming and supportive communities are essential in fostering a healthy learning environment, one that encourages all students, faculty, and staff to reach their highest potential. We will continue fostering a culture of excellence and belonging at Truman that embraces ideas and people from all walks of life. Selected tactics include:

- Foster the student community through a robust university experience supported by a comprehensive retention and persistence plan that begins with intentional community building in the First Year Experience and remains responsive to societal realities that may create barriers to degree completion.
- Foster the faculty and staff community through supporting and appropriately funding professional development opportunities, increasing participation in ongoing leadership and mentoring programs, and enhancing coordination of constituency group leadership among Staff Council, Faculty Senate, and Student Government.
- Foster the community at large by deepening Truman's contributions to the Kirksville and Northeast Missouri communities and utilizing experiential learning as a catalyst for civic engagement.

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS, ASSESSMENT, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In addition to the three initiatives, Truman is committed to making continued improvements in institutional effectiveness. That is, engaging in ongoing activities to organize evaluation, assessment, and improvement efforts that demonstrate how well we are fulfilling our mission and achieving our goals.

While there are many measurements used to indicate continued progress, Truman will focus on making improvements that ensure continued good standing with our accreditation body, maintain compliance with federal and state reporting requirements, enhance development and advancement opportunities, and demonstrate organizational excellence.

Concomitantly, we will improve the data-gathering mechanisms put in place during the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan through more nuanced and informative data analysis and response activities, and by demonstrating transparency and accountability through regular progress updates on each initiative. Selected tactics include:

- Ensure that Key Performance Indicators and other metrics are appropriate for collecting data relevant to each goal.
- Establish measurable targets for each initiative, balancing quantitative and qualitative metrics, ensuring these targets remain flexible enough to allow for annual evaluation and adjustment as necessary.
- Develop response activities to more quickly address issues discovered during our data-gathering activities.

These improvements will be quantified through the following core metrics:

<p>ARE WE STRUCTURED TO ATTAIN OUR MISSION?</p> <p>Internal Processes and Planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Program Reviews • Data management • Ongoing HLC accreditation efforts <p><i>Resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill our mission, improve the quality of our educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.</i></p>	<p>HOW DO TARGETED STAKEHOLDERS SEE US?</p> <p>Standing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer engagement • Alumni achievement <p><i>Review the extent to which graduates are prepared for the workplace and society today as well as tomorrow.</i></p>
<p>DO WE EFFECTIVELY MANAGE OUR FINANCES?</p> <p>Financial Perspective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage spent on core functions • Scholarships as a percentage of total revenue • Endowment value <p><i>Denote stewardship and fiduciary responsibilities, cost effectiveness, and revenue generation.</i></p>	<p>HOW ARE OUR FACULTY AND STAFF SUPPORTED?</p> <p>Campus Climate - Organizational Excellence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect and appreciation • Collaborative governance and leadership • Professional/career development • Compensation and benefits • Job satisfaction • Work/life balance <p><i>We thrive as a University when all individual members have the support needed to accomplish their work and receive appropriate communication, support and appreciation.</i></p>

Taken in total, institutional effectiveness activities represent improvement efforts that encompass operations management, decision making, and institutional planning.

APPENDIX A

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

President Thomas convened the Strategic Plan Drafting Team (SPDT) on November 22, 2024 to discuss their charge and provide guidance for the work that would occupy the next twelve months. The resulting strategic plan is built on the framework that was implemented during the 2021–2025 plan, in which the focus shifted from a task-oriented approach to one where tactics serve to guide the university in achieving a targeted set of larger initiatives.

After an initial brainstorming session, SPDT sought feedback about potential initiatives from faculty at the January 9, 2025 Strategic Planning and Assessment Workshop (SPAW). This feedback served as the starting point for developing and refining the initiatives that will guide the university over the next five years.

Throughout the Spring 2025 semester, SPDT met with numerous stakeholders on and off campus, including the Strategic Plan Expert Liaisons (see Appendix B), to gain a better understanding of:

- the progress made to date on current initiatives,
- which initiatives or elements thereof should remain as strategic priorities and which have reached a point that allow us to direct our energies elsewhere,
- the opportunities for growth that exist within the university's sphere of influence,
- the challenges the university may face over the next five years, and
- how we may best embrace these opportunities and face these challenges moving forward.

Identifying the common themes of these meetings led to the development of three initiatives that most succinctly encompass the university's strategic goals. SPDT presented its first draft of the plan to President Thomas on May 2.

Early in the Fall 2025 semester, SPDT revised its initial draft based on feedback from President Thomas and the Executive Leadership Team. Further feedback was then sought from faculty and staff and final revisions were made. Faculty Senate and Student Government reviewed the final draft and passed resolutions of support on October 23 and November 9, respectively. The Board of Governors approved the plan on December 6, 2025 and specific metrics were developed thereafter.

As with the previous strategic plan, biannual Strategic Planning and Assessment Workshop (SPAW) sessions (held each August and January) will keep the campus community apprised of the progress made on each initiative, and provide the opportunity to dynamically adjust efforts to ensure the strategic goals are being achieved.

APPENDIX B

WORKING GROUPS

STRATEGIC PLAN DRAFTING TEAM

Eric Dickson (Chair; Associate Dean of the School of Arts and Humanities)
Laura Bates (Executive Director of Student Union and Campus Recreation)
Kerrion Dean (Program Coordinator for the Office of Community Enrichment)
Jackie Donnelly (Assistant Professor of Military Science)
Andy Herington (Human Resources Manager)
Brenna Hertig (Student)
Amber Johnson (Professor of Anthropology)
Katie Judd (Department Chair of Psychology and Counseling and Associate Professor of Psychology)
Sara Seifert (Chief of Police and Director of Department of Public Safety)

STRATEGIC PLAN EXPERT LIAISONS

ADMISSION

Allison Schweizer (Director of Admission)

ADVISING AND RETENTION

Ashleigh Harding (Director of Student Success)

ALUMNI

Stacy Tucker-Potter (Director of Engagement)

CAREER OUTCOMES

Alison Ayers (Executive Director of Career Services and Employer Relations)

Joel Brumfield (Career Services Coordinator)

GOVERNANCE

Scott Alberts (Faculty Senate President, Department Chair of Computer and Data Sciences,
and Professor of Statistics)

Kerrion Dean (Staff Council Chair and Program Coordinator for Office of Community Enrichment)

Marcia Humphreys (Student Government President)

HUMAN RESOURCES

Melissa Garzanelli (Director of Human Resources)

INTERNSHIPS/EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Kim Sprought (Director of Internships)

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Donna Liss (Chief Information Officer)

STRATEGIC PLAN OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (SPOC)

Roberta Donahue (Chair of SPOC and Professor of Health Science)

Jonathan Vieker (Assistant Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment)

OTHER CAMPUS STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED

Sue Thomas (President)

Eric Freedman (Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost)

Kevin Minch (Associate Provost)

Steve Parsons (Dean of the School of Arts and Humanities)

Rashmi Prasad (Dean of the School of Business and Professional Studies)

Lance Ratcliff (Associate Dean of the School of Business and Professional Studies)

Tim Walston (Dean of the School of Science and Mathematics)

Steve Hudman (Associate Dean of the School of Science and Mathematics)

Janet Romine (Dean of Libraries and Museums)

