EAST CENTRAL UNIVERSITY
STRATEGIC PLAN

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ECU
EST. 1909 ~ ADA, OKLAHOMA

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STRATEGIC PLANNING TASK FORCE

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MISSION

TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR TOMORROW'S WORLD THROUGH A DYNAMIC & DIVERSE LEARNING EXPERIENCE.

VISION

WE ASPIRE TO BE AN ENGAGING, INCLUSIVE, AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION ELEVATING STUDENT POTENTIAL FOR EXCELLENCE IN PURSUIT OF LIFELONG LEARNING

CORE VALUES

INTEGRITY – We are honest in everything we do, upholding the highest standards of ethical behavior.

CANDOR – We share ideas and feedback openly and constructively. We admit our mistakes and learn from them.

ACCOUNTABILITY – We do what we say we are going to do, fulfilling our obligations and delivering results.

RESPECT – We celebrate diversity in ideas and approaches and treat everyone we encounter with care and concern.

EXCELLENCE – We are driven by an innovative spirit to attain the highest level of performance in everything we do.

STRATEGIC PLAN

1 GATHER INFORMATION

We began by collecting a wide range of data and insights from both internal and external sources.

This included:

- Institutional reports, assessments, and performance metrics
- Surveys and interviews with faculty, students, staff, alumni, and administrators
- Community input and benchmarking data from peer institutions

This inclusive approach ensured a full understanding of ECU's current state and emerging possibilities.

2 IDENTIFY STRENGTHS

We examined ECU's internal assets to define what we do best and where we stand out:

- Signature academic programs and faculty expertise
- Community engagement and regional partnerships
- State-of-the-art facilities and technology
- A supportive and diverse student body

These strengths form the foundation on which ECU will build its future success.

3 IDENTIFY WEAKNESSES

We also evaluated areas where ECU must grow and improve:

- Aging infrastructure in certain areas
- Resource limitations and budgetary constraints
- Gaps in student retention and program offerings
- Opportunities for streamlining processes and services

Acknowledging our weaknesses ensures we face them directly with informed strategies.

4 IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES

We identified external conditions and trends that can be leveraged for strategic gain:

- Expanding access to online and hybrid learning
- Opportunities for industry-aligned research and workforce development
- Growth in international and non-traditional student populations
- Emerging technologies that enhance academic delivery

These opportunities will help ECU expand its impact and relevance.

NNING PROCESS

5 GATHER INFORMATION

External risks that could negatively affect ECU's future were also assessed:

- Reduced state and federal funding for higher education
- Changing accreditation standards and compliance demands
- Increased competition from other institutions
- Perceptions and public narratives impacting higher education

Recognizing threats allows us to proactively prepare and adapt.

6 ANALYSIS & PRIORITIZATION

All SWOT data were reviewed to identify key trends and interconnections. The most impactful and probable factors were prioritized in each category. This step ensured that strategy development was informed by both depth and perspective.

7 STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

We translated our SWOT findings into actionable strategic implications by:

- Leveraging core strengths to support innovation
- Addressing critical gaps to enhance quality and competitiveness
- Seizing new opportunities to grow and diversify
- Mitigating risks to maintain institutional stability and trust

These strategic insights guided the formation of ECU's 2030 goals.

8 ACTION PLAN

The final step was to develop a measurable and accountable action plan. It includes:

- Clearly defined objectives and initiatives
- Assigned leadership and stakeholder responsibility
- Timelines and performance metrics for ongoing evaluation
- A feedback loop for continuous improvement

This plan is a living document—reviewed regularly and refined as ECU evolves.

STRATEGIC GOALS

PILLAR 1

PRODUCE WORKFORCE READY GRADUATES

Focus:
Strengthen academic relevance and career alignment.

PILLAR 2

INCREASE ENROLLMENT

Focus:
Grow and diversify the student body through outreach, streamlined processes, and support for underserved students.

PILLAR 3

ENHANCE STUDENT SUCCESS & ENGAGEMENT

Focus:
Improve graduation outcomes, student engagement, and support services.

PILLAR 4

OPTIMIZE OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

Focus:
Strengthen internal processes, budget accountability, and institutional communication.

UNIVERSITY ACCREDITATION & AFFILIATION

ACCREDITED BY

The Higher Learning Commission as a Master's Degree granting institution (1922-24; 1947 to present). The Higher Learning Commission's website is www.ncahlc.org and its phone number is (800) 621-7440.

OTHER ACCREDITING BODIES

Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, Inc. (1978 to present)
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National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council (1975 to present)

APPROVED BY

American Bar Association (for Legal Studies Program)
Collegiate Officer Program
Oklahoma Board of Nursing
Oklahoma Council on Law Enforcement Education and Training
Oklahoma State Board of Education for Teacher Education
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MEMBERSHIPS

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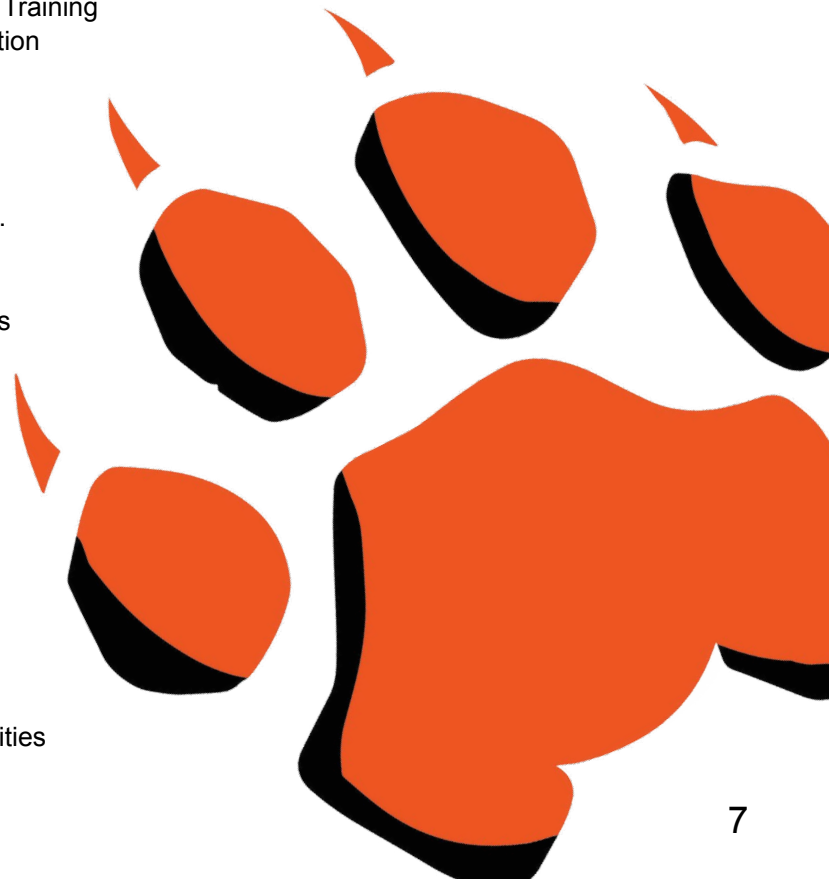
PILLAR 1   PRODUCE WORKFORCE READY GRADUATES

STRATEGY 1:
Align Academic Programs

ACTIONS:

- Conduct program reviews and market analyses.

- Promote interdisciplinary collaboration and develop cross-cutting certificate programs.

LEAD UNITS:

Provost, Deans

STRATEGY 2:
Enhance Career Pathways

ACTIONS:

- Expand internships through industry partnerships.

- Launch a comprehensive career readiness program with workshops, coaching, and networking events.

LEAD UNITS:

Deans, Career Services

STRATEGY 3:
Foster Career Development

ACTIONS:

- Establish industry advisory boards.
- Create alumni mentorship networks.

LEAD UNITS:

Deans, Alumni Director

STRATEGY 4:
Build Infrastructure for Student Success

ACTIONS:

- Construct and upgrade STEM and Nursing facilities.
- Expand wellness and student service facilities.

LEAD UNITS:

Provost, VP Admin & Finance

KEY METRICS

- **Employment Rate (1-Year, Oklahoma): 85% (↑.33%)**
- **Internships & Experiential Learning Participation: 23.94%**
- **Licensure/Certification Exam Success Rate: 90%**
- **Percentage of Students Working in OK after 5 years: 85%**
- **Job Placement in High-Demand Fields as defined by OSRHE: 85%**

PILLAR 2 INCREASE ENROLLMENT

STRATEGY 1:
Strengthen Pre-University Collaboration

ACTIONS:

- Create college readiness programs.
- Develop & enhance articulation agreements with community colleges.
- Launch a University Ambassador Program.

LEAD UNITS:

Deans, Chairs, VP Enrollment Management, ASC

STRATEGY 2:
Improve Awareness & Outreach

ACTIONS:

- Strengthen digital marketing and social media.
- Host community and virtual engagement events.

LEAD UNITS:

Deans, VP Enrollment Management, Marketing & Communications

STRATEGY 3:
Streamline Enrollment Process

ACTIONS:

- Implement a centralized online application and communication tools.
- Simplify admission requirements & documentation.
- Offer personalized enrollment counseling.
- Automate communication & follow-up processes

LEAD UNITS:

VP Enrollment Management

STRATEGY 4:
Support First-Generation and At-Risk Students

ACTIONS:

- Evaluate support programs.
- Offer targeted scholarships and highlight low-cost course options.

LEAD UNITS: **VP Enrollment Management, AVPAA, AVP Student Affairs, ASC**

KEY METRICS

- **Total Enrollment: 4,000 (⬆3.92%)**
- **First-Year Freshmen Enrollment: 678 (⬆4.01%)**
- **First-Year Retention Rate: 66.42% (⬆1.58%)**
- **Accepted Students (New & Returning): 2,917 (⬆4.95%)**

PILLAR 3 ENHANCE STUDENT SUCCESS & ENGAGEMENT

STRATEGY 1:
Increase Student Engagement

ACTIONS:

- Establish discipline-based learning communities.
- Launch faculty-student engagement initiatives.
- Build a comprehensive student engagement portal.

LEAD UNITS:

Provost, Deans, Chairs, Marketing & Communications, Student Affairs
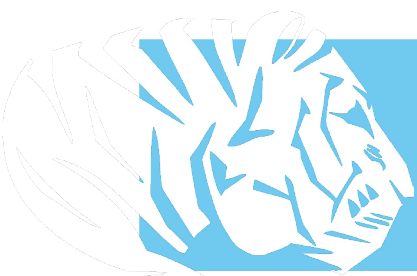
STRATEGY 2:
Improve Graduation Rates

ACTIONS:

- Streamline degree pathways.
- Expand supplemental instruction and support services.
- Increase need-based and retention-directed scholarships.

LEAD UNITS:

Provost, AVPAA, VP Enrollment Management, ASC

STRATEGY 3:
Enhance Online Education

ACTIONS:

- Improve online course design.
- Implement quality assurance measures.
- Develop virtual student communities.

LEAD UNITS:

Deans, AVPAA, CETL

STRATEGY 4:
Streamline Student Services

ACTIONS:

- Centralize core student services into one location.
- Offer targeted scholarships and highlight low-cost course options.
- Cross-train staff for multi-functional service delivery.

LEAD UNITS:

Provost, VP Enrollment Management, VP Admin & Finance

KEY METRICS

- **Overall Retention Rate: 68.14% (⬆1.54%)**
- **Bachelor's Degrees Conferred: AY24: 572; Target: 600**
- **Student Engagement Score: 58.75**
- **Student Satisfaction with Support Services: AY24-25 = 4.38/5.00**

PILLAR 4 — OPTIMIZE OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

STRATEGY 1: Streamline Administrative Processes

ACTIONS:

- Standardize and document all key operational processes.
- Implement routine procedure evaluations.

LEAD UNITS:

VP Admin & Finance,

Employment Services

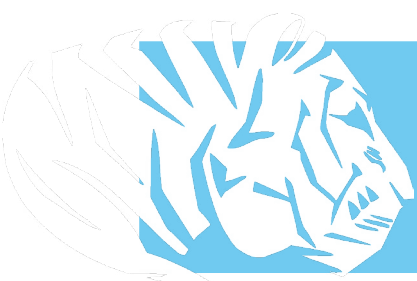## STRATEGY 2: Enhance Budgetary Management

ACTIONS:

- Implement priority-based budgeting.
- Conduct quarterly variance reporting.
- Roll out campus-wide budget training.

LEAD UNITS:

VP Admin & Finance

STRATEGY 3:
Improve Staff Evaluation Systems

ACTIONS:

- Conduct job analyses and update job descriptions.

- Encourage continuous performance feedback.

LEAD UNITS:

Employment Services

STRATEGY 4:
Strengthen Internal Communication

ACTIONS:

- Develop internal branding standards.

- Develop standard communication protocols.

LEAD UNITS:

VP Admin & Finance, Director of Employment Services, Marketing & Communications

KEY METRICS

- **Cost per Student Credit Hour: $244**
- **Primary Reserve Ratio: >0.4**
- **Viability Ratio: >1.0**
- **Debt Burden: <7%**
- **Composite Financial Index (CFI): ≥7.3 with ECU Foundation**