

SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY
STRATEGIC PLAN
THE FIRST CHOICE



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



“Slippery Rock University, The First Choice” is a dynamic plan that builds on the University’s tradition of excellence while setting the expectations and charting a course for SRU to thrive in the coming years. There must be an expectation of excellence from within our organization and from those who come here to learn and to grow. Mediocrity has never been an option at The Rock, and we cannot be content with the status quo.

This strategic plan is so important for our future. It sets our expectations and brings direction toward actionable outcomes that lead to success, not only for SRU but for the people and communities we serve. To do so, we will strive to be a first-choice organization.

As a first-choice organization, we must be centered on student success, expect excellence in what we do each day, foster growth for all and demonstrate the value of our employees. As a first-choice organization, we must respond to the needs of the community, preparing students to engage as responsible, productive citizens in society. A first-choice organization means that SRU will be the first choice for students, a first choice for employees, a first choice for employers, and a first choice for partners.

In the coming years, we will be less defined by the roles traditionally assigned to higher education. We will be more than a place to pursue a degree or credential. Our charge is much broader. Broader than education or learning alone. Our charge is to advance human development—to join with individuals at all stages in their lives and facilitate their growth. Recognizing SRU’s need to evolve in this manner has informed our plan.

The process of strategic planning involved meaningful contributions and thoughtful work from across the campus community. Four themes emerged that will guide our decisions and actions for the next six years and beyond. Our strategic plan outlines SRU’s commitment to:

- **a robust, supportive, and inclusive culture;**
- **academic discovery and growth;**
- **community impact and collaboration; and**
- **financial sustainability and resource stewardship.**

We must honor these commitments through action. Our strategic plan is just that—a plan that allows us to realize our goals, but it means nothing unless we do the work. There is no magic wand in the wording of the plan, no invisible cloak to ward off adverse events, and no lantern to illuminate a secret path to guaranteed success. It is our collective commitment that will allow us to pursue our goals and to adapt and pivot when the inevitable, unexpected occurs. Perseverance, plasticity, and patience will be required, but that is not new to the members of this community. Indeed, it is part of our DNA.

The roadmap for how we implement this plan has been developed and modeled by the people of this University, past and present. It is up to us now to shape and improve upon the existing foundation. The plan is reflective of a mission that binds us together, honors our past accomplishments, challenges our current approaches, and embraces our future endeavors.

The excitement and commitment to executing this plan is reflective of the passion and dedication of those who are members of our Slippery Rock University community. We will need everyone, including current faculty and staff, alumni, and friends, to implement this ambitious plan. We are confident in our future because SRU has historically appreciated and embraced the work necessary to realize our goals. Our success begins and ends with our people. We depend on each other, and I could not be more grateful and honored to lead and serve this community as president as we work to implement this important plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Riley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "K" and "R".

Karen Riley
SRU President

Committed to Becoming a First-Choice Institution

Slippery Rock University has a long and laudable history. Its doors opened on March 26, 1889, as Slippery Rock Normal School. James Morrow served as the first president of this school dedicated to teacher education. Over the years, SRU fulfilled its mandate well, graduating thousands of students to staff the public schools in Pennsylvania and throughout the nation.

In 1926, the institution was purchased by the commonwealth, and became a four-year teacher's college, continuing the tradition of preparing teachers in Pennsylvania. While the curricular preparations were in elementary education and in several secondary education subjects, the area of academic focus which was assigned at that time by the Pennsylvania Department of Education was in health and physical education. And it was in that concentration that the institution soon achieved a national reputation for excellence.

The institution was renamed Slippery Rock State College in 1960 and, for the first time, could award undergraduate and graduate degrees in the liberal arts and in other professions. It grew and adapted to meet the needs of the region, resulting in expanded curricular offerings and an increased number of degree programs. The enrollment numbers rose as the institution responded to the demands for these new programs. The dream was realized as the institution's exceptional reputation and popularity soared. In July 1983, the institution officially became known as Slippery Rock University.

Through hard work, purposeful planning and consistent progress, Slippery Rock University has maintained its relevance and importance within the local and regional markets. The rich history of Western Pennsylvania and the region are woven into the very fabric of the university. As a public institution, SRU has met the economic and social needs of the surrounding communities it serves. Laser focused on adapting to the ever-changing needs of the region and the societal changes that evolve our offerings, SRU has morphed into its current form, shaping the lives of thousands of students with an extensive array of more than 150 programs and 30 graduate programs. Our 75,000-plus alumni are making a rock-solid difference all around the world. Slippery Rock University is the difference.

Our history and our future are inextricably linked, and we must continue along the path set forth by those who came before us to honor their legacy. We do this through our vision to enhance the lives of our community members with an accessible, affordable, high-quality education, thereby meeting the needs of our society and the citizens we serve. As such, we must stand firm in our commitment to living our values, while transforming to meet the needs of our current and future students. Slippery Rock has a long history of applied scholarship, a dedication to both art and science, and a commitment to innovation and professional relevancy. In the current information



Providing the Highest Quality Education, at the Lowest Possible Price.

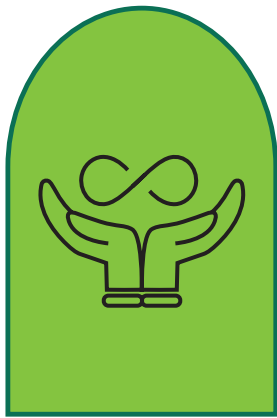
age – with technologies accelerating faster than ever – the future of a dynamic workforce requires people to use their minds to engage with abstraction and novelty. Now is the time for higher education generally – and Slippery Rock specifically – to embrace ambiguity and rise to the challenge.

Our goals are aspirant in nature, with a foundation based on the pragmatism of our previous leaders. We want SRU to be a first-choice organization – first choice for students, first choice for employees, first choice for employers and first choice for partners. We will be the first choice because it will FEEL different here. There must be an expectation of excellence – from within this organization and from those who come here to learn, to grow and to thrive. Mediocrity has never been an option at The Rock, and we cannot ever be content with the status quo. Our pride in ourselves, in each other, and in SRU will not allow it. Translating our pride into action means providing an experience for the people with whom we engage that exceeds their expectations – it means the norm at SRU is extreme engagement, and this plan will bring these goals to fruition.

As a first-choice, 21st-century institution of higher education, Slippery Rock University is poised to be at the forefront of creative and innovative learning. Marked by its green vistas and expansive campus landscape, its vision for the future is a vibrant one, bold in possibilities, all made manifest through sustained reflection and inclusive engagement. Building upon its foundational commitment to educating inspiring, resilient, and outward-looking individuals, Slippery Rock University dedicates itself to imaginative transformation. SRU is committed to positive, reciprocal exchanges within communities that generate investments in the holistic development of its people, their ideas, and their partnerships, as well as insightful, thoughtful, and responsible stewardship of resources as it propels itself and its communities forward.

Our successful history undergirds the goals we have for the future. We have called these goals “pillars,” and we have worked arduously to erect them. They have been reinforced several times through the tenacity and labor of many constituents. The descriptions of the four pillars that follow, along with their implementation initiatives subgoals and the explanatory narratives, are strong like our community; we must continually care for them, revisiting and reminding ourselves of how they support the work that we set out to do. In this way, we will build upon our historical base strengths in the name of the public good, even as we forge new and innovative ways to serve as a premier educational institution.

Slippery Rock University declares its commitment to a robust, supportive, and inclusive culture; to academic discovery and growth; to community impact and collaboration; and to financial sustainability and resource stewardship.



PILLAR #1 COMMITMENT TO A ROBUST, SUPPORTIVE, AND INCLUSIVE CULTURE

As a first-choice institution, Slippery Rock University strives to provide a safe, supportive, and healthy environment that allows students, faculty, and staff to thrive. We are committed to providing opportunities for the holistic development of our students, faculty, staff, and administrators. We will lead the university and surrounding community toward personal growth, brave and inclusive engagement, and welcoming spaces to enhance the quality of life and allow individuals the ability to reach their full potential. As a community, we can extend the positive culture of the organization by elevating our engagement. The concept of extreme engagement involves each individual working to ensure that all are engaged in the community and those who come to SRU feel the difference. Extreme engagement is simple in its approach: Provide those with whom you engage more than they expect. This does not mean decreasing expectations, nor does it diminish the seriousness of our work, rather it elevates the importance of excellence across all areas of our organization and allows us all to live our mission.

Develop a culture of recognition and engagement and live the identity across the campus.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

When university faculty, staff, administration, and students adopt a culture of servant leadership, it enhances not only individuals but the entire community they belong to. SRU will be an institution that celebrates and embraces a range of differences, among our people and our thoughts, and provides a place to support each other during challenges and celebrate our successes. Making this commitment together helps us to accomplish a positive and welcoming environment that embraces the new, while honoring traditions that are centered upon respect, optimism, hope, confidence, and a collective future. This environment will provide a lifelong connection to our university and local community and have a global impact as our alumni strive to share their talent with the world.

WHAT IS OUR “HOW?” AND OUR ASPIRATIONS?

We will strive to honor the members of our organization. Slippery Rock University, through campuswide collaboration, has identified key initiatives to help us develop a culture of recognition and engagement. Redesigns in professional development opportunities and implementations in staff and faculty engagement initiatives will increase recognition for outstanding performance, as well as create pathways to celebrate large and small achievements. Individual, department, and divisional planning will follow organizational assessment systems developed to support the university’s core values and strategic direction. We will prioritize personal, professional, and organizational well-being throughout the university by encouraging employee connection and centeredness around a shared purpose.

Advance access and belonging practices and awareness across campus.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging initiatives are essential as they prepare us to thrive in a diverse world. Intentional DEIB efforts require ongoing development, commitment, and reflection. Slippery Rock University advocates for brave and inclusive engagement that fosters individual growth within a supportive campus community. Its dedication to diversity of talents, equitable opportunities, and inclusive and accessible educational experiences will ensure that we are successful in a rapidly changing world.

WHAT IS OUR “HOW?” AND OUR ASPIRATIONS?

We will embed cultural humility across the university through the integration of equitable and inclusive strategies and initiatives.

When we cultivate a sense of belonging, we create welcoming spaces where students, faculty, staff, and administrators can thrive. Our intentions are to create an environment conducive to effective learning and human development. We are a regional, public institution committed to providing a high-quality education at an affordable cost. We accomplish this by making higher education accessible to all students through our commitments to scholarship and financial aid opportunities. When students come to our university, they must see themselves reflected in the faculty, staff, and administration. We will strive to increase recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and administrators with diverse identities and offer a robust mentorship program for new faculty and staff, providing them continual professional development and programming focused on safe, inclusive, and bias-free spaces.

Utilize marketing and communication to advance the university.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Effective and efficient communication within an organization can create a culture of collaboration, improved decision-making, and increased productivity. Slippery Rock University will develop and implement a comprehensive, deliberate communication plan that will open communication channels across divisions, departments, and units. Raising the profile of the institution externally is equally important, as such a comprehensive and collaborative approach to communicating with our constituents and community is necessary.

WHAT IS OUR “HOW?” AND OUR ASPIRATIONS?

We will commit to shared governance, transparency, timely communication, and inclusive participation. An evaluation will be conducted to discover institutional spaces where communication can be improved. This discovery will include data from university, state, and regional community members. To ensure continued success we will regularly evaluate our progress and remain focused on our mission, vision, and values.

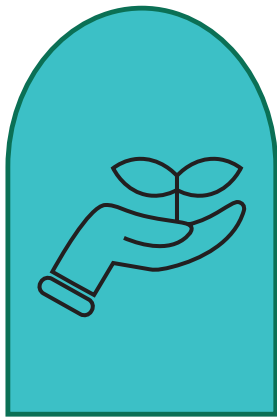
Ensure that all faculty, staff, and students have the support and resources necessary to thrive.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

In a post-pandemic world, higher education is rapidly evolving. Our students, faculty, staff, and administration require us to adapt well, implement innovative ideas, and inspire meaningful connections for current and future endeavors. We must also invest in our people, providing them with the physical spaces, technology, tools and support necessary to succeed and thrive. Slippery Rock University must embrace change to promote well-being and support growth and learning.

WHAT IS OUR “HOW?” AND OUR ASPIRATIONS?

We will explore the needs of our faculty, staff, and students and will create programs and provide resources to meet those needs. Effective and resilient leadership structures, strategies, and expectations must be implemented across the university to allow us to be efficient, pragmatic, inclusive, and creative. We will expand student knowledge of and access to resources to build a sense of connectedness and safety. We will create and maintain safe and healthy environments to strengthen our campus community. We will provide opportunities for our employees to learn and to grow in ways that are consistent with their needs and the best practices within their areas, which means a commitment to continual growth and improvement on the part of the university. This also requires SRU to reflect on current practices and to make prudent choices for the benefit of the organization and those who live, learn, and work here.



PILLAR #2 COMMITMENT TO ACADEMIC DISCOVERY AND GROWTH

As an institution of higher education, we support a steadfast dedication to expanding one's knowledge, skills, and dispositions. We are committed to an environment that supports lifelong learning, goal setting, curiosity, emotional intelligence, and academic innovation. We will strive to provide room for the expansion of one's intellectual horizons, thus positively shaping the future of the region. As the needs of our society change, higher education must redefine its role. The traditional template must be broadened. We are no longer in the business of higher education. Even the term "education" alone does not capture our current charge. We are now firmly in the human development business. Our role is to facilitate the growth and development of those with whom we engage, moving them from one point to the next, throughout their life, regardless of their age or circumstance. The future of work remains ill-defined and, as such, nimbleness and flexibility will be the characteristic that defines success.

Support the expectation of excellence and goal attainment.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Universities have a responsibility to expect excellence and to support goal attainment. Slippery Rock University is charged with providing a high-quality education to our students at an affordable price. Student success depends on engaging in transformational curricular and co-curricular experiences that lead to the realization and attainment of personal and professional goals. As a public institution, we must maintain the trust of all constituents connected to the university and remain committed to building new relationships. Pursuing both personal and collective goals is a fundamental expression of knowledge acquisition, individual development, and societal growth.

WHAT IS OUR "HOW?" AND OUR ASPIRATIONS?

We will commit to a comprehensive approach that involves all constituents in our campus community through varied strategies. First, through clear expectations that are measurable, we will continuously strive for excellence in our academic, research, outreach, and co-curricular programming. Additionally, the university supports excellence through professional development opportunities that enable faculty and staff to grow in their fields and engage in innovative research. University leadership will allocate resources in ways that support the university's mission and goals, maintain open and transparent communication, and encourage flexibility as contemporary trends and needs demand response in an ever-evolving world.

Provide a premier student experience.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Slippery Rock University strives to be a positive catalyst, influencing the region through relevant programs that offer increasingly diverse, scholarly research, and creative endeavors. Our programs must be continuously informed through trends, collaboration, design thinking, and open sharing among internal and external partners. Through this collaboration, new learning opportunities and innovative solutions will emerge for the benefit of students, faculty, staff, community members, employers, alumni, and societies at-large. The challenges of today's world demand analytical, emotional, creative, social, and practical intellect; learners at Slippery Rock University must be challenged to develop each of these through classroom work, as well as through an innovative array of integrated and other experiential learning opportunities. Students of all ages are empowered to thrive during their academic journey by engaging with campus resources designed to help them see the possibilities within themselves and in the world beyond our campus.

WHAT IS OUR “HOW?” AND OUR ASPIRATIONS?

We will work to continually link our market alignment through strategically expanding partnership-driven learning opportunities, both in and beyond the classroom. We will engage with our alumni, departmental advisory boards, community and industry leaders, and professional organizations to identify and implement best practices. Each academic year, our learners will be presented with opportunities to develop across all areas of critical intellect, even as their learning remains founded in our university learning outcomes, and in recognized career-readiness competencies. Throughout a student's learning journey, Slippery Rock University will work to expand engagement with critical support programs, not only measuring engagement success through headcounts, but also through the growth in students, their resilience, self-knowledge, attitudes, academic achievement, persistence, preparedness for joyful and gainful employment, and their propensity to contribute their talents, as alumni, to the ongoing learning legacy of SRU.

Improve retention and graduation rates.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Our institution has historically performed comparatively well in student persistence and graduation rates. The demand for qualified, entry-level college degree earners remains strong, and it is growing in many sectors. To meet those demands of the region and the nation, our institution must work alongside students and their support systems to cultivate a culture of progress-toward-degree. Ongoing, transparent self-assessment processes are necessary to break down individual barriers to graduation, as are resources that promote satisfactory academic progress. It is necessary to have a culture that nurtures learning and supports students along their journey. Student resources must be accessible, future-focused, contextually appropriate, and rooted in social and learning science, as to assure that our student outcomes exceed excellence and focus on the exemplary.

WHAT IS OUR “HOW?” AND OUR ASPIRATIONS?

We will work together, alongside students and their support systems, to achieve and sustain an average first-year, first-time-in-college student persistence rate of at least 85% by 2027. We will focus on achieving and maintaining a benchmark average four-year graduation rate of 60%, and an overall six-year graduation rate that exceeds 70%. Moreover, we will resource innovative ideas that serve to close the retention and graduation gaps that have historically existed between majority and underrepresented minority students. It is our aspiration that by 2027, the overall graduation rates of all historically underrepresented student groups will reach and remain within 5% of the average, institutional and overall graduation rate. To achieve this, we aspire to support our historically underrepresented students in a manner that closes the retention and persistence gaps by 1% annually until the gap is effectively eliminated, as recognized by our system and national metrics.

Expand learning experiences and opportunities to meet the needs of varied learners and groups.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Expanding learning promotes a more comprehensive approach that encourages innovation and creativity, and enhances cultural competence, which are necessary fluencies in an interconnected society. By considering the many ways in which learning opportunities can expand, we exemplify the university's commitment to lifelong learning, critical thinking, skill enhancement, diversity and inclusion, and the development of our communities through well-prepared graduates. A singular approach will not meet the varied needs of learners. Facilitating human development requires both an understanding of and a commitment to addressing the individual and collective needs of our current and future students.

WHAT IS OUR “HOW?” AND OUR ASPIRATIONS?

We will develop approaches and programs that serve the needs of current and future learners. We recognize that expanding learning experiences beyond the traditional student model requires a strategic approach and a commitment to innovation and collaboration. By understanding the varied needs that exist among potential students, we can develop curriculum and programs to provide relevant learning experiences in flexible modalities. Resources for development, marketing, recruitment, mentorship, work-integrated experiences, and data-driven decision making that lead to continuous improvement will drive expansions that benefit all.



PILLAR #3 COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY IMPACT AND COLLABORATION

Slippery Rock University strives to create a culture in which the university and community are interconnected. We are committed to engaging with community and industry partners to listen, learn, and share while working together to implement innovative solutions to the complex issues facing our communities, region, and world. Higher education plays a crucial role in communities, and we must approach this responsibility intentionally and collaboratively. The training of the future workforce is core to our mission but does not encompass its totality. Convener, leader, mediator, employer, connector, and community member — these are only a few of the roles Slippery Rock University will fulfill as we live our mission

Develop a culture of recognition and engagement and live the identity across the campus.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Higher education does not and should not operate in isolation. Higher education serves a distinct role as both driver and passenger of societal evolution. As such, collaboration with our community is critical for continued success. Through leveraging our partnerships and collaborations, Slippery Rock University will continue to be seen as a key strategic partner both locally and regionally. In so doing, we will attract students who are interested in an institution that values community/civic engagement and connecting with community and regional organizations. This is no longer a unidirectional endeavor; reciprocal benefit and bi-directional initiatives are necessary to address the future of work. Universities generally, and SRU specifically, also need to see the employees of today as the students of tomorrow.

WHAT IS OUR “HOW?” AND OUR ASPIRATIONS?

We will evaluate our current practices as a foundation for future planning. This knowledge will allow us to build on our strengths, address local and national gaps, and achieve our goals. We will evaluate what makes Slippery Rock University unique in terms of impact and partnerships and create a plan that will strategically increase these in the coming 3-5 years. Identifying and assessing the current community impacts of the university, from a fiscal lens, will be crucial as we make decisions with both short- and long-term implications. Success will require expanding partnerships to more of our local community, deepening the ones that are most impactful, and creating new partnership opportunities through strategic initiatives aligned with our resources and goals. Success also requires a centralized organizational structure and a transparent inventory of initiatives so that prospective partners can identify existing programs, available resources, and potential for collaborations.

Expand educational, learning, and growth opportunities that add value to external constituencies.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

The university thrives when there is a seamless exchange of energy between the local, regional, and campus communities. Slippery Rock University has a rich history of cultivating formal and informal external partnerships, and the students, faculty, staff, and administration have much to offer as well as much to gain from nurturing a continued tradition of outreach. Expertise is developed through academics and research and applied in purposeful relationships with external constituents. We must expand our partnerships with the world of work beyond campus, making available new experiences that connect classroom development with work-integrated learning. Student participation in work-integrated learning ensures relevant and practical learning for students and supports gainful employment among graduates.

WHAT IS OUR “HOW?” AND OUR ASPIRATIONS?

We will provide external constituents with a clear path for collaborative opportunities and actively listen to the needs of those

seeking to grow alongside us. With world-class facilities and people, we will offer a personalized experience through timely, open, and honest communication. When practitioners in business, health care, education, the arts, the humanities, and the sciences share their expertise through formal and informal mentoring programs that benefit SRU student, administration, faculty, and staff we will ensure that resources, policies, and practices are in place to fully support each student’s growth in those programs. Through rigorous preparation, consistent support, and purposeful reflection, students will benefit from their experiences and add value to the sites that host them.

We recognize that there are financial costs associated with participation in work-integrated learning that can act as barriers to entry for many students. The institution must work strategically and purposefully to increase the number of paid, work-integrated learning experiences. We will remove institutional barriers that might exist in employer partnership sharing, assuring that students have unfettered access to these work-integrated learning experiences.

Develop mutually beneficial, long-term partnerships with local and national industries.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Cultivating and expanding reciprocal partnerships that drive economic and social development is necessary to enhance our learners’ and region’s quality of life. We prepare eminently qualified students, with the support of expert faculty and administrators, who are committed to economic and social development. Slippery Rock University offers innovative services and co-curricular and extra-curricular experiences with strategic partnerships, across a diverse array of programs, to prepare students—to make them lifelong learners for careers and mission-driven callings to serve others. To effectively accomplish this, Slippery Rock University collaborates with private and public institutions in both for-profit and not-for-profit markets. We are uniquely positioned to leverage reciprocal partnerships to create value for the future growth and success of our many stakeholders. As a partner of choice, Slippery Rock University has excellent intellectual, physical, and strategic resources to expand and develop reciprocal partnerships that foster effective, efficient, and equitable benefits for our current and future constituents.

WHAT IS OUR “HOW?” AND OUR ASPIRATIONS?

We will create a culture of collaboration to promote and strengthen community-university partnerships that are mutually beneficial. We will expand existing partnerships to include more interdisciplinary opportunities for our partners, communities, students, faculty, and alumni. As a partner of choice, Slippery Rock University will collaboratively undertake needs assessments with our communities and industry partners. Slippery Rock University will strategically increase the total number of reciprocal partnerships annually. We will also assess the social and economic impact of collaborative engagement efforts, providing the necessary information for continuous improvement and responsible resource allocation. To expand and make the best use of the value created by such partnerships, the university will develop an infrastructure accessible to all internal and external constituents and university/program branding that further connects the university with our surrounding communities.

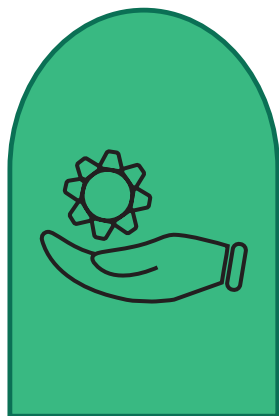
Engage in environmentally sustainable practices.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Acknowledging our interconnected role within the community, we recognize a responsibility to navigate the challenges that threaten the well-being of our region and the sustainability of our shared environment. Slippery Rock University is in a special position to partner with the community and industry partners to lead our region towards a sustainable future through mutually beneficial initiatives. We can have a significant impact on environmental sustainability through both internal operations and outreach to students, faculty, staff, and communities. Through shared initiatives and collective problem-solving, we aim to address regional sustainability challenges, fostering a resilient and thriving community.

WHAT IS OUR “HOW?” AND OUR ASPIRATIONS?

We will work to become a more sustainable organization by integrating responsible practices into every aspect of university life using the Climate Action Plan/Carbon Neutrality Plan as a roadmap. We will strive to reduce our ecological footprint through conserving water and reducing waste; we will reduce fossil fuel usage by employing energy-efficient practices and relying increasingly on renewable energy sources. We will continue to engage in research designed to better understand and find solutions to environmental issues facing the campus and region. Beyond our campus borders, we will collaborate with local businesses, government agencies, and community organizations to forge mutually beneficial partnerships to address sustainability challenges.



PILLAR #4 COMMITMENT TO FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

The university will ensure its future through foresight, strategy, efficiency, responsible planning, prudent use of public funds, and an expanding array of mutually beneficial partnerships. With a collaborative and innovative disposition, we will develop unique connections that inspire innovation, reveal opportunities for students, and give rise to added resources. This aligns with Slippery Rock University's unique and essential role in the region and in the lives of those who live, work, and engage in business here. As a public institution, with a mission for providing a high-quality education at the lowest possible cost, it is our responsibility to be good stewards of the resources provided by the citizens of the commonwealth. Creating new and innovative revenue streams is crucial as is finding ways to conserve our resources while maintaining our high standards.

Structure the university for success.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Base funding for the university is supplied through state appropriations and student tuition and fees. As these resources are limited, the university must continuously seek efficiencies to gain the utmost value and impact from our revenue. As our institution commits to an interlocking relationship with community and industry, and aspires to achieve exemplary student graduation outcomes, efficiency and effective interdepartmental communication and collaboration is no longer a preference but a necessity. We must be prepared to recognize and set aside fixed mindsets and embrace experimentation in pursuit of optimal programmatic design and strategic resource allocation and sharing. We are dedicated to achieving academic excellence and continuity while providing barrier-free learning experiences. We must be diligent to see, prepared to evaluate, inclined to try, all while being thoughtful in our actions. Our intentions are centered on building a sustainable, malleable institution that seizes opportunities and resources, all for the sake of our students and our mission.

WHAT IS OUR "HOW?" AND OUR ASPIRATIONS?

We will commit to continuous discourse, assessment, and, when appropriate, compromise, always yielding individual desires and agendas, to the long-term sustainability of our institution, and the outcomes of our students and graduates. We will work to learn about ourselves, changing and adapting to contemporary work styles and practices, while maintaining dedication to the close-knit culture for which the institution has been known. Departmentally, we will regularly assess and abate barriers to learning and opportunity for our students. We will seek operational efficiencies that align with our institutional commitment to be responsible stewards of public funds. We will develop deliberate methods for identifying and addressing procedural and policy structures – both academic and operational – that create inefficiencies, slow progress, and inhibit our ability to seize opportunities.

Diversify revenue streams.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Diversifying revenue streams is crucial for a university's financial sustainability and vitality to fulfill its mission and vision. Revenue diversification creates flexibility and develops resources to adapt to the ever-evolving global and local economic spheres. We will seek avenues to reduce dependence on tuition as our major revenue source. Within the university and broader communities, diversified revenue streams will promote growth and innovation in research, infrastructure, and program development. New opportunities can be explored, and the university can remain flexible to adapt to changing educational landscapes. While diversified revenues will make income more predictable and afford opportunity to engage in effective resource allocation, it can provide insulation from funding source disruptions, such as government cuts or fluctuations in enrollment. Higher education fundraising has entered a new phase of longer campaigns, higher goals and expectations, narrowing gift pyramids, and decreasing donors. To be successful, each institution and initiative must have a compelling case for support and a well-resourced advancement team and volunteer structure.

WHAT IS OUR "HOW?" AND OUR ASPIRATIONS?

We will weigh our options carefully, seek input, and assess risk strategically with a focus on aligning our revenue-generating initiatives with the university's mission and values. We commit to careful evaluation of potential revenue streams for their long-term sustainability and alignment with the university's mission, vision, and values. Potential opportunities include alternative educational models that reach new populations of students and reimagined facilities to reflect and support new educational paradigms. We will also be expanding research grants, launching fundraising campaigns, and exploring endowment opportunities. Partnerships with industry will be crucial.

We must utilize all areas of our university including but not limited to alumni engagement and advancement services to secure and steward support for Slippery Rock University and its priorities through a comprehensive fundraising campaign.

Ensure alignment and efficiency between and within affiliated entities.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

By their very nature, affiliated entities exist to support the university. The relationship between the university and each affiliated entity must be nurtured to ensure alignment with the university's mission, vision, and values. Our affiliates extend the reach and the impact of the university, and they contribute to the university's ability to promote academic excellence, research and innovation, community engagement, financial sustainability, strategic growth, and shared governance.

WHAT IS OUR "HOW?" AND OUR ASPIRATIONS?

We will work to bring together our affiliated entities. Maximizing the benefits of affiliations and partnerships while minimizing

potential inefficiencies and conflicts is crucial to our ability to leverage those benefits for students, faculty, staff, administration, and the community. Fostering open and regular communication that shares information transparently, and through relevant data, improves and sustains alignment. Additionally, having policies and governance structures in place that define roles, responsibilities, and decision-making authority for both the university and affiliated entities can keep partnerships productive and sustainable. Finally, established performance metrics that utilize useful data and are reviewed regularly as part of a shared goal of continuous improvement and relevance to the university's mission and values will aid in the mitigation of conflict and encourage a cycle of growth, fostering a resilient and thriving community.





PILLAR #1 COMMITMENT TO A ROBUST, SUPPORTIVE, AND INCLUSIVE CULTURE

Description: As a first-choice institution, Slippery Rock University strives to provide a safe, supportive, and healthy environment that allows students, faculty, and staff to thrive. We are committed to providing opportunities for the holistic development of our students, faculty, staff, and administrators. We will lead the university and surrounding community towards personal growth, brave and inclusive engagement, and welcoming spaces to enhance the quality of life and allow individuals the ability to reach their full potential.

Develop a culture of recognition and engagement and live the identity across the campus.

- Foster an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages collaboration across units among faculty, coaches, staff, and students in support of teaching excellence and innovation.
- Strive to create an environment that encourages wellness and emphasizes teamwork and problem solving.
- Recognize and reward students and employees for outstanding performance.

Advance Access and Belonging practices and awareness across campus.

- Embed the development of cultural competencies across the university through the integration of the diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging strategies and initiatives (Access and Belonging Plan) across curricular and co-curricular experiences, training, and programming opportunities for faculty, staff, and students.
- Create an organization that is inclusive, represents a broad range of identities and perspectives, and allows individuals to thrive.
- Increase enrollment of under-represented students (low-income, under-represented minority (URM), first-generation).
- Review current practices through Access and Belonging lens to identify areas for improvement.

Utilize marketing and communication to advance university.

- Develop a comprehensive communication plan and promote communication channels across divisions, departments, and units.
- Raise the regional reputation of SRU.

Ensure that all faculty, staff and students have the support and resources necessary to thrive.

- Implement effective leadership structures, strategies, expectations, and plans across the university.
- Align individual performance evaluations and organizational assessment systems to support the university's core values and strategic direction.
- Support professional development, mentorship, resource attainment, and other opportunities for professional growth.
- Assure support and resources are in place for meeting the varied needs of traditional and non-traditional age students, both in-person and online.
- Create/enhance programs to strengthen holistic wellbeing for the entire campus community.



PILLAR #2 COMMITMENT TO ACADEMIC DISCOVERY AND HUMAN GROWTH

Description: As an institute of higher education, we maintain a steadfast dedication to expanding one's knowledge and skills. We commit to an environment which supports continuous learning, goal setting, curiosity, and academic innovation. We will strive to provide room for the expansion of one's intellectual horizons while significantly contributing to the broader academic community.

Support the expectation of excellence and goal attainment.

- Offer a mission-driven and market-responsive mix of academic programs.
- Incorporate career readiness into curricular and co-curricular endeavors.
- Expand recruitment in viable markets from areas beyond our traditional demographic, while maintaining academic standards.
- Develop achievable evolving assessment standards that meaningfully measure and inform success within and beyond the classroom.
- Provide appropriate resources to support and sustain high-quality scholarship and creative activities.
- Recognize and reward exceptional teaching, scholarship and creative activity, and contributions to academic growth beyond the classroom and across units.

Provide premier student experience.

- Increase student engagement and belonging experience on campus and within our online learning environment.
- Create cohesive student/faculty professional relationships through active and innovative teaching, engaged learning opportunities, and best practices in academic advising and mentorship.
- Enhance the quality, functionality, and aesthetic appeal of campus environment.
- Provide state of the art facilities and technology.
- Create opportunities that link curricular and co-curricular experiences.
- Expand value-added experiences through faculty/student research, internships, and other high-impact practices.

Improve retention and graduation rates.

- Increase FR retention first-to-second term by 0.5% annually to attain a goal of 95%.
- Increase FR first-to-second year retention by 0.5% annually to attain a goal of 85%.
- Increase each upper-division FR cohort persistence by 0.5% annually to attain a second to third year goal of 78% and a third to fourth year goal of 72%.
- Decrease the persistence gap of URM students by 1% annually until the gap is eliminated.
- Decrease the persistence gap of PELL students by 1% annually until the gap is eliminated.
- Increase 4- and 6-year graduation rates to 60% and 70% respectively as student persistence is increased annually.

Expand learning experiences and opportunities to meet the needs of varied learners and groups.

- Provide varied academic offerings and delivery methods—including micro-credentials, shorter-term learning modules, prior learning experiences, and other enrichment opportunities—to accelerate career fulfillment that enhances personal development and well-being.
- Explore and expand upon pre-collegiate learning experiences to improve student transitions from under-represented populations (URM, first-generation, PELL-eligible, academically at risk) to college.
- Expand professional development and continuing education programs to enhance lifelong learning.
- Increase the enrollment of non-traditional learners through online degree completion programs and graduate online programs.



PILLAR #3 COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY IMPACT AND COLLABORATION

Description: The University and the community are interconnected. We will engage with community, and industry partners, to listen, learn, and share, while working together, to implement innovative, real-world solutions, with reciprocal benefits that address the complex issues of our communities, our economic region, and our world.

Expand community engagement/partnerships.

- Increase community involvement/sponsorship opportunities.
- Extend to our external community members opportunities to attend events (e.g., athletic, theatre, dance, music, and other arts and entertainment) on campus.
- Actively and formally engage alumni to enhance career readiness of current students.

Expand educational, learning and growth opportunities that add value to external constituencies.

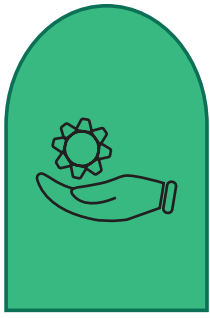
- Remain cognizant of emerging job market trends and make strategic investments accordingly.
- Increase the numbers of credentials earned in high need areas (STEM fields, health sciences, and K-12 education) through industry and philanthropic partnerships.
- Increase engagement, partnerships, and reciprocal relationships with K-12 schools, health care facilities, government, and business and industry at the local and state levels.
- Develop educational-specific partnerships with industry and philanthropic leaders to enhance student learning experiences while cultivating outside funding sources for program growth.

Develop mutually beneficial, long-term partnerships with local and national industries.

- Create a clear, effective, and easy-to-use process for external constituents to find collaborative partners within SRU.
- Grow the university's external engagement through extension, collaborative service, community outreach, alumni engagement and public-private partnerships that enhance the quality of life in Western Pennsylvania and beyond.
- Encourage alumni and partners to engage with and provide opportunities for students in a variety of ways and settings that enrich the undergraduate experience.

Engage in environmentally sustainable practices.

- Implement infrastructural improvements and renovations using the Climate Action Plan/Carbon Neutrality plan as a roadmap to create greater efficiencies, cost savings, and increased reliance on renewable energies.
- Collaborate with local businesses, government agencies, and community organizations, to address regional sustainability challenges, fostering a resilient and thriving community.



PILLAR #4 COMMITMENT TO FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

Description: The university will ensure its place as a first-choice institution through foresight, strategy, efficiency, responsible planning, prudent use of public funds, and through an expanding array of mutually beneficial partnerships. With a collaborative and winning attitude, we will develop unique connections that inspire innovation, reveal opportunity for students, and give rise to new resources that will assure Slippery Rock University's unique, and essential role in the region, and in the lives of those who live, work, and engage in business here.

Structure the university for success.

- Embrace a culture of responsibility and accountability to our university.
- Use robust data analytics and relevant information to provide actionable insights to enhance student success and operational efficacy.
- Implement and maintain optimally efficient and high performing staffing structures to collectively advance student success efforts, persistence outcomes, and faculty efficacy.
- Implement policies and practices to optimize unit-level performance, including the acquisition and allocation of technological, financial and physical resources.
- Encourage collaboration, communication, and connection across campus to minimize the duplication of programs/ services and increase variety of options.

Diversify revenue streams.

- Increase revenue streams through sponsored programs, grant awards, fundraising efforts, and other endeavors.
- Create a campus culture of philanthropy.
- Generate more philanthropic support for the University.
- Encourage and support strategic faculty and staff driven initiatives to sponsor workshops, conferences, and other special events that generate revenue.

Ensure alignment and efficiency between and within affiliated entities.

- Establish a regular cadence of meetings between the University and each affiliate to discuss goals, objectives, issues and concerns of common interest.
- Develop affiliate-sponsored initiatives that will generate value and provide a ROI for the university.
- Provide the resources and other support necessary to launch new initiatives that demonstrate revenue potential.

OUR VISION, MISSION & VALUES

OUR VISION

Slippery Rock University will excel as an accessible, inclusive and engaging community, centered on student learning, positively shaping the future of the region, through the lives of our graduates.

OUR MISSION

Slippery Rock University offers accessible and affordable, broad-based education, through scholarly and creative endeavors, and empowering community-engagement. Educating learners at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, Slippery Rock University fosters an environment of belonging, while ensuring the economic mobility of our graduates. The university is committed to enhancing the quality of life of our learners and our region.

OUR VALUES

- Community and Belonging • Student-Centered • Engagement
- Transformation • Civic-Mindedness • Collaboration
- Focus on the Future • Stewardship

Steering Committee Members

| | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Scott Albert | Alice Del Vecchio | Cara Kriebel | John Rindy |
| Frances Amatucci | Karla Fonner | Maria Malacaman | Sam Thangiah |
| Michelle Amodei | Amber Hamilton | Michael May | Shannon Young |
| Kelly Bailey | Sam Heikinen | Kevin McCarthy | Justin Zackal |
| Carrie Birckbichler | Jason Hilton | Holly McCoy | John Ziegler |
| Joseph Cali | Domenic Ionta | Rebecca Morrice | Lu Ann Znosko |
| Franklyn Charles | Dallas Jackson | Mark O'Connor | Lauren Zuschlag |
| Chris Cole | Samantha Kelly | Patricia Pierce | |



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