

# **RIDER UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN: OUR PATH FORWARD**

**Approved by the Board of Trustees  
June 21, 2017**

## **Introduction**

Rider is at a seminal moment in its history, not unlike its move from Trenton to Lawrenceville in the early 1960s and its evolution from a business school to a comprehensive university over the course of the past 152 years. As with many private, independent not-for-profit colleges and universities across the country, Rider is facing a number of serious challenges and issues impacting its competitiveness and the sustainability of its financial model. These challenges fall into two major categories as identified in the SWOT analyses conducted as part of our strategic planning process of the past year – those that are industry-wide and those that are internal to Rider’s structure and operations.

In the past five years, Rider has effectively managed through enrollment declines and cost reductions, in large part due to the introduction of new academic programs with strong demand. But we operate in a highly competitive market and we lack the substantial endowment, state and external funding that might temper our financial challenges. Regional demographics are not favorable and competition continues to heighten, particularly with our public institution competitors.

Given the complex and multifaceted nature of the internal and external challenges Rider faces, we must implement a comprehensive and transformative Strategic Plan that will ensure the University’s sustainability into the future and provide successive generations of Rider students a quality, affordable education. Such a plan requires a change in our operational paradigm, shifting our work from defensive to offensive, cost-cutting to investment; all with a strong focus on visionary growth.

Achieving this visionary growth over the next three to five years requires decisive action, as outlined in this Strategic Plan. Our emphasis will be on making the University more competitive by enhancing the student experience and Rider’s value proposition. This will be achieved by focusing on affordability while also fostering a vibrant living and learning environment for all students – one that engages them fully in their learning inside and outside the classroom. We will also advance the University’s academic reputation and brand, rebuild enrollments, re-invest in campus facilities, address projected near-term deficits, achieve long-term stability and reshape our culture to deliver Rider’s promise for the next 150 years.

## Overview of the Strategic Planning Process

### Strategic Themes

The Strategic Plan represents the dedicated work of over 100 individuals throughout the University community – faculty, staff, administrators, students, alumni, Trustees and representatives of our external community. The Plan is organized along five strategic themes, or priority areas of focus, with corresponding goals, action plans and metrics.

The five strategic themes are:

- Our unwavering focus on student growth and development
- The branding, marketing and promotion of our University
- The importance of our people
- The strategic cultivation, management and investment of our resources
- Our commitment to planning, implementation and continuous improvement

### Planning Process

These strategic themes speak directly to the SWOT analyses (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) conducted by the Board of Trustees in October 2015 and the Steering Committee and six strategic planning working groups in spring 2016 as well as President Dell’Omo’s vision for the University as he articulated throughout his first year at Rider. The working groups were comprised of faculty, staff, administrators, students, alumni and external representatives and were organized in the following areas:

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|---|---|
| • Academic Excellence and Engaged Learning    | Jonathan Millen, chair                  |
| • Student Enrollment, Experience and Outcomes | Todd Weber, chair                       |
| • Institutional Reputation and Branding       | Kelly Bidle, chair                      |
| • Financial Resources                         | Jason Chiu, chair                       |
| • Facilities and Infrastructure               | Karin Klim, chair                       |
| • Employee Engagement and Enrichment          | Donna Disbrow and Bosah Ebo, co- chairs |

A Steering Committee helped to lead the process and consisted of the President’s Cabinet, Deans, working group chairs, several Trustees, at-large faculty and students and an external representative.

### Strengths and Challenges

The SWOT analyses confirmed many of Rider’s strengths. They include highly qualified and dedicated faculty, administrators and staff; areas of academic distinction and professional accreditations; a focus on teaching with small class size and attention to students’ needs; strong academic enhancement programs; close faculty and student interactions and collaboration; robust co-curricular offerings; distinctive new career-oriented programs and experiential learning opportunities; close sense of community; strong student government and leadership opportunities; Division I athletics; emphasis on sustainability; abundant open, green spaces and attractive landscaping; and close proximity to major metropolitan areas.

The SWOT analyses also identified a variety of external challenges of significance for Rider, particularly within the context of higher education at the state and national levels. These include, among others, increased competition, particularly with public institutions; regional demographic declines; increased government regulations; diminished state financial support; increasing fixed costs; historic levels of student and family debt; greater price sensitivity; greater competition for philanthropic support; and increasing focus on the college experience, different delivery methods and student outcomes as part of higher education's value for price.

## **Rider Vision and Mission**

### **Rider's Vision**

Rider University will be a premier, forward-looking university known for its Engaged Learning Program that, together with dynamic academic programs, enriching co-curricular experiences and a vibrant living and learning community, challenges students, excites their imaginations and instills in them excellence in thought and action, preparing them for highly engaged and fulfilling professional and personal lives.

### **Rider's Mission Statement and the Rider PROMISE**

Rider University welcomes students from throughout the region, across the nation, and around the world who seek to be challenged and supported as active members of our inclusive and vibrant living and learning community. Committed to student growth, transformation and leadership, we connect rigorous academic, artistic and professional programs of study with a rich array of learning experiences that engage students inside and outside the classroom. We prepare graduates to thrive professionally and to be lifelong independent learners and responsible citizens who embrace diversity, support the common good, and contribute meaningfully to the changing world in which they live and work.

Our students, alumni, faculty, staff and administrators live the **RIDER PROMISE** by being forever:

**P**repared to contribute meaningfully to the changing world in which they live and work

**R**espectful of all people, rights, freedoms and individual differences

**O**pen to a life of independent learning

**M**otivated to be responsible citizens who support the common good

**I**nnovative, creative and resourceful

**S**killed and thriving professionals, educators, artists and performers

**E**ngaged in their communities as leaders and role models

*The Rider PROMISE is offered as a representation of the mission. It is inspired by our recent 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary which embraced the tagline, Fulfilling the Promise. This tagline was, in turn, inspired by Andrew J. Rider himself as discussed in the historical books written by Dr. Walter A. Brower '48, former Dean of the School of Education. Andrew J. Rider declared in 1883 that Rider's future was full of promise. The Rider PROMISE is offered as part of the mission in response to student feedback this past spring that we try to represent the mission in a visual or graphic way.*

## **Strategic Theme: Our unwavering focus on student growth and development**

### **Benchmarks/key performance indicators**

- Full-time undergraduate enrollment will increase 12% or 438 students (from 3,743 in fall 2016 to 4,181 in fall 2021)
- Graduate enrollment will increase by 7% or 1,000 credits (from 13,038 in fall 2016 to 14,009 in fall 2021)
- Freshman to sophomore retention will increase to 85% by fall 2021, up from 78% in fall 2016
- The 4-year graduation rate will increase to 65% for the fall 2017 entering cohort, up from 57% for the fall 2012 entering cohort
- The resident student population will increase 17% to 2,540 by fall 2021, or 61% of our full-time population. This is up from 2,177, or 58% of our full-time population, in fall 2016
- Ten new academic programs will be established by fall 2020, including new undergraduate and graduate offerings in such areas as Analytics, Kinesiology, Cybersecurity, Actuarial Science, Engineering and Technology
- NSSE scores will improve particularly in the areas of Academic Challenge and Quality of Interactions
- Job placement rates in the upper 90s
- Gallup Purdue index related to student/alumni professional engagement and personal well-being

### **1. Implement the Engaged Learning Program beginning with the fall 2017 entering class.**

*Approved by UAPC in May 2016, the Engaged Learning Program, a new graduation requirement, is based on results from implementation of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and reflects widespread involvement of the University community, including faculty, staff, administrators and students. Engaged learning refers to activities in which students apply their knowledge in educational settings beyond the classroom; delve further with independent scholarship and creative expression; broaden their horizons with study abroad or cross-cultural encounters; become problem solvers, leaders and team members in their communities; and prepare for professional and civic lives that make a difference. The Engaged Learning Program complements the rigorous and robust curricula provided by Rider's academic programs.*

*Beginning with the fall 2017 class, students will be required to complete at least two high impact engaged learning experiences that reflect the University's strategic themes of leadership, ethics and social responsibility, and global and multicultural perspectives. These experiences, documented on the Engaged Learning transcript, will help students build bridges between their courses of study and the world in which they live.*

*The Engaged Learning Committee, established by UAPC, is charged with the following:*

- *implementing and managing the Engaged Learning Program by verifying that each course and experience meets the criteria for inclusion*
- *seeking out, evaluating and approving additional courses and experiences for inclusion*
- *providing a mechanism for reviewing "one off" options presented by students or their advisors*
- *reporting back to UAPC as requested.*

Responsibility:	<b>Engaged Learning Committee</b> , Provost, Deans and Vice President for Student Affairs
Timeline:	Implementation in the 2017-18 academic year
Resources:	additional operating

*In addition to the program components already being implemented, the Provost, working with the Vice President for Student Affairs and Deans, will incorporate the following additional action plans as s/he oversees implementation of the program:*

*Action Plans*

- A. Establish a new position entitled Director of Engaged Learning to be responsible for implementation and assessment of the program.
- B. Engage faculty, administrators, staff and alumni in the Engaged Learning Program. Create on and off campus internships and other learning experiences through which alumni, administrators and staff serve as mentors, in addition to faculty, and build meaningful relationships with students.
- C. Incorporate engaged learning criteria into the promotion and tenure process and as the basis, in part, for existing faculty awards and grants.
- D. Build widespread awareness of and recognition for the program. Annually showcase successful student engagement, experiences and learning. Establish an annual award, to be presented as part of an annual showcase event, for students, faculty and/or staff that recognizes outstanding student engagement and learning experiences. Engage broad representation in the nomination process to emphasize the value of the program and elevate its visibility across the University.

## **2. Develop a first year experience (FYE) for all freshmen and transfer students.**

Responsibility:	<b>Provost, Deans, Vice President for Student Affairs</b>
Timeline:	Implementation beginning with the fall 2018 entering class
Resources:	additional operating

### *Action Plans*

- A. Develop a credit bearing program for all traditional freshmen and transfer students that anchors them in the disciplines; emphasizes a broad, liberal educational experience; supports their transition to Rider and integrates them more fully into the University community. Introduce them to their advisors and the learning objectives specific to their majors and the Engaged Learning Program. Provide the practical information needed to effectively navigate their academic and co-curricular experience. Determine how the course will be offered in light of the existing freshman seminar program and previous work to establish an FYE.
- B. Offer summer preparatory experiences for all incoming freshmen as an extension of new student orientation to set the tone for their four years at Rider. These experiences may be modeled after existing programs such as EOP, SSS and the STEM Summer Science Institute or they may be centered on building community among new students and faculty/staff. They should include an introduction to both academic and student life at Rider, and should be supported by appropriate faculty development programming that includes effective teaching and mentoring practices.
- C. Develop a coherent and meaningful set of academic and other experiences for freshmen and transfer students in their first year. Incorporate the Shared Read Program and Rider Classroom Experience events/activities throughout the academic year. Involve each student cohort in planning and hosting events/activities to which all students, faculty and staff would be encouraged to attend. Begin the academic year with a kick-off event in support of these programs.
- D. Engage sophomores meaningfully as first year experience mentors.

## **3. Create a comprehensive holistic advising model for all students that supports their academic planning and progression and career development and success.**

Responsibility:	<b>Provost, Deans, Department Chairs</b>
Timeline:	Implementation in the 2019-20 academic year
Resources:	additional operating

### *Action Plans*

- A. Utilize a team approach that includes faculty, student peers and administrators as advisors.

- B. Explore the possibility of developing a centralized electronic system by which all student-faculty/staff interactions are documented and accessible, fostering ongoing follow up and cross divisional tracking and awareness. Include access to such information as early warning notifications, academic evaluations (progress reporting and mid-term grading), engaged learning transcripts, financial aid information and career planning and skill-building throughout students' tenure at Rider.
- C. Develop a comprehensive set of integrated tools to support student/advisor tracking of academic progress and planning, course selection, etc. Provide ongoing faculty/staff/student training in the use of these tools.
- D. Ensure consistent and timely feedback to students in all their courses through mid-term grading, progress reporting and early warning notification and follow up.
- E. Ensure more frequent student-advisor engagement beyond the course selection process. Develop an online scheduling program through which students can make appointments with their advisors and faculty. Adopt the requirement of an academic advisor's signature prior to first year students' withdrawal from courses. Eliminate the ability of advisors to green light multiple students simultaneously.
- F. Integrate the advising model with the First Year Experience and students' career planning.
- G. Offer ongoing faculty/staff development programming in support of the advising role.
- H. Incorporate advising and assessment of advising as part of the promotion and tenure and performance development processes for those who serve in that capacity. Establish a mechanism by which advisors are regularly evaluated by their advisees.
- I. Name the program to brand and publicize it effectively (i.e. Rider Advising and Mentoring Program – RAMP)

#### **4. Strengthen students' persistence and timeliness to graduation.**

Responsibility:	<b>Provost, Director of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness, Deans, Retention Committee, Director of the Academic Success Center</b>
Timeline:	Implementation in the 2019-20 academic year
Resources:	additional operating

##### *Action Plans*

- A. Engage families beginning with new student orientation to help them understand the challenges and expectations of college life so they, in turn, can better support their students throughout their academic career.

- B. Expand programming within the Academic Success Center such as Supplemental Instruction and Success Coaching. Ensure the appropriate academic and other support of students with disabilities through a collaborative effort of faculty and the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities.
  - C. Implement the Milestones Scholar Program (a revision of the programs formerly known as RAP and JumpStart) to provide needed academic and social integration in support of at-risk students.
  - D. Engage transfer students during their community college tenure by creating opportunities for them to participate in Rider courses and programming.
  - E. Expand J-term, summer, late term and weekend course offerings to support timely progress toward graduation.
  - F. Expand on-campus jobs through the work-study program in support of students' financial needs, providing additional opportunities to engage students in the Rider community and provide mentoring opportunities.
  - G. Continue to implement academic programming with corresponding pricing structures that help to control student cost (e.g. 3+1 and 4+1 offerings).
- 5. Continue to revitalize curricular offerings and delivery methods to attract and retain students and non-traditional learners, strengthen the best of what Rider has to offer, and reflect advances in higher education, industries and the professions.**

Responsibility:	<b>Provost and Deans</b> , Academic Policy Committees, Vice President for Enrollment Management
Timeline:	Completion in the 2021-22 academic year
Resources:	capital investment, fundraising potential

*Action Plans*

- A. Establish cutting-edge undergraduate and graduate programs in the sciences and technology that attract new students and build on existing curricular strengths. Complete the renovation and expansion of the Science and Technology Center in support of new and existing programs.
- B. Support the Health Studies Institute as it works to foster multidisciplinary dialogue; build programs and partnerships to benefit students, faculty and staff; support the public and private health sectors; and become a recognized and authoritative voice on topics related to health.



- C. Strengthen programmatic offerings in the College of Business Administration with a focus on the impact of big data in the business world. Implement targeted renovations in Sweigart Hall to include, among other renovations, the planned 1,000 square-foot Business Data & Analytics Center, which will serve as a hands-on learning environment to strengthen students' preparedness for an array of business careers by equipping them with the skills, knowledge, and real-world experiences they will need to become leaders in a competitive global environment. The Center will help make CBA students more literate in analytics, technology, and financial problem-solving across all Business majors.
- D. Strengthen theater and musical theater opportunities with the renovation of the BLC and Yvonne Theaters.
- E. Continue to offer new undergraduate and graduate programs and delivery methods that respond to the interests of traditional and non-traditional students and working professionals. Expand 4+1 and 3+1 opportunities for talented and academically prepared undergraduates. Expand online degree and course formats, off-site partnerships (e.g. Bancroft), and partnerships with community colleges (e.g. 3+1 offerings and on-campus community college presence).
- F. Work with the Academic Policy Committees to streamline the pilot program process to encourage the exploration and implementation of curricular innovations.
- G. Establish an Honors College that will incorporate all existing honors programs. Create a living/learning community for all honors students that incorporates high levels of engaged learning. Expand scholarship criteria for honors students by requiring a credit-bearing thesis experience. Recognize students who successfully graduate from the Honors College with a special diploma designation.
- H. Establish a common academic core across the institution that addresses the University's Student Learning Outcomes and incorporates the First Year Experience and Engaged Learning Program to ensure a common experience of excellence.
- I. Capitalize on cross-disciplinary synergies to establish areas of distinction within the colleges and schools. Continue to build on degrees that maximize curricular offerings through core courses within those degrees that can then be customized to the college/school in which the student resides (e.g. B.S.B.A./B.A. Organizational Psychology).
- J. Create options for student designed majors and interdisciplinary exploration to enable students to study more widely across the curriculum while also satisfying graduation requirements for their major.

- K. Build career preparation more fully into the curriculum across the institution following the model used by the College of Business Administration. A focused integration of the curriculum and the services of the Center for Career Development and Success prepares students for the world of work and highlight the transferable skills expected of future employers.
- L. Design and implement a process that incorporates assessment of student achievement of well-defined student learning outcomes in the formal evaluation of academic programs.
- M. Strengthen the academic portfolio based upon the recommendations of the Academic Prioritization Task Force and the strategic initiatives cited above. Allocate resources to programs based upon the outcome of the Academic Prioritization process and the utilization of the Boston Consulting Group matrix. Implement a zero based budgeting process and consider the use of Responsibility Centered Model (RCM) for graduate program budgeting.

**6. Build a vibrant living and learning community that enhances the university experience for students, faculty, staff, administrators and alumni, strengthens learning and campus spirit and further builds a sense of community, place and belonging.**

Responsibility:	<b>Vice President for Student Affairs, Director of Athletics, Vice President for Facilities and University Operations, Provost, Deans</b>
Timeline:	Implementation beginning fall 2017 and ongoing
Resources:	existing operating, capital investment

***Vibrant Learning Action Plans***

- A. Develop and promote a diverse university community that is reflective and supportive of our diverse student population. This can be facilitated through ongoing intentional discussions in the campus community regarding issues of diversity as they relate to both the student experience at Rider and in society at large, fostering dialogue related to issues of diversity within academic programs, and employee hiring and support practices (as further reflected in the importance of our people theme).
- B. Working with the LGBTQ Advisory Board and Student Government Association, ensure that the needs of students of all sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions are supported.
- C. Expand the array of linked courses and living and learning communities.
- D. Expand on programming and services that address the specific academic and student life needs of commuting, transfer, veteran and Continuing Studies students, integrating them more fully into the Rider community.

- E. Expand academic and cultural programming in the evenings and on weekends. Tie programming into the Engaged Learning Program, First Year Experience, Shared Read Program, Rider Classroom Experience, etc.
- F. Promote activities and events more effectively with a unified campus events calendar and more effective promotion. This can be addressed, in part, with BroncNation.
- F. Implement the recommendations of the Student Affairs Prioritization Task Force in the improvement of programs ranked in the lower quintiles.

***Vibrant Living Action Plans***

- A. Complete the front-campus mixed use residential/retail project on the Lawrenceville campus to enhance campus appeal, contribute to a vibrant living community, enhance on-campus living for upperclassmen, and support enrollment and revenue growth.
- B. Promote and enhance on-campus living. Renovate residence halls including air conditioning, common areas, bathrooms and ADA accessibility. Expand housing options for upperclassmen. Develop alternate residential pricing models.
- C. Foster a greater sense of university spirit through Rider's Division I athletics. Promote individual and team achievements more broadly. Generate greater attendance at athletic competitions among students, faculty, staff, alumni and the surrounding community. Engage student-athletes more meaningfully with the broader student population.
- D. Expand and promote opportunities for students, faculty and staff to interact and engage meaningfully with one another and with the surrounding community. This can be in the form of academic, cultural, social and athletic (intramural) events; community service opportunities; the proposed team advising approach and interdisciplinary committees and departmental showcases where best practices and services are shared across the institution while also promoting leadership opportunities. Encourage staff throughout the University, where appropriate, to serve as advisors to student clubs and organizations. Create informal faculty-student meetings spaces throughout the University.
- E. Strengthen customer service and streamline efficiency within student support offices. For example, utilize technology in the form of automated service satisfaction surveys and digital documentation systems. Provide regular customer service training for front line staff and administrators and revise office hours to accommodate schedules of working students and parents. Emphasize customer service and user satisfaction in annual performance evaluations.

## **Strategic Theme: The branding, marketing and promotion of our University**

### **Benchmarks/key performance indicators**

- Full-time undergraduate enrollment will increase 12% or 438 students (from 3,743 in fall 2016 to 4,181 in fall 2021)
- Graduate enrollment will increase by 7% or 1,000 credits (from 13,038 in fall 2016 to 14,009 in fall 2021)
- Freshman to sophomore retention will increase to 85% by fall 2021, up from 78% in fall 2016
- The resident student population will increase 17% to 2,540 by fall 2021, or 61% of our full-time population. This is up from 2,177, or 58% of our full-time population, in fall 2016
- The 4-year graduation rate will increase to 65% for the fall 2017 entering cohort, up from 57% for the fall 2012 entering cohort
- Alumni giving will increase to 33% by the end of the Campaign, to 12% by 2023, up from 9% in 2017
- Alumni engagement will increase as measured/evidenced by increased membership on advisory boards
- Local and regional media/social media exposure will increase

- 1. Build a dynamic marketing program that integrates marketing, advertising and public relations strategies to raise the University's profile, position Rider to be a university of choice for students and employees, with name recognition and brand awareness, and emphasize Rider's value proposition.**

Responsibility:	<b>Assistant Vice President for University Communications and Marketing; Director of Marketing, Director of Athletics,</b> Vice President for University Advancement, Vice President for Enrollment Management, Provost and Deans
Timeline:	Implementation in 2017-18 and ongoing
Resources:	existing operating and capital investment

### *Action Plans*

- A. Define and implement key messaging around engaged learning, the proposed new advising model, student outcomes, and other strategic priorities to demonstrate Rider's value proposition. Key messages should be driven by an external brand study and internal feedback. Promote the Rider PROMISE.

- B. Develop and implement marketing and communication plans for key constituencies in collaboration with subject matter experts, expanding awareness of the University both locally, regionally and beyond. Constituencies include prospective and current students (traditional and non-traditional), parents, alumni, donors, faculty and staff, external media, government, business leaders and employers, influencers and other specific audiences (e.g., those attending athletic competitions, theater productions and other performances, and Rebovich Center events).
  - C. Ensure consistency in brand awareness and messaging across the institution through a variety of tools and resources (i.e. guidelines, talking points, graphics standards)
  - D. Establish a university-wide team, comprised of staff and faculty, to assist with the development, implementation and assessment of marketing and communication plans. Establish assessment benchmarks, outcomes and reporting tools.
  - E. Strengthen the promotion of Rider’s Division I athletics programs. Establish the capability to provide ESPN level quality in house-produced video broadcasts of events and competitions in concert with the new Sports Media major. In addition to strengthening athletics promotion, this will increase the number of on-campus experiential opportunities for students in this and other sports and communication related majors. This investment should also facilitate the broadcasting of other events throughout the University including, among others, theater productions and speaker series.
  - F. Identify, market and promote pillars of excellence across the institution. These should include the best that Rider has to offer in term of academic and other programs. Marketing of these programs should be consistent, cohesive and enhance Rider’s reputation and name recognition.
  - G. Encourage and support faculty and staff as ambassadors of the University. Offer talking points, strategies and engagement activities that align closely with Rider’s strategic themes, mission, vision and values.
- 2. Build deep, long-lasting and loyal relationships with alumni and the broader external community to strengthen their connections to the University and place Rider prominently at the center of community life.**

Responsibility:	<b>Vice President for University Advancement, Director of Alumni Relations</b> , Provost and Deans, Vice President for Student Affairs
Timeline:	Implementation in 2017-18 and ongoing
Resources:	existing operating

*Action Plans*

- A. Engage students and parents early and frequently throughout students' time at Rider as the starting point for lifelong engagement. This could be in the form of, but not limited to, participation in hallmark campus events; communications that highlight/showcase student, faculty and staff achievements; and discussion of issues that influence student success (i.e. diversity, financial aid, academic rigor, engaged learning, high impact practices).
- B. Promote life-long learning opportunities and partnerships that position Rider as a center for life-long engagement in living, learning and well-being.
- C. Utilize alumni as mentors who provide networking, career guidance and engaged and/or experiential learning opportunities for students. Expand roles for students on the Alumni Board of Directors, creating ever stronger linkages between our alumni and students, our "alumni-in-residence."
- D. Promote regular and active communication with alumni. Extend Rider email access beyond graduation. Coordinate and centralize alumni contact and other data across the institution. Include alumni more directly in university planning and programming. Continue to recruit more alumni to serve on college, school and program-based advisory boards. Showcase alumni achievements via social media, the website and other forms of communication. Extend career development services to alumni through job listing access, resume and other skill building and professional networking events and opportunities.
- E. Build partnerships with local and regional community organizations while also promoting community engagement and civic responsibility among students, faculty, staff and alumni (i.e. serving on local boards, participating in service projects). Work with the Bonner Community Scholars Program, the SGA Community Service Committee, and Campus Compact in this regard. Consider a freshman class project and encourage faculty to connect classroom learning to the community.

## **Strategic Theme: The importance of our people**

### **Benchmarks/key performance indicators**

- The diversity of our employees will be more reflective of our diverse student population.
- The number of underutilized employee categories, as reflected in the Affirmative Action Plan, will be reduced by two by 2019
- The number of minority employee applicants will increase 10% by 2020
- Employee satisfaction across a variety of dimensions will be strengthened as reflected in climate survey results in 2020

### **1. Strengthen and sustain communication and engagement throughout the University to support the shared community in which we live and learn.**

Responsibility:	<b>Cabinet, Human Resources Department</b>
Timeline:	Implementation beginning in 2017 and ongoing
Resources:	existing operating

#### *Action Plans*

- A. Establish mechanisms, both formal and informal, that allows for open, honest and respectful dialogue among employees and offer opportunities to provide feedback on topics of discussion.
- B. Establish a variety of approaches to keep the University community informed of progress made in the Strategic Plan.
- C. Create opportunities for departments to showcase their services to build awareness of the diverse responsibilities required for the University to function effectively.
- D. Create opportunities for employees to participate in community service and social functions as a means to interact and engage with one another outside of the work environment.
- E. Explore opportunities for employees to partner with other departments/divisions to support admissions, student engagement, fundraising and alumni relations.

### **2. Build a diversified workforce where similarities and differences are celebrated and embraced.**

Responsibility:	<b>Cabinet, Associate Vice President for Human Resources, Director of Employment and Employee Relations</b>
Timeline:	Implementation beginning in 2018 and ongoing
Resources:	existing operating

*Action Plans*

- A. Strengthen awareness and understanding, throughout the institution, of issues of diversity associated with hiring practices and employee support programs/programming. Ensure that search committees include diverse representation.
- B. Explore the establishment of a Diversity Task Force, comprised of faculty, staff and students, to provide guidance on policies, programming and community projects that support a shared commitment to diversity in all its forms.
- C. Ensure that Rider's website highlights the degree to which diversity is valued and supported throughout the University community.

**3. Promote employees' personal and professional development and advancement.**

Responsibility:	<b>Associate Vice President for Human Resources and Director of Employment and Employee Relations</b>
Timeline:	Later 2018 and ongoing
Resources:	additional operating

*Action Plans*

- A. Revise new employee orientation. Focus not only on the practicalities of beginning employment at Rider but also on the University's rich history; mission, vision and values; its Strategic Plan and where and how new employees fit into the organizational structure so as to integrate them more fully into the University community.
- B. Create a fully integrated learning system to develop, train, assess and improve employees' skill sets, utilizing multiple delivery methods, including faculty led workshops.
- C. Establish a development program for all supervisors/managers that support their leadership role and help ensure a consistent employee experience.
- D. Establish a mentoring program for all new employees and those seeking mentorship opportunities. Coordinate it with the existing faculty mentoring program.
- E. Re-evaluate the employee performance development program, including the potential for offering a 360 review process. Encourage staff participation in University events, activities and programming through employees' performance development plans. Consider instituting a merit-based pay plan that rewards top-performing employees with more substantial annual increases, when funding is available.



**4. Establish a lifestyle- and family-friendly environment for all employees.**

Responsibility:	<b>Associate Vice President for Human Resources, Human Resources Action Committee</b>
Timeline:	Implementation beginning 2018 and ongoing
Resources:	TBD

*Action Plans*

- A. Continue to offer innovative and flexible approaches to employee work schedules, time off and self-management.
- B. Explore ways to more closely link annual compensation increases to performance and/or goal achievement.
- C. Formalize an employee health and wellness program with specific goals that are assessed annually.
- D. Create opportunities for employees to showcase their work life to their families/children with annual events such as Take Your Child to Work Day.
- E. Explore the establishment of an on campus childcare facility that would be run jointly by the College of Education and Human Services and Auxiliary Services. Or consider partnering with a local organization/facility to provide such services for employees' children. The facility would be available to employees and the surrounding community and would provide experiential learning opportunities for students while also generating revenue for the University.

**5. Instill a culture of appreciation where employees are recognized and celebrated for their contributions to work and life at Rider.**

Responsibility:	<b>Associate Vice President for Human Resources, Director of Employment and Employee Relations, Assistant Vice President for University Communications and Marketing</b>
Timeline:	Planning and implementation in 2017-18 and ongoing
Resources:	TBD

*Action Plans*

- A. Establish an Awards Council, comprised of faculty and staff, responsible for oversight of a multifaceted recognition program that includes existing and future faculty and staff awards and recognitions. Ensure that appreciation and recognitions are sincere, specific, timely and publicized, and that they include something tangible that employees can proudly display. Also ensure that award/recognition criteria and methods of selection are appropriately communicated.

- B. Utilize various platforms for publicly recognizing employee accomplishments, inspiring others and reinforcing a culture of appreciation. These can include, among others, the website, radio station, Rider News, Rider Report and Rider Magazine.

## **Strategic Theme: The strategic cultivation, management and investment of our resources**

### **Benchmarks/key performance indicators**

- Annual operating savings of \$3 to \$4 million will be achieved by fiscal 2019 and another \$5 to \$6 million no later than fiscal 2022
- University deficits will be significantly reduced in fiscals 2018 – 2021 and eliminated in fiscal 2022
- Deferred maintenance needs will be reduced by 25% by fiscal 2022.
- Comprehensive campaign proceeds will reach \$50 to \$75 million by June 2023. This includes increases in the Rider Fund, endowment, scholarship and capital giving across the five year period as well as an increase in the number of unrestricted bequests
- The Rider Fund will increase from \$1.44 million in fiscal 2018 to \$1.6 million in fiscal 2022
- Alumni giving will increase 33% by the end of the Campaign, to 12% by 2023, up from 9% in 2017
- Endowment scholarship support will increase 40% by the end of the Campaign, increasing the number of endowed scholarships to 300, up from 214 in 2017.
- Bequests will increase 43.5% by the end of the Campaign, to 330 by 2012, up from 230 in 2017
- Gross Auxiliary annual revenue will increase 3% to 5% by fiscal 2022
- Full-time undergraduate enrollment will increase 12% or 438 students (from 3,743 in fall 2016 to 4,181 in fall 2021)
- Retention will increase to 85% by fall 2021, up from 78% in fall 2016
- The 4-year graduation rate will increase to 65% for the fall 2017 entering cohort, up from 57% for the fall 2012 entering cohort
- Reduced cyber security and other risks
- Improved technology user satisfaction

### **1. Build tuition and other net revenue to meet capital and operating needs.**

Responsibility:	<b>Vice President for Enrollment Management, Vice President for Facilities and University Operations, Vice President for Finance, Provost</b>
Timeline:	Ongoing
Resources:	Existing operating

*Action Plans*

- A. With input from Rider's enrollment partner, transition to lower per student costs to compete more effectively with cross-admit peer institutions and improve admissions yield and retention. Implement innovative pricing and other financial aid strategies to better attract and retain students, support affordability and generate greater net tuition revenue.
- B. Evaluate proposals to acquire Westminster Choir College and retain the programs in Princeton, acquire the programs for relocation to the successor institution, or acquire the campus real estate. The proposals will be evaluated relative to a set of Guiding Principles designed to ensure the long-term success of Westminster Choir College and of Rider University as a whole. Invest proceeds in strategic program development and facility improvements.
- C. Right size the University in terms of the number and mix of undergraduate and graduate programs and students.
- D. Monetize the Tri-generation plant through sale of the building and equipment to support capital needs. Enter into a ground lease and a power purchase agreement to purchase power at a competitive rate with operational costs that do not exceed the current budget.
- E. Secure a two-year \$15 million line of credit.
- F. Seek over \$40 million in bond financing to support renovations and expansion of academic buildings, residence halls and community common areas that focus on the areas with the greatest potential for enrollment growth.
- G. Increase the scope and profitability of the camps and conferences program. Expand the Study Tours Program and international auxiliary operations.
- H. Pursue partnerships with area community colleges for use of existing residential and other facilities.
- I. Continue to pursue options for the undeveloped 30 acre parcel of land located at the west end of the Lawrenceville campus that could include, but not be limited to, age restricted living, a go-generation plant, solar project or preservation funding.

**2. Continue to reduce operating and other costs and seek energy and other efficiencies, contributing to a culture of lean thinking that also emphasizes quality.**

Responsibility: **Vice President for Finance, Vice President for Facilities and University Operations, Cabinet**  
Timeline: Ongoing  
Resources: Existing operating

*Action Plans*

- A. Centralize purchasing across the institution including technology equipment. Identify opportunities to purchase goods and services more economically through expanded competitive selection and implementation of best practice purchasing policies and procedures.
- B. Working with the AAUP, identify efficiencies and savings within the collective bargaining agreement.
- C. Renegotiate food service contracts and utility purchases.
- D. Further expand energy production/purchasing opportunities that are more cost efficient and that provide the foundation for future energy related needs including air conditioning, heating and emergency power.
- E. Engage faculty, staff and students in the effort to reduce costs and seek energy and other efficiencies. Consider establishing a task force to identify and track initiatives and communicate progress across the institution.
- F. Reduce Rider's carbon footprint. Engage students, faculty and staff as good stewards of the environment. Increase recycling across the institution and find innovative ways of encouraging employee carpooling and staying on campus during their lunch hours. Pursue efficiencies with university sponsored travel where feasible.

**3. Update and implement the campus facilities master plan in support of strategic priorities with the greatest potential for enrollment growth.**

Responsibility: **Vice President for Facilities and University Operations**  
Timeline: Plan to be completed in fiscal 2018 and implemented through fiscal 2022  
Resources: Existing operating, capital investment and fundraising

*Action Plans*

- A. Include a phased residence hall renovation plan.
- B. Include the creation of informal faculty-student meetings spaces throughout the campus as outlined in the Plan.
- C. Include a variety of academic facilities projects as outlined in the Plan including renovation and expansion of the Science and Technology Center as well as renovation of Sweigart Hall, including construction of the Business and Data Analytics Center, and the BLC and Yvonne Theaters.
- D. Include renovation and expansion of Alumni Gym as outlined in the Plan as well as improved stadium style seating at Cohen Field and renovation of the tennis courts and Coppola Pool.
- E. Pursue a front-campus mixed use residential/retail project at the front of the Lawrenceville campus.
- F. Identify and prioritize other academic and athletic capital projects and address deferred maintenance needs. Expand ADA accessibility. Upgrade classrooms/academic and library spaces in support of existing and new programs.
- G. Explore the realignment and/or consolidation of campus space to better support academic and student life programming, increase efficiencies, and generate revenue.
- H. Engage a cross-section of the University community in the master planning process. Regularly communicate facilities priorities and major projects in support of the master plans.

**4. Strengthen institutional fundraising and advancement efforts.**

Responsibility:	<b>Vice President for University Advancement</b>
Timeline:	Implementation beginning in fiscal 2018 and continuing through June 2023, which marks the end of the Campaign
Resources:	Existing operating

*Action Plans*

- A. Embark on a multi-year Comprehensive Campaign, beginning with a feasibility study in fiscal 2018, to determine a range of goals and purposes in support of the Strategic Plan with a target completion date of June 2023 and proceeds in the range of \$50 to \$75 million.

- B. Secure naming gifts for the College of Business Administration and prominent buildings and spaces including the Student Recreation Center, North Hall, BLC Theater and West Village residence halls.
- C. Secure naming gifts in support of high-profile University programs including the Center for the Development of Leadership Skills and the Health Studies Institute.
- D. Raise funds in support of a variety of academic facilities projects including renovation and expansion of the Science and Technology Center as well as renovation of Sweigart Hall and the BLC and Yvonne Theaters.
- E. Raise funds in support of athletics facilities as identified in the campus master plan including renovation and expansion of Alumni Gym.
- F. Increase unrestricted giving to The Rider Fund to \$1.6 million by the end of the Campaign, up from \$1.44 million in fiscal 2018, through various annual initiatives including The Trustee and Women's Giving Challenges, Raise Your Game, and the Class Pride campaigns.
- G. Establish a culture of philanthropy among alumni, increasing the alumni giving participation rate by 33% by the end of the Campaign (from 9% in 2017 to 12% by 2023).
- H. Increase endowment scholarship support by 40% by the end of the Campaign, growing the number of endowed scholarships to 300, up from 214 in 2017.
- I. Continue to confirm new bequest intentions, increasing the University's expectancy file by 43.5% by the end of the Campaign (from 230 bequest intentions in 2017 to 330 by 2023).

**5. Establish a new information technology master plan that supports the University's strategic goals, adapts to evolving needs and reduces risk.**

Responsibility:	<b>Associate Vice President for Information Technologies, Cabinet</b>
Timeline:	Begin development in 2017-18 and implement thereafter
Resources:	Existing operating

*Action Plans*

- A. Support expanded technology use and innovation across the University through regular technology training, information sessions and user-friendly web-based IT related information for students, faculty and staff. Communicate strategic priorities, projects and timelines more widely and frequently across the University.

- B. Strengthen IT helpdesk service to students, faculty and staff.
- C. Strengthen student service and customer satisfaction in collaboration with business units through the innovative use of technology.
- D. Mitigate cyber security and other risks by replacing legacy and custom developed data/reporting systems in business units across the institution with more secure proprietary systems and addressing other key recommendations of the fall 2015 cyber security audit.
- E. Strengthen analytical, reporting and other capabilities in business units through the use of technology to increase self-sufficiency, generate efficiencies and facilitate decision-making.
- F. Establish a centralized, reliable and secure data repository with standardized data definitions to be used across the institution.

## **Strategic Theme: Our commitment to planning, implementation and continuous improvement**

### **Benchmarks/key performance indicators**

- Strengthened student outcomes as measured by NSSE results above average as compared to peers; six month job placement rates in the upper 90's; increased retention rates (85% by 2022); and increased graduation rates (65% by 2022).

### **1. Strengthen student learning outcomes assessment across the University.**

Responsibility:	<b>Provost, Director of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness</b> , Deans, Department Chairs, Faculty, Vice President for Student Affairs
Timeline:	Completion in the 2020-21 academic year
Resources:	Existing operating

#### *Action Plans*

- A. Design and implement an “assessment as learning” strategy utilized by students, faculty and staff to continuously evaluate student success as it pertains to achievement of both the University Student Learning Outcomes and disciplinary outcomes. Encourage the use of capstone experiences and program portfolios to evidence student learning.
- B. Provide faculty development opportunities for designing and modifying courses, assignments and rubrics that also highlight best practices as they pertain to student learning and outcomes assessment.

- C. Work with faculty members to increase use of evidence-based pedagogical strategies to improve student success.
  - D. Encourage increased communication and collaboration across disciplines and annually showcase successful examples of outcomes assessment and student learning. Encourage staff and faculty to audit/visit courses and attend faculty research presentations.
  - E. Expand the use of existing technologies (e.g. Canvas, DegreeWorks, Bronc Nation) to support learning, instruction, advising and assessment.
  - F. Strengthen student learning outcomes assessment within the Student Affairs division under the leadership of the reconstituted divisional assessment committee. Ensure that meaningful assessment is conducted throughout the division on an annual basis.
- 2. Establish a regular calendar for academic program review/competitor analysis and academic and student life prioritization to support curricular and co-curricular innovation and keep pace with advances in higher education, industry and the professions. Work closely with departments within each division to implement recommendations from these reviews.**

Responsibility: **Provost, Vice President for Student Affairs, Deans**  
Timeline: Beginning in fall 2017 and ongoing  
Resources: TBD

- 3. Establish an organized mechanism by which to support annual assessment in administrative departments and support subsequent improvements.**

Responsibility: **Associate Vice President for Planning, Cabinet**  
Timeline: Beginning in 2018-19  
Resources: Existing operating

- 4. Establish an organized mechanism for effectively tracking the implementation of the Strategic Plan and the assessment of intended outcomes and benchmarks.**

Responsibility: **Associate Vice President for Planning, Institutional Analysis Office, Cabinet**  
Timeline: Beginning in 2017-18  
Resources: Existing operating