



TENNESSEE WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN: 2022-2032

REVISED NOVEMBER 7, 2025



Vision 2032

Tennessee Wesleyan University will be recognized as an exemplary model of a comprehensive church-related institution centered in faith and reason that inspires and prepares students to become compassionate servant leaders in their community and our world.

TWU is proud of its 168-year heritage. As the University plans for the next decade and its 175th year, TWU will distinguish itself by:

- Providing a deeply engaging learning environment through high impact practices and guided reflection
- Providing intensive mentoring, career counseling, and student support services
- Offering innovative leadership development and service-learning experiences
- Offering innovative educational programming that addresses the evolving needs of the region by utilizing a variety of delivery systems and modalities
- Providing an educational experience that blends the liberal arts and professional studies



MISSION

In keeping with the spirit of the liberal arts, Tennessee Wesleyan University seeks within the framework of the Judeo-Christian tradition to provide for students the highest quality educational experience; to promote personal responsibility, integrity, and purpose; and to prepare students for a life of leadership and service in an ever-changing global community.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Tennessee Wesleyan University will be recognized as an exemplary model of a comprehensive church-related institution that embraces the creative tensions between faith and reason, while inspiring and preparing students to become compassionate leaders in their community and our world. The University therefore seeks to join inquiry with the faith journey, preparing graduates to serve and lead with compassion and integrity. The University welcomes learners from all over the globe to the main campus in Athens as well as additional instructional sites in Knoxville and online. The University serves a student body comprised of traditional and non-traditional students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Highly qualified faculty and staff are committed to assisting students in the realization of their full potential by providing appropriate career, pre-professional and professional education and/or requisite preparation for continued study in graduate school. The University offers baccalaureate programs in fine arts, humanities, natural and social sciences as well as business, nursing, other career-related areas and teacher certification. In addition to its undergraduate programs, Tennessee Wesleyan also offers master's programs in business, education, and health and sport sciences. Drawing on the best traditions of the liberal arts, the University's curriculum is designed to prepare graduates to be informed individuals who are curious, who think critically and creatively, and who are ready to develop a strong basis for effective judgement in a constantly changing world.



THE FUTURE

The University will continue to fulfill its role as a leader of higher education in the region and develop a national reputation in selected programs. It will become known in the nation for its commitment to leadership development, mentorship, innovation, comprehensive general education requirements, faculty scholarship and creative expression, and alumni support and achievement. The University will continue its long tradition of providing a liberal arts and science education integrated with professional education. It will continue to be a place where theoretical and practical learning are blended as we prepare students for careers that are marked by transitions and by emerging career opportunities, many of which have yet to be created.

The University will launch new undergraduate and graduate programs that will broaden its impact on the region and beyond, as well as seek out innovative partnerships with other varied institutions (governmental, educational, charitable and non-profit, and private industry) to provide for the educational needs of the country. To meet the changing needs in healthcare in the region, TWU will continue to leverage the relationship with Covenant Health and other similar health organizations to emerge as one of the primary providers of allied health professionals to area medical facilities.

The student body will continue to expand and reflect the national trends. The University will move quickly and responsibly to offer new and existing programs using varied delivery methods, including dual enrollment, online, hybrid, accelerated, evening and weekend formats, as well as to continue a long tradition of offering a residential campus in Athens.

The new programs will be properly funded to ensure that they are of high quality and self-sufficient so as not to impede enhancements in existing programs. As the reputation grows and demand for admission into the University increases, Tennessee Wesleyan will become more selective and enroll students with higher ACT scores and grade point averages. A higher level of student achievement in graduation rates and job placement performance will be evident, as well as increased alumni admissions into top graduate programs.

In the next 10 years, the University will increase in enrollment to about 1500 or more undergraduate and graduate students, both part-time and full-time, which includes bringing the resident population to 500 or more. While undergraduate programs will garner substantial resources, serve as a major contributor to the reputation of the University, and continue to expand and grow, growth will also be realized from new professional, adult, and graduate programs using both online and hybrid delivery methods. Consideration will also

be given to launching a continuing education program combining transfer flexibility with emerging models, such as stackable credentials, to meet the fluid and developing needs of employers in the region and possibly beyond.

The University will continue to strengthen its position in Athens, a robust rural community located in East Tennessee. Being uniquely positioned in a community that is situated half-way between two metropolitan areas, the University has much to offer its students and the communities it serves throughout a multi-county region. Attracting students, faculty, and staff talent by sharing this unique position will become an important part of the recruitment process. In addition, exploring how to positively impact rural America not only in Athens, but throughout the region, will be a focus.

The University will continue its rich tradition of commitment to the development of the minds, bodies and souls of students, and will be a model for others to emulate for its unmatched commitment to student growth and development. The University will enhance in every way possible the spiritual development of its varied constituents. Furthermore, the University affirms its United Methodist heritage while welcoming and supporting students, faculty, and staff from all backgrounds. An authentic campus culture that nurtures, supports and challenges students to reach beyond their perceived limits will continue to be fostered, valued, and celebrated.

Blending the practical with the theoretical, the University will enhance opportunities for students to study abroad, engage in research and artistic expression, explore career options through internships and put their faith in action serving the community. The University will be highly regarded for its innovative approaches and unwavering commitment to offering high quality co-curricular experiences that clarify career choices. Central to TWU's approach of offering a highly transformational learning environment is using best practices to recruit talented faculty, staff, and students who represent the mosaic of differences that contribute to the free exchange of diverse ideas, values, and cultural attributes.

The financial foundation of the University will be enhanced through strategic fiscal management, responsible enrollment growth, and professional resource development from charitable and governmental sources. TWU will continue to offer significant financial aid to undergraduates in order to serve disadvantaged and worthy students. This will require expanding the fundraising operation of the University and creating a stronger culture of philanthropy among friends and alumni throughout the region.

Core Values



Inquiry

We value the pursuit of knowledge and strive to develop an enduring passion for learning in others.

Community

We are a community of learners who are united in a common mission to provide a transformational education for our students, and we welcome all people, affirming the positive impact that every individual can have on our community.

Excellence

We strive for high standards for scholarship, service, and leadership.

Engagement

We value opportunities that allow our students to apply learning outside the classroom through internships, service learning, study abroad programs, and research.

Sustainability

We value the planet and the preservation of it.

Service

We value our commitment to improving the conditions of others.

STRATEGIC PLAN THEMES

- 1 Excellence in Academics:** Sustain and enhance an environment wherein scholars and practitioners are equipped to educate both undergraduate and graduate students in order to prepare students for a life of leadership and service. Launch new and viable programs in undergraduate and graduate education and cultivate continuous excellence and growth in current programs. This will be achieved through data-informed curriculum improvement, faculty development, and targeted recruiting strategies.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

Traditional Undergraduate Programs:

- Develop the best new undergraduate programs in keeping with the mission and vision of the University
- Expand the emphasis areas in programs of high interest to inquiring students, such as communications, education, and health and human performance
- Enhance and grow the Honors Program
- Analyze the feasibility of degree offerings in applied areas such as STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) and additional technology offerings (computer sciences, cyber security, data analytics, game development, and artificial intelligence)
- Expand dual enrollment offerings
- Develop an exemplary model of undergraduate education combining high impact practices and guided reflection to prepare traditional undergraduates for graduate school or the first step in their career
- Focus on study abroad opportunities to further student and faculty engagement and learning opportunities outside the classroom
- Continue to transform the Merner Pfeiffer Library into a learning commons that provides flexible space and technology that permits group study, creativity, and collaboration
- Continue to hone and implement the vision for how the Kilbride Nature Sanctuary can support or be incorporated into the academic and student life programs

DEGREE COMPLETION AND ALTERNATIVE CREDENTIAL PROGRAMS

- Develop varied offerings for working adults that accommodate their demanding schedules
- Develop a continuing education division that serves as a platform for continuous learning and enrichment for professionals or others who want to develop new vocational interests, including the exploration of alternative credentials such as certificate programs and micro credentials

GRADUATE PROGRAMS

- Evaluate and develop master's and doctoral degrees in health professions and other critical need areas in keeping with the mission and vision of the University
- Analyze the feasibility of graduate offerings in areas with strong undergraduate enrollment such as health and human performance, education, and natural sciences
- Evaluate and develop master's degree offerings tied to high enrollment undergraduate programs with potential 4+1 pathways
- Analyze the feasibility of additional graduate offerings in the executive format including STEM designated areas (AI, information technology, data science)

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

- Enhance the support for faculty professional development, research, and scholarship
- Provide state-of-the-art technology to enhance the learning experience of all students and provide appropriate training for faculty on new technologies
- Provide artificial intelligence (AI) literacy training for faculty with the goal of effectively and ethically integrating AI into teaching and scholarship practices. AI integration into the classroom will focus on practical applications that enhance critical thinking and creativity while promoting ethical uses of AI tools

The University will expand on its long tradition of excellence in academics and continue to offer a liberal arts-based undergraduate education at the Athens campus. However, patterns of university attendance are evolving, and adults are returning for multiple degrees to keep pace with the knowledge economy. The University will therefore expand offerings for adult learners at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

The University will offer graduate degrees in a variety of formats. The University will use state-of-the-art technology to enhance the learning experience of all students and continue to harness the great promise of online learning by serving students from around the world.

The University will enhance its compensation competitiveness and its overall support for faculty scholarship and creative endeavors. Faculty resources will be dedicated to support professional development, research, and scholarship.

- 2 Exemplary Student Success and Achievement:** Affirm our commitment to offering a high value transformational university experience that incorporates the best of co-curricular and curricular practices, policies, and programs to support student learning, personal development, and success.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Provide expanded opportunities and financial support for a global or study away experience
- Offer a highly engaging learning environment that provides opportunities in undergraduate research, internships, as well as other community and civic engagement opportunities
- Provide students a seamless transition into, through, and out of the University so that they are highly prepared to succeed in careers, graduate programs, and service to their communities
- Maintain and expand the personalized education that has been the hallmark of the Tennessee Wesleyan experience
- Develop opportunities for students to hone their skills as learners through the auspices of the Mosher Student Success Center and Learning Commons, which will provide career, tutoring, advising, and social support services for all students
- Maintain and strengthen recognition as a military and veterans friendly university
- Develop a counseling center to assist students with psychosocial growth, adjustment, developmental tasks, and emotional support
- Continue to provide outdoor adventure and leadership programming to provide students an opportunity to enjoy the scenic regional beauty and physical fitness benefits that such activities provide
- Offer 1 to 3 new sports in athletics that require minimum physical infrastructure, such as women's flag football, archery, and bass fishing
- Increase programming and engagement opportunities for students

The University will offer diverse co-curricular programming and services to ensure that all students have the necessary skills and experiences to succeed in college and after graduation. The University will expand the integrated Mosher Student Success Center that provides career services, academic support, and engagement opportunities. The Student Life Office will be charged with leading initiatives to offer services, success coaching, and support to increase graduation rates and ensure more TWU students obtain the fruits of a university education.



- 3 Expansion of Spiritual Growth and Service Leadership Opportunities:** Enhance the relationship with the Holston Conference of the United Methodist Church and expand the religious life program by welcoming and supporting students, faculty, and staff of all backgrounds.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Offer a vibrant, ecumenical Chapel program that caters to the varied spiritual needs of the University
- Evaluate the Leadership Academy and determine its future state
- Offer multiple service-based and alternative break trips that provide students varied experiences in which to put their faith into action
- Provide varied opportunities to grow in faith and advance the common good through the chaplaincy program
- Intentionally build stronger relationships with the United Methodist Churches in the Holston Conference by actively recruiting youth from those congregations

Tennessee Wesleyan enjoys a long and important relationship of service with the United Methodist Church. The University will continue to strengthen that relationship through actively engaging students in service, mission trips, and worship opportunities. The University will expand its efforts to provide programs that allow students to put their faith into action through service to others and through advancing the common good.

- 4 Exceptional Facilities:** Improve the campus substantially, including new or renovated academic, athletic, student life, and residential facilities with a commitment to environmental sustainability.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Continue to scan for properties that could be renovated for a reasonable cost to be used for mission critical initiatives near the Athens campus
- Provide new or renovated wellness, athletic training and sports venues such as renovation to the soccer/lacrosse stadium and the former Ingleside School property
- Construct new residence halls that meet the long-term needs of a broad range of living styles
- Complete a master plan for new and renovated facilities that outlines the University's optimal configuration in the areas of student enrollment, facilities, and financial profile
- Develop and execute a comprehensive plan to enhance existing facilities and address deferred maintenance
- Continue to keep pace with changing instructional and computing technology

The beautiful TWU campus is one of our greatest assets. It deserves our continued investment as we look to expand and improve its functionality. The University will continue to update a bold master plan that will be in keeping with its current visual elements. Special attention will be paid to the development of outdoor spaces where students can socialize, study, and enjoy.

- 5 Institutional Excellence:** Building a sustainable organization and maintaining a culture and structure supportive of a high-performing, technologically-advanced, data-driven comprehensive university.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Continue to develop and maintain a work culture that values teamwork, innovation, and creative thinking
- Continue to enhance and maintain effective and efficient operations and a transparent governance structure
- Strive to enhance employee retention
- Focus on enhancing employee compensation
- Develop an institutional commitment to training and professional development of all employees
- Expand and diversify revenue opportunities and carefully maintain expenses to ensure long term sustainability
- Continue to build an advancement model with both short-term and long-term goals, including eventually increasing the endowment to \$40 million

- Use resources wisely to enhance the student experience and learning
- Foster a culture of assessment and evaluation in pursuit of continuous quality improvement
- Ensure ethical data practices, data security, and data privacy remain a priority
- Maintain a focus on emerging technologies, including the emergence of artificial intelligence

The University's greatest resource is its faculty and staff. The success of the University is dependent on the creation and maintenance of an organizational culture that values teamwork, open communication, transparency, student service, efficiency, professional development, and an unparalleled commitment to continuous improvement. The University is committed to maintaining an accountable and collaborative process that enables the institution to prosper, enhance in stature, and effectively deliver a high-quality education for students.



THE TWU *Value Proposition*

The following terms and characteristics describe the intentional ways TWU strives to distinguish itself in the higher education marketplace and offer an exceptional learning experience for students.

Service

TWU prepares leaders who serve the needs of their communities and others.

Mentorship

Success does not happen by accident. Mentors share their wisdom and provide social support so students test their limits, grow in confidence, and prepare for a lifetime of learning and success.

Experiential Learning

Nothing replaces an engaging teacher who develops opportunities for students to apply knowledge in a relevant context.

Career Nimbleness

TWU develops skills and knowledge that transcends the confines of a particular job and prepares students for varied avocational and work situations and positions.

Bulldog Community

The term refers to epic helpfulness that is rooted in the belief that we are one family and we are committed to making sure no one struggles alone.

Student Success

Student learning and development are at the center of all that we do. TWU excels at offering a transformational educational experience that prepares students to lead and serve in the ever-changing global community.





