



# STRATEGIC PLAN

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## 2012-2017





## Our vision

Kennesaw State University will be a nationally prominent university recognized for excellence in education, engagement, and innovation.

## Our mission

Kennesaw State University provides exceptional undergraduate, graduate, continuing, co-curricular, and community educational opportunities. KSU educates students who become capable, visionary, and ethical leaders in their chosen professions and careers, and who are engaged citizens with global understanding and a love of learning.

The university's research, scholarship, and creative activities expand knowledge, contribute significantly to economic development, and help improve the quality of life in the local community, Georgia, the nation, and the world.

KSU students, faculty, and staff engage with local, state, regional, national, and international communities to improve those communities and the university.

Kennesaw State University promotes open and honest intellectual inquiry, and inspires professional, personal, and social excellence throughout the KSU community.

# Our strengths

KSU has increasing visibility and a solid reputation due to its highly qualified faculty, nationally ranked and accredited programs, commitment to student learning and success, first-year student programs, international opportunities for students and faculty, expanding research and graduate programs, focus on community engagement, and professional staff dedicated to serving students.

KSU's reputation is enhanced by its emphasis on students' access to full-time faculty, high quality programs, investment in technological infrastructure, increasing diversity, presence in Division I athletics, emphasis on professional service, and extensive new campus construction.

KSU's degree programs and organizational culture are strengths. Many of KSU's degree programs are innovative and market-driven, and many focus on leadership development and collaboration across college boundaries. Accompanying its growth, KSU retains its student-oriented focus, serves a diverse student body that includes multicultural and multifaceted traditional and non-traditional students, and is committed to inclusiveness, diversity, and freedom of thought and expression.

A number of factors contribute to KSU's graduation rate improvement, including establishment of on-campus housing; expanded emphasis on student advising; and changes in the campus culture to create stronger connections among students, staff, faculty, administrators and the institution. The university has a dynamic and flexible professional and continuing education program. Campus life is vibrant, with many student organizations and off-campus activities readily available. In addition, KSU is highly and positively rated for its work environment.



Easily accessible from Atlanta and northwest Georgia, KSU's location provides visibility and connectedness due to easy accessibility to metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia, and the world. The campus setting is attractive and safe.

# Our weakness

KSU has evolved rapidly as an institution. Therefore, KSU must significantly enhance its name and brand recognition by, among other things, raising public awareness of its numerous strengths, and correcting dated and inaccurate perceptions of the university.

The low level of state funding on a per student basis compared to other USG universities is a weakness. The university has fewer classrooms, laboratories, research facilities, offices, and meeting spaces than many peer institutions. In addition, recent budgetary shortfalls have slowed repairs, reduced required services such as evening advising and counseling, limited strategic marketing, and curtailed other academic and academic-support programs required to advance KSU to the next level. Also, even with more on-campus housing, Division I athletics, and state-of-the-art sports and recreation facilities, opportunities for on-campus student activities on weekends are limited.

Despite fund-raising successes, KSU has insufficient funding for scholarships, reducing KSU's ability to recruit the best students. At the same time, not all of KSU's entering undergraduates are prepared to succeed in higher education. Off-campus and on-campus bureaucratic constraints sometimes hamper KSU's ability to function efficiently and to respond agilely to emerging opportunities.



# Our opportunities

KSU can address many of its weaknesses and capitalize on its strengths by developing opportunities to increase its resources through private, corporate, and foundation development; expanding its emphasis on research and sponsored programs; developing innovative profit centers; and enhancing community, alumni, faculty, and staff giving. In addition, KSU must expand its support within the government of Georgia and the Board of Regents, especially to attain per student funding levels on par with peer USG institutions.



KSU's location provides access to a large, diverse population of students, and provides members of the KSU community unique partnership and career opportunities with other universities, businesses, industries, health-care facilities, and nonprofit organizations in metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia, and the world. These partnerships, as well as KSU's rapidly increasing numbers of alumni, present a chance to encourage a greater appreciation for higher education among Georgians. KSU has opportunities for creative land acquisitions and off-site facility development to accommodate enrollment growth. Opportunities exist to expand study abroad programs, international partnerships, intra-college and cross-college interdisciplinary programs,

inter-institutional partnerships, online courses and programs, and co-curricular activities to meet the needs and schedules of a diverse student body.

Opportunities exist in specific program areas throughout the university's nine colleges. Additional graduate programs are necessary to meet the needs of individuals, employers, the state, the nation, and the world. At both the undergraduate and graduate levels, opportunities exist to expand internship, cooperative, and study abroad programs. Together, these opportunities present KSU with the ability to enhance significantly its regional and national name and brand recognition, and in so doing to become a nationally known and nationally respected university.



# Our threats

The impacts of recent changes to the HOPE scholarship; alteration in the missions of Technical College and two-year University System institutions; and increases in the number of branch campuses and on-line programs of other institutions are yet to be seen. Under certain scenarios, these changes could emerge as threats.

KSU has lower faculty and staff salaries, and higher student-faculty and student-staff ratios, than many peer institutions. Given the high-quality job markets in which KSU competes, these weaknesses lower morale, render more difficult the recruitment, hiring and retention of faculty and staff, and complicate efforts to diversify faculty and staff.

Local traffic patterns, flows, and congestion make access to and egress from campus difficult during peak travel times. Although a shuttle system has been initiated, insufficient parking remains a threat. These make KSU less accessible for many students.

If the university is to attain its full potential, it must acquire more land to support university enrollment growth, projected to reach 35,000 students.



# Conclusions

Kennesaw State University is an institution that has significant strengths and extensive opportunities. If it leverages its strengths and takes advantage of its opportunities to the fullest extent possible, KSU will overcome its weaknesses, surmount its challenges, and succeed in fulfilling its vision of becoming a nationally prominent university recognized for excellence in education, engagement, and innovation.

KSU has the opportunity to leverage demand in professions for which our degree programs prepare students. KSU must plan for additional growth; improve student-faculty and student-staff ratios; foster an environment that embraces inclusiveness and diversity; improve customer service; enhance relationships and engagement with alumni and surrounding communities; and expand its emphasis on recruiting the best and brightest students, staff, and faculty.

# Goal 1

***Promote excellence and innovation in education through teaching, supervising, and mentoring students; research, creative activity, and scholarship; and professional service.***



## **OBJECTIVE 1:**

Improve on-campus and on-line learning environments.

### **Action Steps:**

1. Provide additional funds to academic departments and colleges earmarked to improve faculty teaching expertise.
2. Begin operation of new off-campus educational sites selected with input from off-campus advisory groups.
3. Increase support and reassignment incentives for faculty involved in technology-enhanced education.
4. Increase the number of courses and degrees offered on-line.
5. Decrease student-faculty ratios and student-staff ratios to reach the average for University System of Georgia comprehensive universities.

## **OBJECTIVE 2:**

Promote the scholarship of discovery, teaching, learning, and engagement.

### **Action Steps:**

1. Identify, implement, and reward best-practice teaching strategies for student-centered learning within each college.
2. Increase support and reassignment incentives for faculty mentoring undergraduate and graduate students in research.

## **OBJECTIVE 3:**

Increase the number of faculty who are nationally and internationally recognized for their research, scholarship, creative activity, and professional service.

### **Action Steps:**

1. Fund and hire at least two new chaired professorships in each degree-granting college.
2. Develop support and reassignment incentives for faculty who are on the verge of attaining national prominence.
3. Develop additional reward systems for recognizing exemplary professional service.

## **OBJECTIVE 4:**

Increase external funding generated for teaching, supervising, and mentoring; research, creative activity, and scholarship; and professional service.

### **Action Steps**

1. Develop an incentive program that helps to increase the number of external grant and contract proposals submitted.
2. Work with off-campus advisory groups to identify new premium/customized programs and/or existing degree/certificate programs that support economic development.
3. Initiate or enhance at least 3 programs per year that support economic development.

# Goal 2

*Improve recruitment, retention, progression, and graduation rates (RRPG) in accord with the Complete College Georgia initiative, while continually increasing the quality, breadth, and relevance of academic and co-curricular programs.*



## **OBJECTIVE 1:**

Strengthen KSU's data centered approach to RRPG initiatives.

### **Action Steps:**

1. Identify unique RRPG factors and compare them to national findings.
2. Enhance or initiate specific programs designed to improve RRPG based on the findings.

## **OBJECTIVE 2:**

Become nationally recognized for RRPG programs.

### **Action Steps:**

1. Create a faculty-led university council to provide input and advice regarding RRPG initiatives.
2. Encourage and reward instructional methodologies that actively and effectively engage students.
3. Increase the number of enrolled students who have a high school academic GPA of at least 3.5.

## **OBJECTIVE 3:**

Improve academic and co-curricular student engagement programs.

### **Action Steps:**

1. Increase the number of student peers (leaders, mentors, supplemental instructors, teaching assistants, etc.) serving each degree-granting department to 5% (8% for departments with core responsibility) of declared majors.
2. Create an Honors College, which includes discipline specific honors programs.
3. Increase the number of students competing for national-level scholarships.
4. Increase the percentage of students who at graduation are employed or pursuing additional education.

## **OBJECTIVE 4:**

Expand interventions to improve RRPG rates.

### **Action Steps:**

1. Implement an early intervention plan within each degree-granting department to advise students at key points in their studies.
2. Increase support and reassignment incentives for faculty participating in intervention programs for at-risk students.
3. Increase financial aid available to students, and effectively promote financial aid opportunities to all students.
4. Increase participation of students in career, counseling, leadership, and residence life programming and services.
5. Make instruction on the value of class attendance, time management, ethics, interpersonal skills, and performance available to all KSU students.



# Goal 3

***Become more engaged and prominent in the local community, Georgia, the nation, and the world.***

## **OBJECTIVE 1:**

Develop and implement a community engagement framework that creates synergies among engagement initiatives.

### **Action Steps:**

1. Create an infrastructure and budget to coordinate, leverage, promote, market, and measure community engagement.
2. Increase the number of students, faculty, staff, and administrators participating in community engagement activities.
3. Increase significantly the number of alumni actively participating in KSU and Alumni Association activities.

## **OBJECTIVE 2:**

Raise the profile of KSU's academics, research, scholarship, and creative activity.

### **Action Steps:**

1. Incorporate external reviewers from peer institutions in promotion and tenure processes.
2. Increase faculty and staff membership and leadership in national and global associations.
3. Obtain accreditation in all programs for which an accrediting body exists.
4. Increase annually the number of articles by faculty submitted to and accepted by peer-reviewed publications.



## **OBJECTIVE 3:**

Identify and nurture existing programs and areas of excellence that have achieved or have potential to achieve national or international prominence.

### **Action Steps:**

1. Provide additional funding to nationally recognized programs and areas.
2. Target and promote two programs and/or areas per year for national or international prominence.

## **OBJECTIVE 4:**

Recognize and reward engagement in KSU's local, state, national, and international communities.

### **Action Steps:**

1. Create Foundation Community Engagement awards and incentives for faculty, staff, students, alumni, and partners.
2. Create one faculty, one staff, and one student community engagement fellow in each degree-granting college.



# Goal 4

*Enhance the collegiate experience, and foster a welcoming, diverse, and inclusive environment.*



## **OBJECTIVE 1:**

Promote a culture of consistent, high quality service.

### **Action Steps:**

1. Conduct a biannual assessment of customer service satisfaction.
2. Institute a comprehensive customer service training program based on the assessment.

## **OBJECTIVE 2:**

Enhance the co-curricular and extra-curricular experience for students.

### **Action Steps:**

1. Increase the involvement of students in co-curricular and campus life programs.
2. Begin an intercollegiate football program and appropriate additional women's intercollegiate athletic programs.

## **OBJECTIVE 3:**

Promote a culture of diversity, inclusion, and sensitivity.

### **Action Steps:**

1. Establish baseline data that measures constituents' intercultural competence and improvements in diversity and inclusion on campus.
2. Increase participation in diversity and inclusion programs for faculty, staff, administrators, and students.
3. Integrate broadly defined diversity and inclusion curricula into the academic core.
4. Ensure that each academic and operational department has an effective plan for recruiting and retaining diverse populations.



## **OBJECTIVE 4:**

Enhance the work experience and the job environment for all KSU employees.

### **Action Steps:**

1. Provide campus-based child care for employees and students.
2. Institute comprehensive recruitment, retention, and training programs that support advancement opportunities for all personnel.
3. Pursue compensation levels competitive with academic and/or private sector peers, as appropriate, and reward high performance.

## **OBJECTIVE 5:**

Enhance sustainability standards on campus.

### **Action Steps:**

1. Assess the environmental impact of existing sustainability initiatives.
2. Create policies that reflect sustainability best practices.

# Goal 5

**Expand resources, and improve operational efficiency and effectiveness.**

## OBJECTIVE 1:

Ensure that facilities and infrastructure keep pace with growth.

### Action Steps:

1. Increase the square footage available per full-time equivalent student (FTE) to the average level of square footage per FTE at comprehensive universities in the University System of Georgia.
2. Start at least six building projects that are LEED and/or PEACH certified.
3. Develop a master modernization plan, and complete modernization in at least two buildings per year.
4. Maximize classroom, laboratory, and other instructional site utilization rates based on University System criteria.

## OBJECTIVE 2:

Optimize business processes and organizational structure.

### Action Steps:

1. Review business processes for two organizational units per year to assure internal controls guarantee accountability, identify inefficiency, and reduce redundancy.
2. Reexamine KSU's organizational structure, modifying the structure as needed to ensure that it meets changing university needs.



## OBJECTIVE 3:

Increase support to the university from state and non-state sources.

### Action Steps:

1. Increase the level of state funding per full-time equivalent student (FTE) to the average level of state funding per FTE at comprehensive universities in the University System of Georgia.
2. Launch a comprehensive capital campaign.
3. Initiate fund-raising programs that increase the combined contribution rate for faculty, staff, and administrators to 40% or more, and for alumni to 5% or more.





Kennesaw State University, a unit of the University System of Georgia, is an equal opportunity institution, which does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin or disability.