



Towson University Mission Statement

I. Summary Mission Statement

Towson University, as the state's comprehensive Metropolitan University, offers a broad range of undergraduate and graduate programs in the liberal arts, sciences, arts and applied professional fields that are nationally recognized for quality and value. Towson emphasizes excellence in teaching, scholarship, research and community engagement responsive to the needs of the region and the state. In addition to educating students in the specialized knowledge of defined fields, Towson's academic programs develop students' capacities for effective communication, critical analysis, and flexible thought, and they cultivate an awareness of both difference and commonality necessary for multifaceted work environments and for local and global citizenship and leadership. Towson's core values reflect high standards of integrity, collaboration, and service, contributing to the sustainability and enrichment of the culture, society, economy, and environment of the State of Maryland and beyond.

II. Institutional Identity

Towson University began as The Maryland State Normal School and was founded in Baltimore City in 1866, moved to its current Towson location in 1915, and became the Maryland State Teachers College at Towson in 1935, offering a Bachelor of Science degree in education. The institution's mission was expanded in 1946 with the introduction of a variety of degree programs in the arts and sciences. This programmatic development led to its becoming Towson State College in 1963. The move to a more diverse academic portfolio including health professions, business, and technology were interwoven into the transition to Towson State University in 1976 and Towson University in 1997. As Maryland's largest comprehensive university, the quality of its programs, its educational value, and its focus on student achievement and civic engagement have brought it national recognition as a premier metropolitan institution. With strong baccalaureate programs in the arts and sciences, the fine arts and communication, health and nursing, education, business, information and computer science, and interdisciplinary studies to serve as the foundation, it similarly provides high quality graduate programs in a variety of areas of professional practice and applied fields. Towson University responds to the needs of the region and greater metropolitan area by serving as an engine of change in Maryland's academic and socioeconomic environments. Towson strives to create a productive future for our students and its region by enriching the lives and opportunities for all members of its community.

The University's longstanding commitment to creating a multicultural campus is advanced by policies and practices that assure the recruitment and retention of a diversified student body, staff, and faculty who reflect local, regional, national, and global diversity. This commitment is sustained through a focus on community service, democratic principles, and global engagement as it relates to the curriculum, services, activities, and partnerships on and off the campus. Through its international education program, Towson enrolls students from as many as 100 nations. Diversity initiatives provide a direction that mirrors the face

of the population in the region and the state by fostering a model of a respectful and inclusive environment that serves to prepare all members of the institution to appreciate differences, including ideological differences, and to live comfortably within an increasingly multicultural society.

The undergraduate curriculum promotes the intellectual skills essential for effectively communicating, gathering and evaluating information, thinking critically, using technology effectively, appreciating diversity and commonalities, and making informed choices. These skills are grounded in the University's long-standing commitment to a strong liberal arts core that emphasizes an understanding of how the arts and sciences gather, evaluate, and apply information to reach valid conclusions. The liberal arts core, combined with a commitment to students' co-curricular experiences, also serves to develop intellectual and social skills that will guide students as contributing members of the workforce and participants in a democratic society.

As a complex comprehensive learning community, the University currently emphasizes the systematic addition of strong undergraduate and graduate programs that represent emerging disciplines, address economic and workforce needs, and serve the metropolitan region. Master's degree programs in the health professions, applied information technology, education, homeland security, business, and a variety of interdisciplinary and applied fields have been developed in response to pressing regional needs and student demands. The applied and unique doctoral programs build on the foundation and strengths of the University in areas that are fundamental to the development and vigor of the institution.

The certification and professional development of educators has been and will remain central to Towson University's future. As the largest single provider of certified teachers in Maryland, Towson plays a leadership role in the continuing professional development of the state's educators. The College of Education's strategies for improving the quality of teacher preparation serve as regional and national models, as do its highly regarded Professional Development School Network and the professional development programs of its different centers and projects. To meet the critical needs for more and better teachers in Maryland and the nation, the University has expanded programming in teacher education with plans to add specialized master's and doctoral programs responding to market demands and the Maryland State Plan.

Towson University is committed to a student-centered learning environment that uses a variety of formats to provide innovative access to information. Towson University's faculty and staff work actively to enable students to develop as citizens and leaders of the community by combining classroom learning with out-of-class experiences (internships, practica, service-learning, and related experiential opportunities). Through academic partnerships and collaborative programs, it advances the statewide goal of attaining a cost effective and accountable system for delivering high quality post-secondary education. It is an active participant in four regional higher education centers and has expanded its current certificate and baccalaureate programming through formal 2+2 partnerships with community colleges in the state. The largest off-campus site in Harford County is offering upper division academic programs. It works closely with profit and non-profit organizations to provide educational opportunities, including baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate programs meeting the organizations' specific needs. It has created a technology infrastructure for providing improved access to degree programs for a greater number of Maryland residents. In so doing, Towson strengthens Maryland's role as a national leader in the use of technology to enhance its economy and to improve life-long access to learning for all of its citizens.

Towson's faculty members actively pursue scholarship and creativity that complement disciplinary knowledge and superior teaching. The University values and rewards equally the scholarships of discovery, teaching, integration, and application. Faculty members also engage in a wide range of activities, which support the University's institutional outreach programs to government, health care organizations, nonprofit groups, education, business, and the fine arts in its region. Its research and consulting centers, such as the Regional Economic Studies Institute, the Center for Geographic Information Sciences, the Center for Applied Information Technology, and the Center for Leadership in Education continue to link faculty expertise with community needs and interests. Partnerships with corporations engage the University both as learners and as teachers. WTMD Radio Station, The Baltimore Hebrew Institute, The Asian Cultural Arts Center, and numerous faculty and student performances and exhibits throughout the year contribute to the cultural life of the community. Multiple clinical sites and centers provide clinical opportunities for faculty members and students and serve the well being of members of the community. The Institute for Teaching and Research On Women provides international as well as national services for a full variety of disciplines and agencies. Towson University is designated by the Carnegie Foundation as a recognized university for curricular engagement, outreach and partnership.

Towson University's role of addressing Maryland's workforce needs depends on its ability to respond quickly to changing circumstances and emerging needs by revising or introducing high quality undergraduate, masters, doctoral, and certificate programs. Program development can be readily targeted to support economic and social development as identified by national, state, and regional governmental agencies. Its plans for expanding its graduate programming, increasing the number of both students and degrees offered, will lead to an increase in the number of teaching and research opportunities available to the graduate student body and will allow the institution to provide valuable expertise to regional and state agencies and organizations. This design gives Towson a strong presence in the educational growth of employees from local school districts, health care fields, the arts, government agencies, and technology and service industries, including e-Business. Towson University plays a major role in efforts to sustain Maryland's social, cultural and economic fabric as well as its natural environment.

III. Institutional Capabilities

By Carnegie Classification, Towson University is a Masters (Comprehensive) University I. It has achieved national prominence as a premier metropolitan comprehensive university by offering a wide-range of excellent graduate and undergraduate degree programs and by increasing its regional and national reputation through its focus on student learning, innovative programs and pedagogies, faculty creativity and scholarship, applied and sponsored research, community service, and cultural outreach to business, education, non-profit and health care organizations.

The University has a strong commitment to a liberal arts education that serves as a general intellectual resource for more specialized disciplinary work and as it enriches students' cultural and social awareness. A highly regarded core curriculum provides undergraduates with multiple ways of knowing and specific skills that equip them to reason in and respond to a wide range of work and life settings. Active initiatives to recruit African-Americans, other American minorities, first-generation/low-income individuals, women, and a range of international faculty, staff, and students advance Towson's commitment to diversity. Support for strong multicultural and international studies programming along with robust study abroad programs enhance global understanding . It further augments and enriches students' academic programs through an expanding Honors College experience, extensive practice of faculty-student and student-student

mentoring, a model first year experience program, undergraduate research projects, internships, practica, career services, clinical placements, departmental honors, colloquia, forums, and performance and lecture series.

Faculty members value excellent teaching and give it high priority. Their active engagement in scholarship and service generates sustained originality and outstanding performance throughout their academic careers. Their frequent participation in more than one academic unit or department sustains the unusually high number of innovative multi-disciplinary programs offered by the University. Their large number of refereed publications and presentations are noted for their quality and innovation, and the richness and diversity of their research and interests provide a wide array of learning and research opportunities for students, who often engage in collaborative research and creative projects with their instructors.

The University capitalizes on its urban/suburban location by providing varied and distinctive opportunities for students and faculty learning, teaching, and research. It recognizes its obligation to serve at the local, regional, and state levels through its academic programs and professional services. It uses its metropolitan context as the environment for basic and applied research, as a teaching laboratory for the curriculum, and to strengthen its program and course offerings from the baccalaureate to the doctoral level. These strengths also support the ability to draw on national and international candidacy pools for faculty and administrative positions. As part of its pursuit to meet societal needs in a more comprehensive manner, Towson University will move eventually to the Carnegie Classification of Doctoral/Research Universities – Intensive level. This means the University will maintain a wide range of baccalaureate programs along with further development of graduate education through the doctorate, and it will focus more on applied research.

The University, while designated as a growth institution, maintains its commitment to student-centered, small class engagement. This value is reflected in the Master Plan that calls for substantial modification to and growth of the academic precinct over the next ten years. The plan includes a focus on designing new academic support spaces that emphasize the values of interactive learning, informal teaching and learning communication, and individual student attention. Other areas of growth that will enhance the student experience at Towson include art facilities, athletic facilities, housing, and student gathering spaces.

IV. Institutional Objectives and Outcomes

In keeping with the Towson University 2016 Strategic Plan, the University System of Maryland Strategic Plan, and the Maryland State Plan for Higher Education, the University will pursue the following directions:

Academic Achievement

Building on our past success, we continue to emphasize excellence in teaching, scholarship, research and community engagement responsive to the needs of the region and the state.

Assess and strengthen academic programs to ensure students develop Towson's Learning Outcomes.

- Review and evaluate curriculum to ensure challenging content that addresses workforce and geographic demands.
- Employ faculty development programs; enhance learning assessments, use of online delivery and new technology to support faculty and students.

Enhance and expand academic endeavors to improve the well-being of the Baltimore Metropolitan Region and the State of Maryland.

- Embrace the metropolitan mission by taking a leadership role in addressing urban problems, developing creative partnerships, and adapting to the needs of urban/suburban students and school systems.
- Right-size enrollment, faculty and staff to build capacity in high demand fields such as STEM, health professions and education.

Challenge, inspire, and support students and faculty to perform at the highest level.

- Inspire students to become educated, engaged, informed citizens with leadership skills and a passion for intellectual challenge.
- Empower faculty with innovative pedagogical methodologies and establish best practices within each discipline.

Optimize retention and time to graduation for all students.

- Strengthen student advising.
- Implement an early warning system to assist students throughout their academic career.
- Take the trimester from pilot to program.
- Develop The Towson Promise of degree attainment in 4 years.

Student Experience, Engagement and Success

The Towson University experience expects students to be academically, civically and socially engaged through exciting and challenging endeavors.

Enhance and celebrate a diverse and complex university.

- Broaden perspectives for all members of the university community
- Continue to cultivate a welcoming and diverse campus community.
- Include diverse perspectives across the curriculum.

Provide support programs for student populations with non-traditional needs.

- Identify and address needs of non-traditional students.
- Support transfer student transition through model programs focusing on orientation and advising.

Involve students in co-curricular educational experiences on- and off-campus that build civic engagement and global literacy, and promote the Towson University experience.

- Further implement service learning as a component of the academic experience tied to the curriculum with linkages to the metropolitan region.
- Support students and faculty in their quest for focused international experiences and through the inclusion of global awareness in the curriculum.

Respond to student needs to strengthen student satisfaction and success.

- Identify and respond to students' needs and promote access and availability of services, resources, and technology.
- Develop innovative approaches to provide student support.

- Support the Library's role in academic support, student development and campus life.

Partnerships Philosophy

Collaboration within our University and with our partners facilitates our path to success.

Continue to be a leader in workforce development in Maryland.

- Identify workforce trends and adapt programs, certificate, and non-credit offerings to meet demands.
- Enhance existing partnerships and develop strategic partnerships as they relate to workforce.

Emphasize the shared governance structure throughout the university to ensure responsive organizational leadership.

- Encourage and support the university community to engage in effective shared governance.
- Improve communication in the development of priorities and policies.

Maximize resources and success through stronger internal partnerships and collaborations.

- Increase collaborations across the university.
- Create strong linkages as we grow our reputation and strengthen our Towson pride.

Enhance and support partnerships and collaborations with government, business and educational sectors throughout the region to promote economic development and address social issues.

- Strengthen social partnerships and stewardship throughout the region.
- Build upon the successful community outreach efforts and continue to enhance collaboration with our neighbors.

Resources for Success

Targeted resources are crucial to achieving the universities priorities and laying the groundwork for the next 150 years.

Increase philanthropic support to achieve the university's goals.

- Maximize fundraising opportunities and collaboration throughout the university.
- Aggressively identify and cultivate friends and extramural funds for academic, arts, athletics, and community and student development endeavors.

Enhance recruitment, retention and development opportunities for faculty and staff.

- Improve succession planning and leadership development.
- Define faculty work and implement a more effective peer review process.

Cultivate a campus-wide culture of excellent customer service and encourage innovation and continual improvement in the delivery of services for both internal and external constituencies.

- Clarify expectations and provide motivation, training, and the tools necessary to implement best practices for excellent customer service across the university.

Emphasize campus-wide applied research and scholarship efforts.

- Support faculty efforts in grants and contract initiatives.
- Promote projects to support applied research and engaged scholarship.

Continue to execute the Master Plan to address the educational, research, environmental, housing, recreation, and co-curricular space needs to support the Towson University experience.

- Ensure commitment to the Campus Master Plan through continued construction and renovation.

Maintain a healthy, safe and environmentally sustainable campus.

- Engage a campus-wide culture of energy conservation and sustainability.
- Address the health and wellness of the university community.
- Ensure the safety of all throughout the campus.

Telling and Selling *Our Story*

Sharing the Towson University experience allows us to convey the impact of the work of faculty, students, staff and alumni in the region and beyond.

Continue to improve internal and external communications.

- Seek innovative ways to promote the accolades of the university and alumni.
- Improve access to information for alumni, supporters, and friends.
- Enhance and adopt technology that allows us to effectively reach more people.
- Improve recruitment, marketing, and outreach to make Towson a first choice institution for an increasing percentage of students.

Feature the arts, athletics, academics, and community outreach as key components of the Towson University experience.

- Celebrate the accomplishments of the university community and alumni within the university and beyond.
- Encourage broader participation in activities by all members of the university and greater community.

Communicate the significance of applied research and community engagement initiatives.

- Find additional creative methods to emphasize faculty, staff and student initiatives.
- Highlight the scope and impact of faculty, staff and student research.

Continually assess our success in meeting marketplace demands and continuing education needs through feedback from alumni, donors, employers and business and government leaders.

- Continue to develop and implement regular market research from opinion leaders, alumni and employers.