

# WIU Division of Academic Affairs Rebuilding & Reimagining Plan 2025-2027

## Table of Contents

<b><i>Introduction: The University in 2025</i></b> .....	<b>2</b>
Rebuild Overview.....	4
Goals and Guiding Principles .....	5
Timeline .....	5
<b><i>The Division Reimagined</i></b> .....	<b>6</b>
Phase One: The Two-College Model .....	6
Operational Definitions and Administrative Roles .....	7
Roles in Shared Governance .....	10
The Structure of the Provost’s Office .....	11
<b><i>Action Items</i></b> .....	<b>12</b>
Phase Two: Reimagining how we work.....	12
Committees .....	12
Division Budget Revision .....	13
Phase Three: Stability, Planning, and Program Innovation .....	14
<b><i>Appendix</i></b> .....	<b>14</b>
The Initial Models for the Rebuild in Academic Affairs .....	14

## **Introduction: The University in 2025**

Over the last decade, Western Illinois University experienced steady and increasingly significant declines in its undergraduate enrollment. These declines altered the institution's culture, finances, and larger stability as a state comprehensive school.

During this period the administrative response focused on increased freshman enrollment and increased first-to-second year retention as the primary solution to these declines. For example, initiatives included the development (and then closure) of a new division (the Division of Enrollment Management) with a new cabinet-level VP; likewise, in almost all of Western's recent planning documents, including Western's revised strategic plan, Higher Values in Higher Education 2022-2025 (HVHE), financial sustainability became and continues to be equated with enrollment growth through the increase of retention and recruitment.

In the Fall of 2024 and the Spring of 2025 we refocused our assessment of these issues, widening the focus so that scrutiny was applied to every aspect of the Division—in other words, we began to seek out solutions to these cultural and fiscal problems that do not involve recruitment and enrollment management exclusively, but rather encompass the way the entire division and institution function.

Of all the data and other kinds of evidence available, the annual schedule of courses at Western gives the greatest insight into how the university works. And at this moment, our schedule is broken: simultaneously, we have too many sections on the schedule and too few; we have too many under-enrolled sections and too many over-enrolled sections; we have a larger number of complicated problems regarding online courses and we lack a coherent vision of how online courses work at our university. We have complicated issues surrounding registration, student holds, advisor calendars, and other similar matters pertaining to every semester's schedule.

In addition to reimagining our scheduling, administrative structure, and processes, we must envision building and academic space and the use of that space in a more dynamic, connective way. After an evaluation of our current enrollment, staff, and classroom and building needs, it is clear that we are not operating sustainably in terms of both campus culture and finance.

We are also not communicating in the manner or with the frequency we should. And thus our analysis of the WIU Academic Affairs Division included (and continues to include) a concern with communication, and an attempt to close the gaps in communication, develop sense of belonging, and create simple workplace happiness.

With these communication issues mind, over the last year, the Administration, in consultation with representative groups, has identified the following challenges that need to be negotiated as we reimagine our Division in the coming months:

- Denial of fiscal reality and a feeling of being overwhelmed
- Confusion regarding the proposed changes
- Trust in administration and colleagues
- Scheduling in the Two-College Model
- Scope of Change

Our strategies to meet and solve these challenges have been and will continue to be as follows:

*Denial of fiscal reality and a feeling of being overwhelmed:* share as many drafts of the plan as possible; explain the plan as often as possible in public forums and on the website; President Mindrup, VP Mossman, and VP Roselieb will continue to visit Faculty Senate to discuss the University's budget; meet with the Budget Transparency Committee with regularity.

*Confusion regarding proposals:* Scheduling individual and small group meetings to answer questions and review the proposals.

*Trust in administration and colleagues:* Use our shared governance structure for all of this work and commit to transparency; faculty were given the opportunity to vote on changes; seek feedback from Deans, Chairs, Faculty, and the entire division.

*Scheduling in the two-college model:* In order to fix the clear scheduling problems that we have, we will explore the following: centralized scheduling; block scheduling; a 4-day a week schedule; reduction in number of courses; a vision for online course delivery; a clear decision on registration timelines; etc. At the time of the writing of this document, a working group has been formed, including the Registrar, to discuss and develop our next steps in this kind of work.

*Scope of Change:* In February of 2025 formed a committee to discuss the rebuild that included representation from across the institution. Create a second video explanation of the work for the WIU community; update and meet with Faculty Senate on a regular basis to discuss the larger nature of the rebuild; in February of 2025 formed a committee to discuss the rebuild that included representation from across the institution.

Better communication and collaboration are essential for the success of our division's reimagining, as is a recognition that change, innovation, and evolution are a part of the new foundation of the Academic Affairs Division. Times have changed and it is now the Summer of 2025—the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Western's establishment as an institution of higher learning and almost a full decade past the 2015 Budget Impasse that debilitated most of the public higher education institutions in the state. It is time for a new approach to the issues outlined above and a better understanding of what the issues even are.

We are a University built around a large, diverse set of undergraduate programs and a small portfolio of community-aligned, Masters-level degree programs. At the core of our institution is the knowledge that an education at Western is defined by transformation, by the realization of potential, and by the fulfillment of purpose.

And thus for our division, in 2025, this inventory of programs translates most clearly into the phrase, "social mobility." Western is a university that aligns directly with the needs of first-generation students, students who are determined to rise up in the world through higher

education, students who, with access, will significantly change their lives through the completion of a college degree. For years Western's academic programs have given our graduates the knowledge and preparation they need to improve their social and economic circumstances. Not surprisingly, this year Western's Carnegie classification included the designation of an "Opportunity College or University" status, which means that Western is one of the few select institutions in the country that meet this transformative, social mobility rating (and only 16% of the schools in the country fall into this category. See <https://carnegieclassifications.acenet.edu/institution/western-illinois-university/>).

Likewise, Western continues to be defined by Carnegie as a "Community Engaged" institution, which means that the everyday decisions by leadership involve community engagement, that this engagement is core to the institution's identity, and that the institution's strategic direction and practices are directly linked to this community engagement.

As we move forward, this classification and these institutional characteristics must be embraced. In Academic Affairs, we deliver transformation—programs and degrees that are crucial to the intellectual and financial elevation of our students and our community, programs that lead directly to social mobility.

We must focus on how to connect our disciplines, share our knowledge, and build up the commitment we have to being a community of educators, scholars, and committed higher education professionals at a University that in turn must create a culture of ambition and success for our students. We do this in the division through excellent teaching, through robust tutoring and peer mentorship, through intentional advising, through comprehensive intellectual rigor, and, more than anything else, through an institutional perspective defined by acceptance, charity, inclusion, and compassion.

To maintain our status as an accessible comprehensive state university, then, the Division of Academic Affairs must implement administrative cost reductions, restructure and reorganize academic colleges, and redefine our approach to institutional success. Simultaneously, we must establish an organizational framework that enables us to secure resources required for sustainable, realistic enrollment stability.

To conclude, our division-wide rebuild constitutes a significant paradigm shift for Western. It is clear that the current environment in public higher education is defined primarily by austerity, by a profound lack of funding, and by a nationwide devaluing of the traditional 4-year college degree. In this context the solution to many of our fiscal, cultural, and structural issues involves a process where we are required to match the University with this environment, that is, where we must *contract*, and become more efficient in order to achieve stability and a solid fiscal foundation. Once the goals are achieved, we will be able to evolve and develop, and indeed grow.

### **Rebuild Overview**

With all of this in mind, a constituency committee (composed of a dean, a chair, the UPI President, the Faculty Senate Chair, advising, and representatives from the Provost's Office)

began meeting in February 2025 to discuss a rebuilding/reorganization of Academic Affairs. From the start, this discussion was shaped by data from the Higher Learning Commission, accreditation reports, trends in higher education, conversations across campus constituencies, and the financial and space utilization realities WIU is facing.

After reviewing data from similarly sized institutions, and affirming that guiding principles of the rebuild would include sustainability and efficiency, respect for program purposes, pedagogies, and traditions, and providing the greatest potential for innovative engagement, the decision was made to explore one-, two-, and three-college models.

The need for interdisciplinarity also emerged in these discussions, an interdisciplinarity that encompasses much more than academic course content, but indeed the different perspectives of the entire University, and the student learning that happens in these spaces.

The constituency committee, in consultation with the Vice President of Finance and Administration, determined that the two-college model will save between \$800,000 and \$1,200,000. The exact savings will depend on decisions made about administrative leadership in the colleges, summer contracts, and decisions made during collective bargaining with UPI.

What has now been developed is a three-phase comprehensive plan to both reduce administrative costs and to rebuild our Division by re-establishing a solid fiscal and intellectual foundation that will, in turn, enable us to evolve and expand over the next 10-20 years.

### **Goals and Guiding Principles**

Our goals in this work are as follows:

- Solidify and expand the narrative or story of who we are and what we are
- Maximize stakeholder engagement
- Increase interdisciplinarity across the institution
- Reduce cost

Our organizing principles are:

- Pedagogy
- Purpose
- Traditions

### **Timeline**

We recognize that this work will not be completed overnight. We will move forward in phases, which will allow us to make the best, most thoughtful decisions possible. As new information emerges and fiscal, facility and staff realities change, the plan will be adjusted accordingly throughout each of the phases.

Academic Year 2024-2025: FY 25: *Phase 1 - Structure*

- Completed the larger conceptual restructuring of the division
- Facilitating budget reallocation in order to support specific initiatives

- Beginning work on ACE sheets, course schedules, and other larger administrative inefficiencies
- Developing MOA of faculty chairs with UPI

Academic Year 2025-2026: FY26: *Phase 2 - Policies & Procedures*

- 2026-2030 UPI contract negotiations (including DWEs, DCs, etc.)
- Search procedures for new administrative positions in division (Deans, etc.)
- Curriculum & Governance (Senate/Committees restructured)
- Strategic Planning and Marketing
- Possible schedule revision implementation
- Other workload barriers resolved
- Building plans completed

Academic Year 2026-2027: FY 27: *Phase 3 – Implementation*

- Division rebuild complete after any necessary adjustments made

### **The Division Reimagined**

The University’s revised strategic plan states clearly that “Western Illinois University is committed to developing a budgeting model that will lead past financial stability and into financial sustainability as we evolve into our promising future” (HVHE 3). The following will develop not only the budgeting model, but the entire administrative structure of the University, and then help us achieve both sustainability and growth.

#### **Phase One: The Two-College Model**

To facilitate more open communication and transparency, faculty were asked to express their approval of the creation of the new academic units to which they would belong through a Qualtrics survey collected between April 28 and May 5, 2025. Respondents were also invited to “Please provide any comments that you would like to share”. One hundred and seventy-three (173) of the Faculty Senate eligible faculty (332) provided feedback resulting in a response rate of 52%.

**A majority of respondents in both colleges approved of the creation of the new colleges.**

- Humanities, Arts, Sciences and Education: 63.5% Yes to 36.4% No
- Business, Health, and Community Programs: 79.2% Yes to 20.7% No

**In the College of Humanities, Arts, Sciences, and Education, the creation of new school approvals were:**

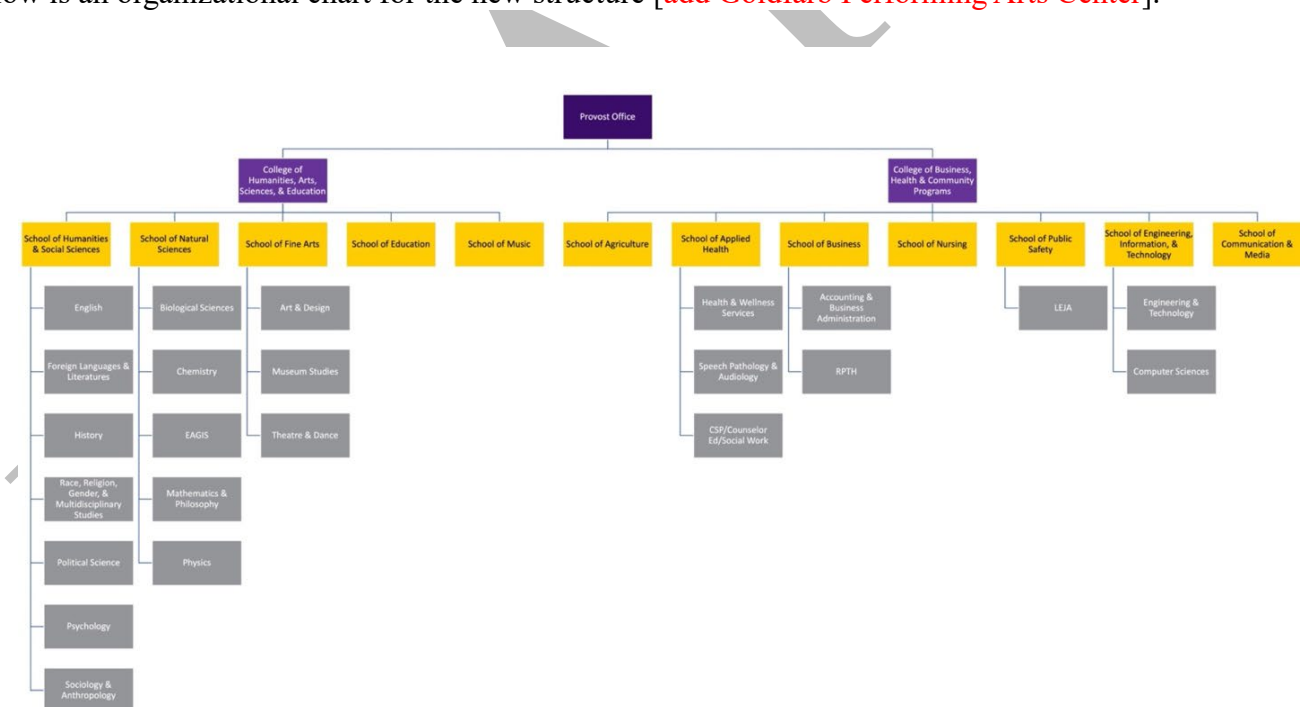
- Humanities and Social Sciences: 55.6% Yes to 44.4% No
- Natural Sciences: 81% Yes to 19% No
- Fine Arts: 50% Yes to 50% No

**In the College of Business, Health, and Community Programs, the creation of new school approvals were:**

- Applied Health: 68.8% Yes to 31.2% No
- Business: 90.5% Yes to 9.5% No
- Public Safety: 100% Yes to 0% No
- Engineering, Information, and Technology: 52.9% to 47.1% No

Faculty Senate continued to have discussions related to the Rebuild after the campus-wide balloting to help nuance understandings and to provide another forum for feedback and engagement. On May 13, Faculty Senate voted to approve the creation of the two new colleges, and five of the seven newly proposed schools. Senate did not support creating a School of Humanities and Social Sciences (the larger size of this proposed school was discussed at length) but instead suggested it be two different administrative units; it also did not support the School of Engineering, Information, and Technology (pedagogical considerations and program alignment were discussed) but provided feedback on where some programs might better fit. Additionally, Deans' Council and Chairs' Council coordinated the collection of feedback for their respective groups.

Below is an organizational chart for the new structure [add Goldfarb Performing Arts Center].



## **Operational Definitions and Administrative Roles**

In its **administrative structure**, Western is defined through the following definitions:

***The University:*** the “University” is an institution that has many branches of advanced learning, confers degrees through various faculties, and often embodies divisions, colleges, schools, and similar structures.

***The College:*** the “college” is a constituent part of a division, like Academic Affairs, focusing on a specific set of academic areas and programs

***The School:*** the "school" is a specialized academic unit or division that focuses on specific fields of study.

***The Department:*** the “department” is an academic unit responsible for offering instruction and conducting research in a specific field of study, often organized around a particular discipline or group of related disciplines.

In order to complete duties, the following **administrative roles** exist or are being considered within the Division of Academic Affairs:

***The Provost:*** The Provost is the chief academic officer of the division, overseeing academic programs, faculty, and staff, and reporting directly to the university president. As chief academic officer, the Provost and Academic Vice President provides academic and internal leadership and serves as the primary representative for the President in her absence. The Provost and Academic Vice President is responsible for intellectual standards; academic planning and budgeting; and the recruitment, retention, and development of faculty. Other responsibilities include program development, review, and assessment; academic policies and procedures; and personnel actions involving faculty, academic support professionals, and administrative employees.

***The Associate Provost(s):*** The Associate Provosts report directly to the Provost.

Associate Provost for Budget, Personnel, and Student Affairs

- Contract Administrator/ Grievance Officer
- RPT Process/ Faculty Development
- Academic Affairs budget & expenditures
- Dual Enrollment/early admission
- Student Crisis and Threat Assessment
- Academic Advising, Coaching, and Student Learning Center
- Academic Personnel
- University Research Council
- Building Space and Development

Associate Provost of Academic Programs and Institutional Effectiveness

- Undergraduate Programing
- School of Graduate Studies
- Student Learning Assessment
- Summer School
- Institutional Research



- Registrar/Scheduling
- Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Strategic Planning
- Office of Sponsored Projects

Assistant Provost of Licensure, Advisory Boards and Councils, & External Partnerships  
This is a new position that will report to the Provost. It is responsible for the following

- Assigned by the Dean
- Work closely with disciplinary experts
- Coordination of Advisory Boards
- Consider and support outside engagements or partnership
- Grants/Sponsored Projects
- Licensure

**Deans:** Academic Deans are the chief executive officers of their administrative units and are responsible to the Provost/Academic Vice President and the President of the University for the administration of their academic units. Deans are responsible for carrying out the educational policies of the respective units. They shall represent their administrative units on standing and ad hoc administrative committees in the central administration and University.

**Associate Deans:** Duties assigned by the Dean

**School Directors:** The school director, as a chief unit officer, shall be responsible for the execution of University and College policies insofar as they concern the relevant needs of the disciplines they oversee. Responsibilities include [These will be reviewed by committee]:

- Duties Assigned by Dean
- Coordinate scheduling efficiency across departments, disciplines, and programs in the School
- Plan personnel and strategic faculty hires
- Adjudicate Personnel/Student Conflict
- Review, evaluate, and make recommendation on tenure, retention, promotion [along side of the DPC recommendation]
- Oversee long-term planning for the School/ programs
- Lead in all professional activities, including service, teaching, and research
- Coordinate student complaints and grade appeals
- Coordinate recruitment and retention initiatives

**Department Chairs:** Department Chairs are now a part of the Unit A Faculty. They report directly to a School Director. Duties assigned include [These will be reviewed by committee]:

- Assignments from Dean
- Coordinate department meetings

- Coordinate long-term planning for the department
- Leader in all professional activities, including service, teaching, and research
- Assist with student complaints and grade appeals
- Coordinate scheduling for individual department
- Assessment reports in accordance with faculty in departmental DWE
- Coordination of Living and Learning Communities
- Coordination of Advisory Boards

***Executive Director for Advising:*** Responsible for the oversight of all academic advising and academic support on campus [Reviewed by committee]

- Directly supervises 2-3 Directors and the First Year Advising Center
- Works to develop training and support for all Academic Advisors and Faculty Advisors on campus.
- Works with Admissions, Registrar's Office and New Student Family Programs Offices to coordinate New Student Registration
- Oversees Dual Enrollment Program
- Works with FYE in development of First-Year Programs
- Coordinates Learning Center

### **Roles in Shared Governance**

The following are working approximations that will allow us to continue robust shared governance and efficient administration.

#### *Administrative Positions in the Division*

Provost; Associate Provosts; Deans; Associate/Assistant Deans; Office/Center Directors; School Directors

#### *Faculty and ASPs in the Division*

Department Chairs: 3-year faculty positions with assigned ACES in DWEs and CWEs [10-15][Reviewed by committee]

Unit A Faculty

Unit B Faculty

Unit C Faculty [to be negotiated by UPI and Admin]

Advisors and ASP

Faculty Senate: the composition of Faculty Senate, and its councils and committees, will align to meet its rights and responsibilities in faculty governance within the university's model of shared governance

#### *UPI Contract*

Organization of retention/tenure/promotion: remains the same inside of a two-college structure with the following change: where appropriate, Associate Deans/School Directors will serve the administrative role Department Chairs served in past contracts.

Consideration of Clinical/Professional Faculty (Unit C) for programs which require credentialed faculty members (accounting, for example).

Department Criteria: revised with primary focus on teaching, and a reduced or increased focus on research and service (depending on discipline and desire of the departments).

### **The Structure of the Provost's Office**

The following is an outline of additional positions, duties, and direct reports to the Provost:

- *Career Center*. Office engages in internship fairs, finding a career, alumni connections, and the administration of Handshake.
- *Center for Study Abroad and Global Studies*. Office recruits and provides programming for international students; office directs Study Abroad programming
- *CT Vivian Center for Social Justice*. In honor of the Rev. Dr. C.T. Vivian, a distinguished and accomplished Western Illinois University alumnus who made monumental contributions to society as a pivotal leader, activist and organizer in the Civil Rights Movement, Western will created an academic center that supports teaching opportunities for graduate students and current academic professionals pursuing careers as university faculty, who are entering the final year of a terminal degree or doctoral program, or have just completed a terminal degree or doctoral program. The Center will also support University retention initiatives, student mentoring, and student programming.
- *Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs*. [Develop definition]
- *Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board Executive Institute*. Founded in 1992, the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board (ILETSB) Executive Institute is dedicated to developing leaders in the law enforcement community.
- *Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Strategic Planning*. [develop definition—see webpage/
- *Office of Sponsored Projects*. The mission of the Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP) at Western Illinois University is to provide comprehensive support services to the University community for the successful administration of externally sponsored projects.
- *The Student Learning Center*. Responsible for major advising, reach student advising, first-year advising, dual enrollment programming, first-year programming, bridge programming. Coordinates with other departments across campus.
- *Registrar's Office*. The Office of the Registrar maintains student academic records, administers registration, publishes class schedules, processes undergraduate reentry, certifies NCAA academic eligibility, administers academic room scheduling, maintains the degree audit system, processes major or minor declarations, issues official transcripts and enrollment verifications, certifies degree completion, and coordinates undergraduate commencement.
- *WIU Libraries and Academic Commons*. In the foundation of the Malpass Library, three purposes were identified: (1) to serve as a library for the University community; (2) to serve as a gallery space; (3) to serve as a garden space. The library will develop each of these items by increasing collections and periodicals; by making public spaces that highlight sculpture, paintings, etc; and by regenerating the historic garden spaces that were at one time prevalent in the building.

## **Action Items**

As the structure has now been determined, and being mindful that additional changes may be necessary, it is possible to move into Phase Two by looking at our policies and procedures.

### **Phase Two: Reimagining how we work**

There is a recognition that the first step towards being more administratively efficient is to engage the function and practice surrounding documents like the ACE sheet, or the Student Learning Assessment Report, or the Consolidated Annual Report; and second, the larger policies and regulations that guide and shape the University's work on assessment, annual reporting, and the review and approval of budget requests. At the time of the writing of this document, both of these items are being engaged through the Provost's Office.

### **Develop Committees**

In order to address the issues that follow, the following committees will be formed, populated, and charged through SU25-FL25:

1. Academic Use of Space Committee
2. Advising Committee
3. Chairs and School Directors Committee
4. Communication Committee
5. Constituency Committee
6. Efficiency Committee
7. Interdisciplinary and Co-Curricular Committee

### **Focus Items**

The following is a list of focus items through which to quickly implement change:

1. The Schedule: efficiency [pilots in FL26; complete by FL 27]
2. The ACE Sheet [By FL25]
3. Develop of Advisory Boards for EACH Department and School [SP26]
  - Fundraising
  - Guidance
  - Sharing information with the "rhizome network" (that is, recognizing that the disciplinary communication network is not a hierarchy)
  - Align WIU core values and emphasis on social mobility with work going on in academic programs, departments, and colleges [FL25]
4. Cultivate Ambition in students, faculty, and staff
  - Develop and participate in self-regulation, growth mindset activities across campus
  - Develop Mentorship Program for first-gen, underrepresented, undecided students
  - Bridge and other specialized student programming
  - Support faculty teaching, service, and research initiatives
  - Explore ALL models and research for this paradigm shift

## 5. Reimagine and Represent WIU

- Develop current employee discussions on the University
- Expand partnerships external partnerships
- Emphasize new Carnegie Classifications
- Communication through academic programs that WIU offers access and delivers success
  - Develop webpages, pamphlets, etc for each department to do just this
- Incorporate data like job placement rates and other tangible outcomes to ALL external marketing done by WIU, colleges, and departments.

### **Division Budget Revision**

To improve both cost savings and growth initiatives, we will centralize the Academic Affairs budget. Likewise, we will clearly identify the budget priorities in the Division and reallocate funding where necessary. As it is unlikely that new funding will be available, priorities and objectives will be funded from reallocation of realized cost savings, budgetary restructuring and fundraising.

#### *Appropriated Budget Priorities:*

1. We must deliver our academic programs with excellence
2. We must increase retention of first-year students
3. We must increase the enrollment of transfer students in SP26 and FL 26
4. We must reduce general operating and administrative costs

#### *Directives, Approach, Outcomes:*

1. We will allow most/all vacancies to fold into the FY26 budget in order to reduce the deficit
2. Funds available will be moved into areas of need as it pertains to retention—in other words, available funds will not stay in particular departments or colleges or even the division itself
3. Our approach will be transparent and detail-oriented
4. Our outcome will be increased cost savings/efficiency, as well as an increase in funding for targeted, retention-oriented initiatives.

### **Examples of Initiatives and Reallocations in the Division**

1. FYE Programming [in coordination with Student Success] [highest priority]
  - \$5000.00 to family/dining program for FYE students
  - \$5000.00 to 1-5 departments with FYE major discipline proposals for 1<sup>st</sup> year retention
  - \$25,000.00 [\$25000 added by Student Services] for a mental health counselor/case manager focused exclusively on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students through FYE
  - \$50,000.00 Assistant Director of Student Engagement (for FYE)
2. LLC Programming [TBD]

3. Classroom and Building enhancement [\$50,000]
4. Personnel allocations for units serving a high percentage of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students

*Approximate Total:*

**Actual Dollars Available for Reallocation**

Approximately []

**Phase Three: Stability, Planning, and Program Innovation**

In this section:

1. Fiscal stability [cash flow and long-term budget]
2. Strategic Hiring
3. Larger connection to a new University Strategic Plan [Through AASP]
4. Workforce Development programming
5. International Refocus: Undergraduate Recruitment

**Appendix**

**The Initial Models for the Rebuild in Academic Affairs**

In the early stages of this work, the Provost's Office and the Constituency Committee used an IPEDS data search to find the following schools with a similar enrollment profile:

Bemidji State University: <https://www.bemidjistate.edu/academics/affairs/reporting-areas/>

Emporia State University: <https://www.emporia.edu/academics-majors/colleges-schools/>

Missouri Western State University: <https://www.missouriwestern.edu/acadaff/>

Western New Mexico University: <https://academic.wnmu.edu/?lang=en>

Westfield State University: <https://www.westfield.ma.edu/academics/colleges-and-departments>