Goals, Strategies, and Actions

The mission of the University of Kansas, as a public international research university, is to educate leaders, build healthy communities, and make discoveries that will change the world.

The strategic plan is summarized below in graphical form, with its six goals and the strategies we will pursue to achieve the goals. Subsequent pages give more details for each individual goal, in which the strategies are decomposed into a series of specific action items. On page 14, we describe the four strategic initiatives that will position KU as leaders and innovators in tackling some of society’s global grand challenges.

Goal 1  Strengthen recruitment, teaching, and mentoring to prepare undergraduate students for lifelong learning, leadership, and success
  - Establish a new KU core curriculum for all undergraduate students 1-A
  - Strengthen the pipeline of undergraduates to and through KU 1-B
  - Invest in first-year intellectual experiences 1-C
  - Enhance experiential learning opportunities 1-D
  - Redesign courses to enhance student learning 1-E

Goal 2  Prepare doctoral students as innovators and leaders who are ready to meet the demands of the academy and our global society
  - Develop sustainable funding for doctoral education 2-A
  - Use comparative data to set academic program standards 2-B
  - Develop a comprehensive doctoral student recruitment plan 2-C
  - Size academic programs based upon merit, mentoring, and placement 2-D

Goal 3  Enhance research broadly with special emphasis upon areas of present and emerging strength in order to push the boundaries of knowledge and benefit society
  - Pursue multidisciplinary strategic initiatives 3-A
  - Increase research activities, innovation, and funding 3-B
  - Document research excellence with enhanced accountability 3-C

Goal 4  Engage local, state, national, and global communities as partners in scholarly activities that have direct public impact
  - Promote a culture that openly values engaged scholarship 4-A
  - Encourage, support, and coordinate engaged scholarship 4-B
  - Promote active entrepreneurship and vibrant external partnerships 4-C

Goal 5  Recruit, value, develop, and retain an excellent and diverse faculty and staff
  - Enhance the recruitment process for excellence in hiring 5-A
  - Develop and retain talent and leadership at all levels to thrive in an era of change 5-B
  - Be accountable 5-C
  - Enhance diversity of faculty, staff, and students 5-D

Goal 6  Responsibly steward fiscal and physical resources and energize supporters to expand the resource base
  - Reallocate resources on a regular basis to priorities 6-A
  - Create a comprehensive process for facilities planning 6-B
  - Energize the comprehensive fundraising campaign 6-C
1. Energizing the Educational Environment

Goal:
Strengthen recruitment, teaching, and mentoring to prepare undergraduate students for lifelong learning, leadership, and success

KU has a strong tradition of serving the state of Kansas by providing an exceptional undergraduate education. Yet as conscientious professionals, we must ensure that our practices meet the needs and challenges faced by 21st century students. Our recent consideration of undergraduate education at KU began with the report of the chancellor’s taskforce on retention & graduation. During this past year, the strategic planning work group on energizing the educational environment received extensive input from over one thousand students, faculty members, staff, and alumni through a variety of surveys and focus groups. We asked many hard questions in the process: Why do some applicants choose not to enroll at KU? Why do some students leave KU without completing their degrees? What are the barriers preventing timely progress to graduation? What should be the educational goals that every graduate achieves?

The result was a strong and clear mandate to formulate a new KU core curriculum based upon a common set of educational goals and outcomes. Each graduate should not only master the skills needed for success in today’s world, but should acquire the foundational knowledge and abilities to adapt to and thrive in an ever-changing world. The new university-wide curriculum will significantly reduce the number of required general education courses, while ensuring that each student meets key objectives. The added flexibility will encourage students to participate in the many exciting experiential opportunities KU offers — such as study abroad, research, internships, and service learning — which we will continue to enhance. Those experiences are often life-changing; they turn a good education into a great one.

Other feedback suggested important ways to enhance the success of our students along their pathways from recruitment through graduation. Crucial steps are to improve how we prepare, aid, and recruit students to KU and then, once on campus, to involve them more immediately in the intellectual life of the university. We will restructure student advising and link students more effectively to resources that help them navigate curricular transitions and achieve their educational ambitions. As new students get started at KU, technologies can alert faculty members and staff to students whose progress can benefit from immediate intervention.

Energizing the educational environment at KU in these significant ways will require strong action and collaborative partnerships among units and programs across campus. We are committed to this important task. By so doing we will position KU to recruit the very best applicants, engage them intellectually to reach their full academic potential, and stimulate their progress to graduation and successful careers.
**Goal 1: Strengthen recruitment, teaching, and mentoring to prepare undergraduate students for lifelong learning, leadership, and success**

**Outcomes:**
- Students empowered to make informed decisions about their learning through consistent, high-quality advising and mentoring.
- Students connected to KU intellectually and emotionally, from first-year through capstone experiences.
- Enriched educational experiences for students through experiential learning and redesigned courses.
- Students initiated for life-long learning through renewed, goal-based general education curricula.

**Strategy 1-A**
- Establish a new KU core curriculum for all undergraduate students
- Develop the foundation for a new undergraduate core curriculum with clear educational goals and learning outcomes
- Design and implement a new undergraduate core curriculum
- Pilot student use of e-portfolios to provide evidence of achievement of learning outcomes
- Adopt policies and procedures to ensure that students make timely, achievable major choices

**Strategy 1-B**
- Strengthen the pipeline of undergraduates to and through KU
- Reorganize recruiting by focusing on communication and a comprehensive scholarship plan
- Strengthen partnerships with community colleges to facilitate student transfer to KU
- Initiate a central academic unit to enhance undergraduate advising
- Implement block enrollment in freshman year to encourage cohorts and learning communities

**Strategy 1-C**
- Invest in first-year intellectual experiences
- Institute a common book program
- Develop topical, discussion-based, first-year seminars
- Implement block enrollment in freshman year to encourage cohorts and learning communities
- Enhance experiential learning opportunities

**Strategy 1-D**
- Enhance experiential learning opportunities
- Establish a Center for Experiential Learning
- Build experiential learning opportunities into the new core curriculum
- Encourage the development of courses that take advantage of new pedagogical methods and IT

**Strategy 1-E**
- Redesign courses to enhance student learning
- Promote active learning

**Metrics:**
- Retention rates of undergraduate students
- 4-year and 6-year graduation rates
- Student participation in experiential learning
2. Elevating Doctoral Education

Goal:
Prepare doctoral students as innovators and leaders who are ready to meet the demands of the academy and our global society

Doctoral education prepares future thinkers, researchers, and educators. The doctoral students of today will be the innovators of tomorrow. They will provide new solutions to the issues we face and, in so doing, sustain the development of our civilization.

The doctoral degree is by no means solely a degree for future college professors, although that role will always be an important one. Today, a doctorate in chemistry can lead to a job in an energy company or in a promising new startup. A doctorate in the humanities or social sciences can lead to a career in local, state, or national government or in a host of nonprofit agencies and foundations.

Doctoral education is a distinguishing feature and a fundamental component of KU’s mission. Success in doctoral education defines our national and worldwide standing as an international public research institution, and much of our research is possible only because of our doctoral students. The required investment — in time, money, and effort — is enormous.

While we offer a variety of graduate degrees at KU, we are focusing our efforts in this goal on bolstering the strength and vitality of our most advanced degree — the doctoral degree. Imperative in that regard is elevating the profile of our doctoral programs; holding ourselves accountable in how well we educate and train researchers, scholars, and innovators; and helping students succeed while as students and throughout their careers.
Goal 2: Prepare doctoral students as innovators and leaders who are ready to meet the demands of the academy and our global society

Outcomes:
- Rigorous data-based planning and accountability for doctoral education.
- Establishment of standards for milestones, completion, time to degree, outcomes, and placement.
- Mentoring of students to become professionals and scholars inside and outside academia.
- Comprehensive and sustainable funding model for doctoral education.
- Increased diversity of graduate student body and of graduates.

**Strategy 2-A**
Develop sustainable funding for doctoral education
- Develop flexible funding models and workloads for graduate assistantships
- Increase external and internal funding opportunities for doctoral education
- Make doctoral education a priority in the capital campaign

**Strategy 2-B**
Use comparative data to set academic program standards
- Establish discipline-specific standards for doctoral education and review student progress annually
- Distribute fellowships based upon student progress and placements

**Strategy 2-C**
Develop a comprehensive doctoral student recruitment plan
- Actively target and recruit high-quality doctoral applicants, including international students and students from underrepresented groups
- Provide central support and training for unit-led recruiting efforts

**Strategy 2-D**
Size academic programs based upon merit, mentoring, placement
- Ensure transparency by publishing each program’s key data in a consistent format
- Collect and use job market and placement data to set admission targets for doctoral programs

**Metrics:**
- Doctoral student employment rate within one year after graduation
- Time to degree
- Percent of graduate students holding GTA or GRA appointments
3. Driving Discovery and Innovation

**Goal:**
Enhance research broadly
with special emphasis upon areas of present and emerging strength
in order to push the boundaries of knowledge and benefit society

Many challenging problems that confront society — such as sustaining economic vitality and a healthy environment, improving human health and well-being, resolving generations of conflict, and exploiting information without falling prey to it — are inherently cross-disciplinary and require deep and synergistic advances from several disciplines. Experts in individual disciplines must inspire one another, work together, and build synergies in order to effectively address today’s grand challenges.

On the other hand, our academic structures are organized primarily around specialized and narrower fields of study. Over the last century, that specialization helped launch an explosion of deep and fundamental discoveries in the disciplines, creating a truly golden age of learning. The multidisciplinary fields that drive our national economy today — such as IT, nanotechnology, and genome science — can each trace their roots to fundamental discoveries in the disciplines. Therefore, it is important to embrace a *dual philosophy of excellence* — excellence in multidisciplinary collaborations as well as in core disciplines. These two goals are highly synergistic. The most successful multidisciplinary collaborations often occur among researchers with deep but distinct areas of expertise who, in the course of their joint work, make state-of-the-art contributions to their respective core disciplines. Moreover, the feedback and insights gained from cross-cutting collaborations and conversations can inspire exciting new directions in the core disciplines and contribute to their renewed vitality.

The first two strategies in this section focus on proactive ways to enhance both disciplinary and multidisciplinary research excellence — by removing hurdles, facilitating conversations and collaborations, and encouraging risk-taking. We will invest in the four strategic initiatives described on page 14 to position KU researchers to make major contributions to society as well as to secure the external funding needed to reach full potential. Related recommendations appear in goal 4 to develop corporate partnerships and entrepreneurship opportunities.

For purposes of convenience in this strategic plan, we will use the term “research” to refer to the totality of a faculty member’s creative activities — encompassing not just what is published in scholarly books and journals but also other forms of scholarship, such as performance, composition, artwork, and (as discussed in goal 4) community-engaged scholarship. As a public international research university, it is important for KU to value and recognize scholarly innovation of all kinds. We will develop accountability tools to measure and monitor research activity of faculty members and their units. These tools will support the recommendations in goal 5 to implement policies for post-tenure faculty review and differential workloads, as well as those in goal 2 for program review.
**Goal 3:** Enhance research broadly with special emphasis upon areas of present and emerging strength in order to push the boundaries of knowledge and benefit society

**Outcomes:**
- An enhanced identity as an international research university.
- Data-focused planning and accountability for discovery and innovation.
- Increasingly transdisciplinary, synergistic, and collaborative scholarship.
- Scholarly innovation, strategic risk-taking, and long-term thinking.
- Enhanced external research funding.
- An expansive view of scholarship embracing all forms of research and creative expression.
- Wider dissemination of knowledge and visibility.

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<th>Strategy 3-A</th>
<th>Strategy 3-B</th>
<th>Strategy 3-C</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Action Items</td>
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<td>Pursue strategic initiatives that position KU as a national leader</td>
<td>Encourage the development of new research efforts and funding opportunities</td>
<td>Obtain comparative tools for evaluating department rankings nationally on varied measures</td>
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<td>Develop hiring plans involving joint appointments in support of strategic initiatives</td>
<td>Recruit faculty members at all ranks to enhance the research portfolio of KU</td>
<td>Institute a university-wide web-based faculty activity reporting system</td>
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<td>Introduce more differential rewards and awards university-wide</td>
<td>Establish a formal external review policy for all academic and research units</td>
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**Metrics:**
- Federal research funding
- Number of major awards and memberships
- Scholarly citations to KU faculty members
4. Engaging Scholarship for Public Impact

**Goal:**
Engage local, state, national, and global communities as partners in scholarly activities that have direct public impact

The heroine of E.M. Forster’s masterpiece *Howards End* pleads: “Only connect the prose and the passion and both will be exalted… Live in fragments no longer.” Faculty members sometimes face a similar challenge: how to connect the work of discovery that they feel so passionately about with the needs and expectations of the wider world.

In an academic environment, it can be tempting to live in fragments. Indeed, scholars are often rewarded — by tenure, promotion, honors, and sabbaticals — for their focused pursuit of new knowledge, as reflected in individual publications and grants.

On the other hand, the state and the nation that sustain us need us now more than ever — to invest KU’s substantial intellectual capital and research infrastructure in order to spur innovation, business partnerships, community collaborations, and economic prosperity.

We should demand the highest standards of excellence in our scholarly activities, but at the same time we should provide a broad playing field upon which our faculty members, staff, and students can choose how to fully exercise their creative talents. Scholarly excellence can be found not only in traditional scholarship, but also in technology commercialization and other forms of entrepreneurial or out-of-the-box thinking. It can be found in collaborative partnerships with businesses and corporations, which have downsized research operations over the last two decades and look increasingly to universities for innovative work. It can be found in P–12 innovations in pedagogy, technology tool development, and assessment methodologies. And it can be found in the broad area of community-engaged scholarship, in which research is done in collaboration with community partners for direct public benefit.

The common element of all these examples should be scholarship, which involves dissemination and assessment conducted within an acceptable system of peer review. The goal of engaged scholarship, therefore, is to connect our dedication for scholarly excellence with KU’s important mission of service to the state, nation, and world. We will work to encourage and reward a wide array of innovative research and scholarly activities that have direct positive bearing upon the communities we serve.
Goal 4: Engage local, state, national, and global communities as partners in scholarly activities that have direct public impact

Outcomes:
- Recognition, facilitation, and support of engaged scholarship.
- Mutually productive partnerships with the community for engaged scholarship.
- Learning and scholarship experiences for students.
- Increase in scholarly activities by leveraging existing community engagement activities.
- A culture of entrepreneurship and risk-taking.

Metrics:
- Engaged scholarship projects and expenditures
- Business, industry, and community partnerships
- Patents, licenses, and startups
5. Developing Excellence in People

**Goal:**
Recruit, value, develop, and retain an excellent and diverse faculty and staff

KU’s people are its most valuable resource. Quality higher education is people-intensive. Technology is important, but there is no replacement for an inspiring teacher, an innovative researcher, or a helpful staff member. It thus makes sense to devote exceptional care and attention to the hiring, training, and recognition of people. Seemingly well-intentioned personnel policies can slow the hiring process to a crawl, risking the loss of strong candidates to more nimble universities. Retention of excellent faculty members and staff can be equally challenging, especially if their contributions to the university are not formally recognized and appreciated.

KU faculty members and staff should be encouraged to achieve high standards of performance based upon clearly established and applied criteria. Tenured and tenure-track faculty members in particular should aspire to promotion to full professor and to sustained productivity. To facilitate long-term success, KU will follow the lead of many peer universities by developing and implementing meaningful policies of post-tenure faculty review and mentoring. For staff members, systematic review and refinement of position descriptions will clarify performance criteria. These efforts will enhance the annual process for performance evaluation and goal-setting. We will work to increase satisfaction and retention of faculty members and staff through enhanced professional development opportunities and by visible recognition of exemplary achievements.

As a foundation for a vibrant and productive campus community, KU will foster a rich mix of perspectives, ethnicities, life experiences, interests, worldviews, and cultures. Diversity and excellence go hand in hand. A diverse and inclusive environment strengthens KU’s ability to excel. Diversity enriches our ability to find innovative solutions to complex problems and to create new knowledge. It provides our students valuable experiences that will help them prosper after graduation in an increasingly global and multicultural world. Through diversity, we gain the opportunity to broaden our worldview, as well as build a community of learning and fairness marked by mutual respect.
Goal 5: Recruit, value, develop, and retain an excellent and diverse faculty and staff

Outcomes:
- Productive faculty and staff proud to call KU home
- A workforce accountable to the highest standards of performance
- A culture of recognizing, rewarding, and advancing excellence
- A diverse community of faculty, staff, and students

Strategy 5-A
Enhance the recruitment process for excellence in hiring

Action Items
1. Identify and remove barriers to hiring and facilitate recruitment
2. Implement the Hiring for Excellence protocols

Strategy 5-B
Develop and retain talent and leadership at all levels to thrive in an era of change

Action Items
1. Expand and enhance training, mentoring, and leadership development opportunities
2. Increase the visibility and recognition of KU faculty and staff expertise
3. Enliven the KU campus community with eminent visitors and local community talent

Strategy 5-C
Be accountable

Action Items
1. Develop and implement university-wide faculty policies for post-tenure review and mentoring
2. Utilize differential faculty workloads to enhance productivity
3. Encourage ongoing two-way performance evaluation

Strategy 5-D
Enhance the diversity of faculty, staff, and student body

Action Items
1. Elevate the diversity leadership position to a vice provost level
2. Provide university oversight for diversity and equity of faculty, staff, and students
3. Develop and implement a campus vision and plan to coordinate diversity efforts

Metrics:
- Professional development participation of faculty and staff
- Numbers of minority faculty members, staff, and students
- Appointment processing time
6. Developing Infrastructure and Resources

Goal:
Responsibly steward fiscal and physical resources and energize supporters to expand the resource base

The Lawrence campus sprawls from Corbin Hall to the Research Circle on West Campus, out to Wakarusa Road and up to the Field Station. And the Edwards campus in Overland Park is thriving with a new building soon to be operational. It is easy to remark upon the beauty of KU and yet not realize the amazing diversity it contains: classrooms, cubicles, wet labs, Wi-Fi zones, climbing walls, art collections, library books, pipe organs, and pickled specimens. Beneath our feet and over our heads are fantastic webs of electrical cables, steam tunnels, chilled water pipes, fiber optic lines, HVAC ducts, sewers and water mains.

These things are real and important. They provide the infrastructure that makes it possible for students to study, teachers to teach, and researchers to discover. There is also another kind of infrastructure at KU: the equally complex and often opaque organizational structure that plans and manages and pays for the entire physical infrastructure.

Our strategic plan is an aggressive one — requiring significant monetary resources for full success. We will identify important strategies to develop and enhance the needed infrastructure and resources. We will reorganize administratively and operationally to do more with less, so that we can invest in our core academic priorities. We will more effectively plan and manage the facilities on campus for long-term sustenance. And we must be visionary in order to enlist the full financial support of our alumni and friends in the comprehensive campaign.
Goal 6: Responsibly steward fiscal and physical resources and energize supporters to expand the resource base

Outcomes:
- Efficient and effective business and administrative operations
- A comprehensive campus master plan and process for facilities planning
- A sustainable and well-functioning campus known for its enduring beauty
- A successful comprehensive fundraising campaign

**Strategy 6-A**

- Reallocate resources on a regular basis to priorities
  - Transform organizational structures for maximum effectiveness
  - Create dynamic strategic planning efforts at all levels and utilize them for resource decisions
  - Regularize administrative processes and systems with the KU Medical Center

**Strategy 6-B**

- Create a comprehensive process for facilities planning
  - Establish a university-wide process to coordinate and prioritize building projects
  - Develop a campus master plan for buildings, infrastructure, and sustainability
  - Build a computational and technology infrastructure for future teaching, research, and administration needs

**Strategy 6-C**

- Energize the comprehensive fundraising campaign
  - Focus fundraising goals upon the bold ideas from the strategic plan
  - Activate school-level campaign steering committees
  - Communicate often and effectively with key stakeholders

**Metrics:**
- Amount of budget reallocated per year
- Master plan developed
- Philanthropic gifts
**KU Strategic Initiatives: Bold Aspirations in Action**

Universities are many things to many people. At KU, our core mission is to educate leaders, build healthy communities, and make discoveries that will change the world. While our mission is comprehensive, we have a tremendous opportunity and obligation to develop synergies across several parts of the university where we have particularly strong combined strength and potential. The whole is indeed greater than the sum of its parts.

A key aspect of the strategic plan is the focused investment in some big, bold ideas where KU can harness its unique assets to help make the world a better place. The four strategic initiative themes — referenced earlier but presented here in more detail — grew out of a bottom-up response to a campus-wide request for proposals. The objectives were several:

- To address emerging and escalating global grand challenges and societal issues where KU has special capabilities;
- To build scholarly communities that challenge, engage, and inspire individuals from many disciplines around a common theme;
- To enhance KU’s national and international visibility and impact;
- To engage and motivate funding agencies, foundations, state government, community, alumni, and friends to provide much-needed resources; and
- To provide our students with unique experiences that will position them as highly recruited and valued drivers and innovators of social and technological change.

A total of 104 proposals were submitted by February 28, 2011. A full vetting of the proposals, as described in the introduction of this document, resulted in the following four strategic initiative themes:

1. **Sustaining the Planet, Powering the World**
2. **Promoting Well-Being, Finding Cures**
3. **Building Communities, Expanding Opportunities**
4. **Harnessing Information, Multiplying Knowledge**

These themes represent KU’s highest priorities for research investment during the coming five years. Each theme statement is described in more detail in the following pages and includes a set of “bold exemplars” derived from some of submitted proposals.

During the 2011–2012 academic year, each strategic initiative theme will be the subject of an open, on-campus summit. The format for these meetings is now taking shape, and faculty members have been chosen to plan and lead them. The summits will help form research networks, identify funding opportunities and faculty leaders, strategize about needed infrastructure, and inform priorities for future faculty hiring.