



### **Notre Dame de Namur University Strategic Plan FY25-FY28**

For over 170 years, NDNU built a reputation for educating the whole person, fostering in its students' concern about humanity, their communities, and personal well-being. Supported by strong academic programs, our students develop networks that not only serve them professionally but serve the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur's Hallmark values that are at the core of their NDNU experience.

Since 2020, national enrollment trends in graduate education indicate declines in several disciplines, including those offered by NDNU. Enrollment for post-traditional, degree completion students has been in decline since 2018, but NDNU has shown growth in the past three years.

Opportunities for growth exist in expanding online offerings. A recent Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL) study of prospective graduate students shows that 39% of those surveyed prefer programs that are 100% online and 43% prefer hybrid modalities.

Employer data indicates that we will continue to see challenges for teacher preparation programs, not because there are no jobs, but because there is a lack of interest in pursuing that career field due to current teaching conditions. Employer data for business and psychology is more promising.

A study of local competitors who are demonstrating success seem to have three areas of focus:

- Doubling down on prior successes
- Going where there is market interest by expanding online offerings
- Demonstrating vision and gumption through bold and innovative leadership

NDNU's story is a turnaround story. To be successful, we must deliver programs in modalities that modern students want, make sure we have the right staff and faculty to build toward our future, and have adequate finances for investment.

Higher education leaders who have led successful turnarounds identify key lessons learned:

- Be realistic.
- Define health carefully.
- Identify the most critical KPIs and track them vigorously.
- Prepare for a long campaign at high speed.
- Have frequent access to the Board for swift decision making and support.
- Know the difference between late and too late.
- Leverage partnerships.
- Refocus on students.



## **Notre Dame de Namur University Mission Statement**

To support the realignment of NDNU mission and purpose, we have revised the mission and vision statement to reflect our institution's pivot to focus on adult learners seeking graduate and degree completion programs.

### **Notre Dame de Namur University Mission Statement**

Educational Mission and Vision: NDNU provides transformative, professionally oriented education designed for learners who reflect the diversity of our world. Our graduates are highly skilled professionals and lifelong learners who work to transform the world through values-based professional work and community-based action for social justice.

Community and Core Values: As an inclusive learning community, NDNU invites people from all walks of life to come together to honor the dignity, sacredness, and diversity of every person. Rooted in the inclusive values of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, the Catholic intellectual tradition, and our liberal arts heritage, NDNU is guided by its Core Values and the Hallmarks of a Notre Dame de Namur Learning Community.

### **Hallmarks of a Notre Dame de Namur Learning Community**

- We proclaim by our lives even more than by our words that God is good.
- We honor the dignity and sacredness of each person.
- We educate for and act on behalf of justice, peace, and care for all creation.
- We commit ourselves to community service.
- We embrace the gift of diversity.
- We create community among those with whom we work and with those we serve.
- We develop holistic learning communities which educate for life.

### **NDNU Core Values**

- Community
- Diversity
- Excellence
- Goodness
- Integrity
- Justice
- Learning
- Service

### How do we live our Mission?

- Deliver accessible, innovative education that meets students where they are.
- Offer personalized and flexible programs that honor the whole person.
- Integrate innovative research-based teaching practices, core values, and experiential learning.
- Prepare students to be mindful users of technology and ethical global contributors.
- Promote the public good both locally and globally.
- Maintain a student-centered approach, reflecting our commitment to growth and success.

To support the development of a new 3-year NDNU Strategic Plan for the “post-traditional” student through graduate and undergraduate degree completion programs, the Cabinet engaged the NDNU Community to establish 4 work groups. These work groups included representatives from NDNU administration and academic leaders in the Schools of Education, Business & Management, and Psychology. The work groups took into consideration internal and external analysis regarding factors influencing and impacting the institution, including a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and strengths) analysis to better inform NDNU’s new 3-Year Strategic Plan.

The outcomes of these work groups resulted in the development of the five primary strategic goals and the associated with KPI metrics which form the basis of the NDNU Strategic Plan for FY25-FY28:

- **Goal 1: Fiscal Sustainability**  
Achieve fiscal sustainability through increased enrollments, diversified funding sources, aligning expenses with revenue, and enhanced operational efficiency, in accordance with WSCUC standards.
- **Goal 2: Build Market Recognition and Expand Brand Awareness**  
Elevate our market presence and expand our brand awareness by highlighting the unique value of NDNU's diverse programs, exceptional faculty, and transformative student experiences.
- **Goal 3: Multimodal Educational Excellence**  
Optimize a mix of professionally oriented academic programs that meet market demand. These programs will be offered in modalities that work for students. In any modality, programs will provide strong learning outcomes and an exceptional student experience.
- **Goal 4: Student Experience / Centeredness / Community**  
Enhance and expand current services and resources to better anticipate and respond to student needs. These services and resources, including infrastructure, will support and empower student voices; offer meaningful feedback to strengthen curriculum and practices, and swiftly adapt to increased enrollment and new program offerings.

- **Goal 5: Establish New and Enhance Existing External Partnerships and Alumni Relations**

Hire Director of University Partnerships. This would enable creating stronger advisory boards and increase knowledge of developing employer needs. Most importantly, it will create pipelines for student enrollment and opportunities for student teaching, clinical placements, internships, and OPT (Optional Practical Training) options.

## **Notre Dame de Namur University – Strategic Plan Goals and Strategies**

### **Goal 1: Fiscal Sustainability**

*Achieve fiscal sustainability through increased enrollments, diversified funding sources, aligning expenses with revenue, and enhanced operational efficiency, in accordance with WSCUC standards.*

#### **Strategy 1.1: Create a Strong Culture of Philanthropy**

Build a strong culture of philanthropy through personal engagement with alumni, donors, and friends through special events, a robust NDNU Annual Fund, major gifts, and grants program outreach. Position events, personal interactions, and direct communications as ways to cultivate donors and attract new supporters. Improve identification of donor prospects through data and reporting.

#### **Strategy 1.2: Boost Development Yield**

Identify NDNU short-term and long-term fundraising priorities and initiatives, including grant opportunities and cultivation of major gifts and donors. Create an Advancement Plan outlining the development goals and initiatives that NDNU will pursue, and the staffing needed for success. Hire staff and pursue the plan in coordination with other strategic efforts. Develop ongoing means for determining which funding needs will be prioritized.

#### **Strategy 1.3: Develop Enrollment Pipelines for Undergraduate Degree Completion and Graduate Degree Students**

Identify areas in which to build and expand community college articulation agreements and consortiums. Broaden reach with in-person and virtual early admission/instant admit events for graduate and degree completion students. Utilize technology to create connections between NDNU and prospective and admitted students resulting in lead generation. Establish better onboarding support services throughout the admissions process that will provide calls to action at each stage in the pipeline.

**Strategy 1.4: Build Employer Sponsor/Referral Partnership Framework to Increase Outreach and Enrollment Opportunities**

Establish deliberate guided pathways for students from underrepresented and traditionally underserved communities to receive bachelor's and master's degrees. Create branded relationships with community college partners, establishing ourselves as the second half of their path to attaining a bachelor's degree. Create employer sponsor and referral partnerships with non-profit and for-profit sectors to provide their clients and constituents with affordable degree completion, graduate, and credential options. These efforts will create an additional rotating pipeline of potential enrollments by using an integrated team advising approach. We will provide students with peer and alumni mentors and an array of student support services.

**Strategy 1.5: Build Annual Income from Endowment Corpus**

The CEO, CFO, the NDNU's Investment Firm, and the Institutional Investment Subcommittee will review, revise, and update NDNU's investment policy and portfolio and fully prepare the Board of Trustees with a recommended short-term and long-term investment strategy as the university prepares to invest its anticipated net proceeds from the future sale of the campus property. The investment strategy objective is to provide the university with ongoing income to help support its mission and students.

**Strategy 1.6: Implement the Tuition Revenue Projections from the Modernized Enrollment Planning Methodology**

Create, develop, and implement a predictive model to forecast future enrollment headcount and credit hour targets. Using year over year data and identifying percentage increases, tailor a plan that realistically predicts outcomes and future tuition revenue targets for budget development. This will allow the admissions team to strive toward a realistic goal and evaluate the different strategies that are being tested.

**Goal 2: Build Market Recognition and Expand Brand Awareness**

Elevate our market presence and expand our brand awareness by highlighting the unique value of NDNU's diverse programs, exceptional faculty, and transformative student experiences.

**Strategy 2.1: Continue to Build NDNU Brand Identity and Equity**

Given the significant changes to our core curriculum and value proposition as a university over the last 3 years, we will initiate strategies to focus branding on NDNU's graduate and degree completion programs, offering them in-person, hybrid, and fully on-line. Because the school programs are now more clearly defined through digital marketing and local community outreach, we will be shifting our focus to promote each University School's brand more holistically building our brand identity across the state of California and neighboring states.

**Strategy 2.2: Website Redesign and Optimization**

The NDNU website is our first impression to student prospects and the community. After 10 years, we will be updating and modernizing the site to reflect NDNU's new brand identity and create an optimized environment to recruit students and donors and build stronger relationships with alumni. Through dynamic content, personalization and AI technology, the new website will be built to reflect NDNU's value proposition and effectively engage these key stakeholders.

**Strategy 2.3: Enrollment Marketing and Advertising Campaigns**

We will continue to develop targeted recruitment campaigns for prospective students by creating campaigns for new students, transfer students, and international students, where applicable.

(Refer to FY25 – FY28 Enrollment Marketing Plan)

**Strategy 2.4 Public Relations and Media Outreach:**

We will continue to implement an effective public relations and media outreach for NDNU by setting clear, measurable goals to raise the institution's profile, engage key audiences and influencers, to promote a positive reputation of our institution's faculty, leadership, and alumni. We will continue to pitch stories about NDNU's academic achievements, programs, and community involvement. Our tactics will include continuous media outreach that promotes the university's programs, key milestones during our transition related to Stanford's potential purchase of the campus property, and faculty accomplishments, focusing on the university's unique selling points.

**Goal 3: Multimodal Educational Excellence**

Optimize a mix of professionally oriented academic programs that meet market demand. These programs will be offered in modalities that work for students. In any modality, programs will provide strong learning outcomes and an exceptional student experience.

**Strategy 3.1: Program Mix Review**

Review data on program demand and modality to include programs to sunset in order to efficiently use resources.

**Strategy 3.2: Multimodal Excellence: Enhance Quality of Courses and Faculty Knowledge of Engaging and Equitable Practices for Diverse Learners**

Develop courses and programs in multiple modalities to meet student needs for flexibility. Create an incentive structure for faculty to engage in expansion of online learning and related professional development.

**Strategy 3.3: Build Practical and Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence into All Programs.**

With strong faculty involvement, create a vision for NDNU's academic program mix that is mission-centric, coherent, aligned with NDNU's new direction, and leads to enrollment growth. Based on a SWOT analysis, plan parameters should include innovative programs and new populations to serve, evolution of academic program modality (in-person, hybrid, online) to meet adult student needs, and metrics to gauge program sustainability.

**Goal 4: Student Experience / Centeredness / Community**

Enhance and expand current services and resources to better anticipate and respond to student needs. These services and resources, including infrastructure, will support and empower student voices, offer meaningful feedback to strengthen curriculum and academic practices, and swiftly adapt to increased enrollment and new program offerings.

**Strategy: 4:1 Develop Hiring Needs Plan**

Including University stakeholders, assess, develop, and implement a staffing plan. Create a policy and procedure for new and replacement hires that aligns with the annual budget development timeline. Ensure that current and future job descriptions are reviewed and updated to reflect modern standards for use of technology in a multimodal working environment. Vacated positions and their functions should be assessed and determined if they should be reassigned to existing positions as potential reclassification before automatically determining replacement. Any high-priority vacated position should be replaced within three months or reallocated to other higher-priority positions.

**Strategy 4.2: Democratize online learning for all students by providing essential equipment, training, and support services.**

Assess, develop, and deploy standards for university facilities and information technology to support hybrid/remote work and Hyflex learning environments with both asynchronous and synchronous capabilities. Expand technical support coverage. With stakeholders, assess, develop, design, and implement a comprehensive policy and training program for staff and faculty to optimize the use of technology, AI, and working conditions in hybrid or fully remote environments.

**Strategy 4.3: Foster a culture among faculty and staff that embraces the values and practices of a modern university.**

Create a dynamic and forward-thinking culture among faculty and staff that aligns with the values and practices of a modern university. This includes fostering innovation, inclusivity, collaboration, academic excellence, community engagement, and lifelong learning. Establish and communicate the shared values and vision of the university that guide decision-making, behavior, and relationships within the institution while promoting an environment where faculty and staff collaborate across disciplines, share knowledge, and innovate together.

Encourage ongoing development and skill-building among faculty and staff to support their personal growth and adaptability in a rapidly changing academic landscape while building diverse, equitable, and inclusive campus culture that actively supports the well-being and success of all faculty, staff, and students.

Empower faculty and staff to use innovative technologies and data-driven practices in teaching, administration, and research while continuing to use high touch institutional communication to ensure that faculty and staff are well-informed, engaged, and able to contribute to decision-making processes.

**Goal 5: Establish New and Enhance Existing External Partnerships and Alumni Relations**

Hire Director of University Partnerships. This would enable creating stronger advisory boards and increase knowledge of developing employer needs. Most importantly, it will create pipelines for student enrollment and opportunities for student teaching, clinical placements, internships, and OPT (Optional Practical Training) options.

**Strategy 5.1:** Create pipelines for student enrollment and opportunities for student teaching, clinical placements, internships, and OPT (Optional Practical Training) options.

**Strategy 5.2:** Build a database of alumni employment to support partnership initiatives., Use alumni outreach and advisory boards to refine programs and identify emerging trends.

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NDNU administration is grateful to the many faculty, staff, students, and Board members involved in this plan, and we will continue to solicit input and guidance from our constituent.