PLYMOUTH STATE UNIVERSITY: ACADEMIC PLAN

August 2018

Plymouth State University’s Academic Plan aligns with revised University Vision and Mission, and Values.

**Vision:** Plymouth State University is a visionary institution at the hub of an ever-growing creative community where students, faculty, staff, and alumni are actively transforming themselves and the region. We develop ideas and solutions for a connected world and produce society’s global leaders within interdisciplinary integrated clusters, open labs, partnerships and through entrepreneurial, innovative, and experiential learning.

**Mission:** Plymouth State University serves the state of New Hampshire and the world beyond by transforming our students through advanced practices where engaged learning produces well-educated undergraduates and by providing graduate education that deepens and advances knowledge and enhances professional development.  With distinction, we connect with community and business partners for economic development, technological advances, healthier living, and cultural enrichment with a special commitment of service to the North Country and Lakes Region of New Hampshire.

**Values:**  Our values shape the environment in which our campus community members learn, teach, and serve.  Our values guide our decision making, provide clarity in determining priorities, and influence our relationships and behaviors.

We value:

* Our alumni, heritage, and future as a transformative and highly engaged University with innovative and creative approaches to learning and problem solving;
* Service to others, exemplifying our motto, *Ut prosim* (That I may serve), and working across disciplines where deeper levels of learning and outcomes occur;
* Entrepreneurial partnerships that enrich our learning and benefit our region focused on sustainable, environmentally connected, work that enhances our sense of place and purpose;
* The rights and dignity of all people

In 2015, President Donald Birx arrived at Plymouth State University bringing a vision of an [innovative and integrated approach](https://www.plymouth.edu/magazine/uncategorized/what-makes-the-psu-clusters-initiative-unique/)to learning that required institutional reorganization from three colleges and 22 departments into seven Integrated Clusters (Clusters). This vision addresses the challenges facing higher education, especially degree completion and students’ postgraduate success. Clusters are transformative learning communities that promote critical thinking, collaboration, and career preparation by valuing innovation, entrepreneurship, engaged teaching and learning, and interdisciplinary scholarship. Clusters enhance the University’s existing strengths related to experiential education and create an environment where ideas can flourish across programs, disciplines, and communities on and off campus.

Through campus-wide discussions, seven Clusters were adopted in AY2016:

* Arts & Technologies
* Education, Democracy, & Social Change
* Exploration & Discovery
* Health & Human Enrichment
* Innovation & Entrepreneurship
* Justice & Security
* Tourism, Environment, & Sustainable Development

In AY2016, the University went through a comprehensive review process of all programs and services, the University Review and Strategic Allocation ([URSA](https://campus.plymouth.edu/neasc/)) to guide longer-term future resource allocation and realignment decisions. URSA provided a foundation for structural and organizational changes. A second phase of campus review, the AY2018 University Reinvention Initiative ([URI](https://campus.plymouth.edu/neasc/)), focused on academic programs, Clusters, and financial sustainability.  Both URSA and URI inform the development and implementation of the Integrated Cluster initiative. (See implementation [timeline](https://campus.plymouth.edu/president/transformation-timeline/)).

The University’s implementation of this vision focuses on [five goals](https://campus.plymouth.edu/president/transformation-timeline/): (1) Movement to a flatter, integrated, Cluster-based organizational structure with implementation of the [Four Tools](https://campus.plymouth.edu/president/the-four-tools-of-clusters/) of Clusters, (2) Retention and persistence, (3) Sustainability/thriving: financially, academically, and reputationally, (4) Recruitment and enrollment, and (5) Equipping our students to lead and thrive in the 21st century global economy. To achieve these goals and the PSU mission, the University emphasizes quality teaching, application of theory to external concerns, service to others to enhance the greater good, collaboration, and high impact learning pedagogy.

The Academic Programs contribute to the University goals over the next five years as follows:

**Goal 1: Movement to a flatter, integrated, Cluster-based organizational structure with implementation of the**[**Four Tools**](https://campus.plymouth.edu/president/the-four-tools-of-clusters/)**of Clusters:**

* Clusters will support curricula innovation, student development and student post-graduate success through increased opportunities for collaboration between students, faculty, staff and external partners providing opportunities for students to engage in multidisciplinary projects that address real issue faced in the region and beyond and promote the skills necessary for post-graduate success.
* The [Four Tools of Clusters](https://campus.plymouth.edu/president/the-four-tools-of-clusters/) that include  First Year Seminars, Open Labs, themed Gen Ed, and an INCO that connect the skills learned in the Gen Ed Program to students’ majors will be central to students’ educational experience. The FYS and the INCO will bookend the Gen Ed Program and provide the basis for Gen Ed program assessment. Themed Gen Ed will be available for all students and will support students making meaningful connections between course concepts and provide pathways to micro-credentialing that are a part of the student transcript. Seven new open labs will be incorporated into classroom and residential spaces on campus to support project-based learning and opportunities for students, faculty, staff and external partners to collaborate.

**Goal 2: Retention and Persistence to achieve a retention rate (first to third semester) of 80% and a 65% 6-year graduation. Academic programs will support the retention and persistence goals through:**

* Engaging pedagogy that provides students the opportunity to work in collaborative teams to address real life issues. High impact learning strategies and project-based learning will be central pedagogical components to the PSU curriculum.
* Enhanced opportunities to engage with alumni and external partners through Cluster-based projects, research and funded programs, internships and service learning will support retention and persistence.
* Faculty mentoring and advising that demonstrates a commitment to student success and deepens a students’ sense of connection with the PSU learning community.
* Ongoing professional development for faculty and staff that promoting project-based and high impact Learning Practices. The goal is for all undergraduate students to have at least three open lab experiences during their PSU experience.

**Goal 3. Sustainability/thriving: financially, academically, and reputationally through:**

* Efficient delivery of courses and programs that maximizes instructional resources while providing an excellent educational experience.
* Increased Partnerships with external stakeholders and alumni that increase student opportunities to engage to work on real life problems; create external advocates and supporters of PSU; increase research and funded projects; and showcase PSU students, faculty, staff, and programs.
* Leveraging of The Center for Research and Innovation, the Holmes Center for School Partnerships and Educator Preparation, and the Center for Excellence in Allied Health to provide partnership, research, and clinical opportunities that will enhance the connections between PSU and the region and meet work force development needs.
* Full and continued Accreditation achieved and for Educator Preparation, Nursing, Athletic Training, Business, School Counseling, Clinical Mental Health Counseling, Social Work and Physical Therapy programs by AY2020.

**Goal 4: Recruitment and Enrollment to achieve and maintain 4,000 undergraduate and 800 graduate students through:**

* Innovative Programs developed that meet student interests and provide meaningful. Faculty and administration will review program data, student interest data and work force needs to identify and implement promising new programs, opportunities to reorganize existing programs into innovative majors, retiring programs with low enrollment and little student interest, and expanding pathways from undergraduate to graduate programs through 4+1 and 2+3 programs.
* Robust faculty participation in Open House, Student Orientation, and Summer Bridge programs.

**Goal 5: Equipping our students to lead and thrive in the 21st century global economy through:**

* Full implementation of the four tools of clusters providing high impact learning opportunities that promote the skills and dispositions necessary to thrive in the 21st century global economy.
* Full implementation of General Education Program assessment to ensure that students’ progress from base camp to summit on the General Education Outcomes.
* Instructional delivery and pedagogy that engages students in project-based learning and collaboration across disciplines and with external stakeholders to ensure that our students leave PSU with the knowledge and with the credentials required for postgraduate success including the ability to address issues through multiple perspectives and work collaboratively in multidisciplinary teams to address these issues.
* Robust assessment of all academic programs to ensure that students leave PSU with the knowledge, skills and dispositions essential to their discipline areas of study.