



Strategic Plan 2019 – 2021

**University Administration
3201 Jermantown Road
Fairfax, VA 22030**

**Plan Approved by the Stratford University
Board of Trustees on June 13, 2018**

Purpose of Strategic Plan

The Stratford University Strategic Plan communicates the organization's intentions for Calendar Year (CY) 2019 – 2021. This plan is intended to coordinate and align our strategy with our planning, budgeting, and executing activities at every level of the organization.

History of Stratford University

The founder, Richard R. Shurtz, Sr. established the American Transportation Institute in 1976. Dr. Richard R. Shurtz, II and wife, Mrs. Mary Ann Shurtz, took over the American Transportation Institute in 1986 from Dr. Shurtz's ailing father, Richard R. Shurtz, Sr. American Transportation Institute became Stratford College in 1998 and began offering associate degree programs in Culinary Arts and Information Technology. Dr. Shurtz named the college after Stratford-upon-Avon and his love of literature and travel. In 2001, Stratford College began offering master degrees and became Stratford University. Stratford University is a private institution of higher learning. The student body comprises of recent high school graduates, those desiring to change their career field, working professionals, military, and international students.

Stratford University's Guiding Principles

Our Master Idea: *Education heals the world.*

Stratford is an organization motivated by purpose. Purpose is where our unique talents intersect with the needs of the world. Our purpose, and our value proposition, are reflected in this Master Idea and will be operationalized via this Strategic Plan. This Master Idea is the North Star against which we weigh all future opportunities, objectives and initiatives. We have become a for-profit institution which uses profits to achieve its purpose.

We believe that many of the world's problems can be addressed with education. Education provides opportunities. These opportunities inspire hope. Hope for financial security, family stability, career progression, community contribution and diminished levels of societal poverty, violence, crime, illiteracy and intolerance.

Our Vision: *Empowering the human spirit – one student, one community at a time.*

By understanding each student and his/her community, we can help empower the human spirit through education. Education is the great equalizer and we intend to provide affordable education globally to embrace our Master Idea.

Our Mission: *Preparing students for rewarding careers through quality educational programs that meet the changing needs of employers and the community.*

By providing career-centric education, based on the competencies demanded by industry, we provide an avenue for a productive career for each of our students. To meet the needs of a diverse community of learners, the University provides education that balances technical, professional, and applied learning components. We deliver relevant curricula based on input from employers, the governing board, advisory boards, academic partners and graduates.

Our Motto: *Changing Lives...One Student at a Time*

By treating each student with compassionate support and instructional focus, we help them achieve the professional and personal success which they seek. We focus on student success through a comprehensive support program including testing following acceptance to assure correct placement in courses, financial planning, academic assistance, and other needed resources.

Strategic Plan Outline

Strategic Plan Cornerstone #1 – Culture of Assessment

- **University:** University-wide evidence-based decision-making.
- **Students:** Systematic evaluation of students.
- **Faculty:** Regular evaluation of faculty.
- **Academic Programs:** Assessment of learning outcomes for continual improvement.
- **All Employees:** Performance evaluation of employees to evaluate growth and establish goals.
- **Operations Departments:** Establishing and evaluating goals for each department to improve service provided to students.

Strategic Plan Cornerstone #2 – Faculty Excellence

- **Qualifications:** Hiring qualified faculty for quality education.
- **Onboarding:** Training faculty to use the resources available.
- **Professional Development:** Continued professional training to ensure faculty are the best educators.
- **Curriculum:** Curricula updated for uniformity across all campuses.
- **Governance:** Faculty participation in the development of academics.

Strategic Plan Cornerstone #3- Student Excellence

- **Project-Centric Education:** Educating students to exemplify their critical thinking and problem solving skills.
- **e-Portfolios:** Tool for personal development.
- **Student Support Services (S3):** S3 will be an integral office towards student success.
- **Moodle:** Using Moodle to document student work and grades.

Strategic Plan Cornerstone #4- Scalable IT Systems

- **e-Faculty Roster:** Tracking faculty qualifications.
- **e-Faculty Files:** Online tool for reviewing faculty files.
- **e-Student Files:** Online tool for storing student files.
- **Unbound:** Technology in every course.

The four cornerstones of the Strategic Plan, listed above, build upon the strengths and needs of Stratford University, the community and employers. The cornerstones serve as a roadmap to meet goals critical to the sustainable future of the University and the employment of its graduates. The detail of these goals stem from numerous survey reports, including two years of annual reviews from the 2016 – 2018 Strategic Plan survey. These goals have been drafted to promote excellence in teaching, students learning, student support and other interventions that lead to gainful employment, achievement of personal goals, and increasing the commitment to one University system.

Cornerstone # 1 – Culture of Assessment

In a commitment to establishing a cyclical assessment culture, Stratford University employees and students undergo a system of assessment. Assessment is the systematic basis for making inferences about the University and the development and/or learning of their employees and students. It is the process of defining, selecting, designing, collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and using information to increase development and/or learning. The assessment process culminates when the assessment results are used to improve subsequent development and/or learning.

University: *University-wide evidence-based decision-making.*

As Stratford University grows to a culture of assessment, all decisions will be based on evidence. All University-wide actions will include assessment and utilize evidence-based decisions when implementing improvements.

Students: *Systematic evaluation of students.*

Stratford University utilizes a mixed methods approach to assessing students. Student assessments will serve two main functions: (1) will provide broad feedback about Stratford University from the students' point of view; and/or (2) will measure the extent that students are adequately prepared for rewarding and challenging careers (Stratford University's mission).

Student assessments will reinforce the University goal to utilize evidence-based decisions when implementing improvements.

Faculty: *Regular evaluation of faculty.*

As Stratford University continues to grow the assessment culture, faculty will be regularly evaluated regardless of status (full- or part-time). A faculty evaluation system will be created to hold all faculty to a standard.

Faculty assessments will reinforce the University goal to utilize evidence-based decisions when implementing improvements.

Academic Programs: *Assessment of learning outcomes for continual improvement.*

In a commitment to ongoing academic assessment, Stratford University will continue to assess all academic programs annually and triennially. Faculty and academic leadership will utilize the S.M.A.R.T. method and update all program Missions, Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), and Course Learning Objectives (CLOs) to align with current practice.

Academic assessments will reinforce the University goal to utilize evidence-based decisions when implementing improvements.

All Employees: *Performance evaluation of employees to evaluate growth and establish goals.*

Stratford University annually evaluates all employees. Stratford University will create a new-hire evaluation system to be utilized prior to the one-year evaluation. Thus addressing performance expectations based on Stratford standards prior to their one-year evaluation. In addition, Stratford University will create a similar system for current employees similar to a mid-year “check-in”.

Employee assessments will reinforce the University goal to utilize evidence-based decisions when implementing improvements.

Operations Departments: *Establishing and evaluating goals for each department to improve service provided to students.*

Each department (outside of Academic Program/School) will establish goals, objectives and outcomes for its services, systematically assesses the extent to which they are attained, and use the results of those assessments to improve future services.

Operations assessments will reinforce the University goal to utilize evidence-based decisions when implementing improvements.

Cornerstone # 2 – Faculty Excellence

Faculty members are of tremendous importance to Stratford University. Therefore, Stratford University continues to improve the faculty as a body of scholars and educators eminently qualified in their academic disciplines and imbued with a love of teaching. Faculty have an ongoing responsibility to participate in the development, implementation and administration of academic policy and programs while contributing to the overall institutional effectiveness and strategic planning. Faculty members are expected to provide systematic, meaningful classroom instruction that results in measureable student learning, retention, and placement, assessment of student learning outcomes, and planning for institutional effectiveness.

Qualifications: *Hiring qualified faculty for quality education.*

The quality and competence of the faculty to develop and deliver the programs is fundamental to the students' experiences here at Stratford University. To that end, the University will ensure that all faculty responsible for the delivery of coursework are qualified to fulfill the university mission, goals of the programs and the objectives of the course(s) they teach.

Onboarding: *Training faculty to use the resources available.*

Stratford University's commitment to each student receiving a quality education begins with the educators. Therefore, an Onboarding System will be created to maintain onboarding consistency for each comparable position and will begin at Corporate Headquarters (University Administration).

Professional Development: *Continued professional training to ensure faculty are the best educators.*

Faculty should continually strive to grow within their respective expertise. Annual external and internal professional development will be required for all faculty members and will be managed through the Professional Development Plan that is part of the faculty file.

Curriculum: *Curricula updated for uniformity across all campuses.*

As Stratford University moves away from individual campuses to one University system, it is important to maintain curriculum integrity. Each course curriculum will be updated to provide uniformed instruction across all campuses within the same course, regardless of delivery (hybrid versus online) and must be "unbound" ready.

Governance: *Faculty participation in the development of academics.*

In order to ensure the academic integrity, academic excellence, and academic quality of the University, it is essential for all faculty to have power in academics governance. This includes the development of policies and procedures to enhance the quality of faculty, academic programs, and curricula. Stratford University will provide a platform where Faculty have governance over all academics.

Cornerstone # 3 – Student Excellence

Stratford University's Motto is "*Changing Lives...One Student at a Time*". In order to accomplish our motto, Stratford University helps students achieve their highest potential in higher education and develop their capacity to succeed in the career path of their choice. By treating each student with compassionate support and instructional focus, we help them achieve their professional and personal success. We focus on student success through a comprehensive support system.

Project-Centric Education: *Educating students to exemplify their critical thinking and problem solving skills.*

Stratford University recognizes that the complexities of today's society requires more focus on critical thinking and problem solving skills. Project-centered learning also emphasizes these two factors. Thus, Stratford University will require all programs to include classroom projects in all courses to ensure student success in their careers.

e-Portfolios: *Tool for personal development.*

E-portfolios provide a rich resource for both students and faculty to learn about achievement of important outcomes over time, make connections among disparate parts of the curriculum, gain insights leading to improvement, and develop identities as learners or as facilitators of learning. Thus, Stratford University will provide an e-portfolio platform and mandate the use of e-portfolios within every course.

Student Support Services (S3): *S3 will be an integral office towards student success.*

As Student Support Services (S3) assist students from Orientation through post-graduation, the department is an integral part of the University. The Office of S3 will create a new division of events concerning mental health awareness.

Moodle: *Using Moodle to document student work and grades.*

In a commitment to student excellence, Stratford University utilizes Moodle to document students' work and grades. All students will be required to upload all coursework to Moodle. In addition, a Moodle training will be created to instruct students on the use of Moodle to include a certificate to be added to student file.

Cornerstone # 4 – Scalable IT Systems

Technology advancement has simplified the way we do things, it saves time, it increases on production, it simplifies communication, and it has improved our educational environment. Stratford University recognizes the need for technology advancements within all aspects of the organization. Technological advancements will help Stratford University save time and cost of production – which will make us more competitive. Stratford University is committed to reducing their carbon footprint by creating a paperless University.

e-Faculty Roster: *Tracking faculty qualifications.*

As Stratford University moves towards regional accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), an electronic system must be created to track faculty qualifications. This document is a requirement for SACSCOC with specific guidelines to be followed. Stratford University's current e-faculty Roster will be updated to accommodate all guidelines imposed by SACSCOC.

e-Faculty Files: *Online tool for reviewing faculty files.*

As Stratford University progresses to becoming one University system, demands for a central system, that geographically dispersed campuses can access, at any time, is greater than ever. Therefore, the University will ascertain through creation or purchase a dynamic electronic system to house complete faculty files.

e-Student Files: *Online tool for storing student files.*

In an effort to reduce Stratford University's carbon footprint by creating a paperless University, student files will be electronic. Therefore, the University will ascertain through creation or purchase a dynamic electronic system to house complete student files.

Unbound: *Technology in every course.*

Technology has simplified the way teachers reach their students and has enabled students to learn from anywhere as well as provide access to coursework at any time. Therefore, Stratford University will continue towards our goal of being an "Unbound" University.