

AN INTRODUCTION FROM THE PRESIDENT OF WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

This document outlines Western Kentucky University's commitment to enhancing the academic quality of the institution. We have organized our efforts around the broad theme of *Engaging Students for Success in a Global Society*. **We specifically target increases in student learning through a five-year plan to engage students with communities other than their own as part of their *Western Experience*.** This concept envisions the university as the center of a broader community in which students learn to think critically, serve generously, and lead responsibly. We will target 10 action initiatives that will directly enhance student learning. We will further support this endeavor by instituting a number of initiatives to enhance our institutional and personnel capacity to promote engaged learning. Our intent is to produce graduates with both the capacity to excel professionally in a global environment as well as the commitment to respect and contribute to society and the world in which they live.

Western has a long tradition of providing experiential and context-based learning experiences for our students. **We believe that the more students are actively engaged in and by a broad educational experience, the richer their learning will be and the greater their potential to contribute to society in positive ways.** That said, a number of internal and external factors, including rapid enrollment growth unmatched by state appropriations, increased breadth of distance education programs, and the need to increase retention and graduation rates have caused us to rethink how best to provide inspiring engagement learning opportunities for our students in all disciplines. We are not the same institution as just ten years ago and, as we approach our centennial year, it is time for us to rededicate the creative energy of our faculty and staff towards an engagement paradigm that will build on those many things we already do well while continuing to add significant value to students' *Western Experience*.

Our plan is ambitious and, we believe, goes well beyond the expectations placed upon us by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) reaffirmation process. We have taken seriously the challenge to use the Quality Enhancement Plan as a vehicle for driving institutional growth, believing this best advances our goal of becoming a comprehensive institution of national prominence. We are confident that, as this plan comes to fruition, our students will broaden their base of knowledge and deepen their perspectives about their place in society. At the same time, our university will be transformed. It is our hope and expectation that Western will come to be known as

A place where engaged learning inspires academic excellence and social responsibility.



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