

2014-2017

# Currents: Navigating with Purpose

Shepherd University Strategic Plan >>



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# Currents: Navigating with Purpose

The Strategic Plan for Shepherd University  
2014 – 2017



Rivers are magnets for the imagination, for conscious pondering and subconscious dreams, thrills and fears. People stare into the moving water, captivated, as they are when gazing into a fire. What is it that draws and holds us? The rivers' reflections of our lives and experiences are endless. The water calls up our own ambitions of flowing with ease, of navigating the unknown. Streams represent constant rebirth. The waters flow in, forever new, yet forever the same; they complete a journey from beginning to end, and then they embark on the journey again.

— Tim Palmer

## MISSION >>

Shepherd University, a West Virginia public liberal arts university, is a diverse community of learners and a gateway to the world of opportunities and ideas. We are the regional center for academic, cultural, and economic opportunity. Our mission of service succeeds because we are dedicated to our core values: learning, engagement, integrity, accessibility, and community.

## CORE VALUES >>

Committed to excellence, Shepherd University embraces the following five core values:

### Learning

Shepherd University creates a community of learners who integrate teaching, scholarship, and learning into their lives. In order to create challenging, relevant experiences, inside and outside of the classroom, the university continually evaluates and assesses student learning. We recognize and accommodate diverse learning styles and perspectives necessary for global understanding.

### Engagement

Shepherd University fosters environments in which students, faculty, staff, and members of the community engage with each other to form mutually beneficial relationships. We believe that meaningful engagement, with ideas and with people, promotes deep learning and nurtures critical thought.

## VISION >>

### Shepherd: A Premier Public Liberal Arts University

We will be a nationally respected community of learners where passion, purpose, and experience unite to inspire individuals to shape the world.

### Integrity

Shepherd University strives for an environment of honesty and fairness in its actions. University officials seek input from students, faculty, and staff and make informed and objective decisions. We expect all members of the community to act in accordance with this value.

### Accessibility

Shepherd University provides services to all qualified students. Our staff and faculty are available to students and are committed to respecting and meeting individual needs. University governance and budgeting structures reflect our commitment to transparent processes and public access to information.

### Community

Shepherd University comprises a community that includes students, faculty, staff, alumni, and involved citizens. We meet the needs of this community through assessment, development, and implementation of innovative programs and initiatives. We strive to create a safe environment based on mutual respect and acceptance of differences.

## INTRODUCTION »»

*Currents: Navigating with Purpose* builds upon the strategic directions first described in *Shepherd University's Crossroads Plan*. Developed to guide decision-making from 2009 through 2013, the *Crossroads Plan* was structured along four pathways toward the vision of becoming a premier public liberal arts university. Given that significant progress had been made toward the goals and objectives outlined in the *Crossroads Plan* and in recognition of the fact that there was still much to be done, President Suzanne Shipley asked the committee to evaluate the *Crossroads Plan* and determine whether it would best serve the campus community to either extend or rework the plan. The committee affirmed that the SWOT analysis that formed the basis of *Crossroads* remained relevant. Furthermore, the committee determined that the nomenclature used to communicate the overarching strategic directions, specifically as four pathways, was becoming an important concept in the campus narrative and that there were distinct advantages in continuing to utilize that terminology.

In the fall of 2012, the Shepherd University Strategic Planning Committee undertook a thorough assessment of the *Crossroads Strategic Plan*. The Strategic Planning Committee was comprised of 40 members of the campus community, including representatives of the faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Members self-selected into four work groups, each of which focused upon one of the four strategic pathways. The remaining members served as general resources for all of the work groups. As a first step, the work groups conducted a gap analysis assessing progress toward the goals and objectives outlined in *Crossroads* utilizing data collected during annual assessments of the plan and data provided by the director of Institutional Research. Utilizing the results of the assessment, the Strategic Planning Committee identified 19 strategic initiatives (goals) to guide the University through FY2017. The most significant changes were made to **Pathway 3, "Create a beautiful and welcoming campus,"** which was

“... the *Crossroads Plan* was structured along four pathways toward the vision of becoming a premier, public liberal arts university.”

reengineered to complement the newly-adopted *Campus Master Plan* while addressing the technological interface with the University. In spring 2013, the strategic goals were vetted with all campus governance groups. After feedback from these groups was incorporated by the Strategic Planning Committee, the campus community was invited to participate in an activity to prioritize the initiatives. One hundred sixty three members of the faculty and staff representing 36 percent of all full-time employees participated in the activity.

Implementation plans were developed to articulate measurable objectives, strategies, and tactics for each of the strategic initiatives. Tactics were tied to resources, both financial and human, costs, and timelines. The implementation plans were released to the campus community for comments and this input was utilized by the work groups to finalize the plans. Throughout the process, the Board of Governors was updated on the work of the committee and in the spring of 2013, Board Chair Gat Caperton appointed a work group under the leadership of Board Secretary Marcia Brand to conduct a thorough review and present its recommendation to the full board. In 2014, the Board of Governors unanimously passed a resolution to accept the revisions to the *Crossroads Strategic Plan* and the Strategic Planning Committee rebranded the plan as *Currents: Navigating with Purpose*.

# THE FOUR PATHWAYS: AN OVERVIEW >>

## 1 Inspire Student Learning and Development

The liberal arts are the building blocks upon which learning takes place at Shepherd University. To best prepare our students for their professional and personal lives, student learning must take place through engagement in the liberal arts, both inside and outside of the classroom. Inside of the classroom, engagement opportunities may include capstone projects, seminars, learning communities, group presentations, or debates. Outside of the classroom, engagement opportunities may include internships or practicum, study abroad programs, global experiences, service learning, community service, faculty-student collaborative research efforts, or involvement in student leadership initiatives. Goals associated with this pathway are to:

- ▶ Ensure a high degree of professional preparation for students;
- ▶ Improve the quality of learning across the curriculum;
- ▶ Inspire student learning and development through the incorporation of technology in teaching;
- ▶ Implement the strategic plan developed by the International Committee and strengthen existing programs that foster diversity and intercultural literacy; and,
- ▶ Improve our commitment to students with disabilities.

## 2 Optimize Potential of Faculty and Staff

A premier liberal arts learning environment requires an outstanding faculty and staff. In order to attract, retain, and reward excellent employees, Shepherd University commits to competitive salaries and professional development opportunities. We must increase the number of instructional and support staff, particularly addressing the ratio of full-time faculty to part-time faculty. We are committed to developing a diverse workforce and to promoting a welcoming community reflective of our pluralistic society. The availability of support systems for faculty and staff should be ensured, including such items as effective work space, technological tools with accessible on-campus training, professional development, and wellness activities. Mechanisms for recognizing outstanding employee performance will be implemented. We will provide incentives for retirees to maintain a connection to the University through established and continuing education programs. In order to foster a liberal arts relationship between faculty and students, the development of innovative curricular initiatives, faculty scholarship, and student research will be encouraged. Goals associated with this pathway are to:

- ▶ Ensure competitive salaries for faculty and staff;
- ▶ Continue to add full-time faculty and staff lines;
- ▶ Enhance professional development programs for faculty and staff; and,
- ▶ Continue to strengthen the campus through diversity and inclusion.

## 3 Create a Beautiful and Welcoming Campus

Shepherd University's virtual and physical campus must meet the needs and expectations of students, faculty, staff, and community attracted to a premier liberal arts environment. Improvement of usability, reliability, and accessibility of Shepherd University's virtual front door will be a priority. A new *Facilities Master Plan* addresses aspects and planning for adequate resources to be expended to maintain the University's physical assets. Additional facilities will require financial resources for debt, depreciation expenses, maintenance, staffing, and utilities. The campus will evolve from an environment where driving is the norm, to one where walking to and from campus buildings is not only the standard, but a welcome activity. All avenues of funding — state, federal, and private — will be sought to enhance Shepherd University's physical environment. Goals associated with this pathway are to:

- ▶ Enhance the University's virtual front door;
- ▶ Strengthen commitment to providing a safe campus environment for all;
- ▶ Enhance appearance and access to buildings and grounds;
- ▶ Develop a more environmentally sustainable campus and enhance campus green spaces; and,
- ▶ Take full advantage of campus historical structures.

## 4 Stimulate the Cultural and Economic Development of the Region

As a premier educational resource, Shepherd University will provide economic and cultural development opportunities for the region. Our programs contribute to the community's quality of life through excellent performances, exhibits, competitive athletics, and educational and recreational activities. We will seek resources and fresh opportunities to develop innovative partnerships. We are committed to open dialog and on-going communication with the greater community. Shepherd University will provide an academic structure that stimulates economic and cultural development. We educate students who will become cultural, economic, and civic leaders. Symbols and ceremonies are vital to the creation, maintenance, and promulgation of our organizational culture. Shepherd University defines itself in terms that reflect our educational heritage. We will celebrate our teaching, learning, and academic successes. Goals associated with this pathway are to:

- ▶ Strengthen degree completion and graduate programs to support employer needs and professional development;
- ▶ Develop an integrated marketing program;
- ▶ Secure grants in excess of \$1 million annually to support pathway initiatives;
- ▶ Celebrate the history of Shepherd in ways that acknowledge its past, recognize the present, and plan for future success; and,
- ▶ Fund athletic programs to the level of regional parity.

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES >>

- 1 Ensure competitive salaries for faculty and staff.
- 2 Ensure a high degree of professional preparation for students.
- 3 Enhance the University's virtual front door.
- 4 Strengthen degree completion and graduate programs to support employer needs and professional development.
- 5 Continue to add full-time faculty and staff lines.
- 6 Develop an integrated marketing program.
- 7 Improve the quality of learning across the curriculum.
- 8 Enhance professional development programs for faculty and staff.
- 9 Inspire student learning and development through the incorporation of technology in teaching.
- 10 Secure grants in excess of \$1 million annually to support pathway initiatives.
- 11 Strengthen commitment to providing a safe campus environment for all.
- 12 Enhance appearance and access to buildings and grounds.
- 13 Develop a more environmentally sustainable campus and enhance campus green spaces.
- 14 Celebrate the history of Shepherd in ways that acknowledge its past, recognize the present, and plan for future success.
- 15 Implement the Internationalization Strategic Plan and strengthen programs that foster diversity and intercultural literacy.
- 16 Fund athletic programs to the level of regional parity.
- 17 Improve our commitment to students with disabilities.
- 18 Take full advantage of campus historical structures.
- 19 Continue to strengthen the campus through diversity and inclusion.

# STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE >>

## Pathway 1

**Laura Renninger**

Leader, Dean of Teaching, Learning and Instructional Resources

**Joey Dagg**

Director of IT Services

**Holly Frye**

Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs-Student Engagement

**Ann Legreid**

Dean of the School of Business and Social Sciences

**Tom Segar**

Vice President for Student Affairs

**Sylvia Shurbutt**

Faculty Senate Representative

**Graham Scott**

Student Representative

## Pathway 2

**Dow Benedict**

Leader, Dean of the School of Arts and Humanities

**Chris Ames**

Vice President for Academic Affairs

**Sonya Evanisko**

Professor of Contemporary Art and Theater

**Marie DeWalt**

Director of Human Resources

**Brian Hammond**

Chair, Classified Employees Council

**Ken Harbaugh**

Advisory Council of Classified Employees Representative of the Classified Employees Council

**Tim Nixon**

Associate Professor of English and Modern Languages

**Alan Perdue**

General Counsel

**Tracy Seffers**

Registrar

**JB Tuttle**

Faculty Senate President

## Pathway 3

**Colleen Nolan**

Leader, Dean of the School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics

**Ann Watson\***

Dean of Libraries and Information Sciences

**Keith Alexander**

Assistant Professor of History

**John Isner\***

Student Representative

**Barb Kemerer**

Associate Professor of Nursing

**Tim Leonard\***

Student Representative

**Don Nuckols**

Facilities Operations Manager

**Diane Shewbridge**

Board of Governors Representative of the Classified Employees Council

**Ed Snyder**

Distinguished Professor of Geology

**Dan Yanna\***

Director of Facilities Management

**Mary Kinnie**

Student Representative

## Pathway 4

**Scott Beard**

Leader, Dean of Graduate Studies and Continuing Education and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs

**Carl Bell**

Professor of Biology

**Gordon DeMeritt**

Associate Professor of Business Administration

**Virginia Hicks**

Dean of the School of Education and Professional Studies

**B.J. Pumroy**

Director of Athletics

**Richard Stevens**

Associate Professor of College Student Development and Administration

## Advisory

**Chris Colbert**

President of the Shepherd University Alumni Association

**Shelli Dronsfield**

Chief of Staff

**Elizabeth Johnson\***

Student Representative

**Al Lueck**

Alumni Representative

**Sara Maene**

Director of Institutional Research

**Kim Scranage\***

Vice President for Enrollment Management

**James Vigil**

Vice President for Administration

**Lauren Winebrenner**

Student Representative

## Leadership

**Diane Melby**

Chair, Vice President for Advancement

**Marcia Brand**

Liaison to the Shepherd University Board of Governors

**Suzanne Shipley**

President

\* Former students/employees

# SUPPORTING MATERIALS >>

## The following materials are available on the Shepherd University website:

[www.shepherd.edu/university/strategic-plan/](http://www.shepherd.edu/university/strategic-plan/)

- ▶ *Crossroads Strategic Plan* (including the SWOT analysis that informs the strategy for both *Crossroads* and *Currents*)
- ▶ Results of the Gap Analysis conducted by the Strategic Planning Committee
- ▶ Annual assessment results
- ▶ Documents related to relevant campus conversations
- ▶ Implementation plans for each of the 19 strategic initiatives forming *Currents: Navigating with Purpose*

## The Campus Master Plan is available on the Shepherd University website:

Volume 1: [www.shepherd.edu/university/masterplan-volume1.pdf](http://www.shepherd.edu/university/masterplan-volume1.pdf)

Volume 2: [www.shepherd.edu/university/masterplan-volume2.pdf](http://www.shepherd.edu/university/masterplan-volume2.pdf)





When you put your hand in a flowing stream, you touch the last that has gone before and the first of what is still to come.

- Leonardo DaVinci



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