

Stetson University

“From Florida Gem to National Treasure”

*Phase One: Achieving Top Regional
University Rankings in the South*

Update on University-Wide Strategic Priorities

ROLKS REPORT LIVE
Strategic Priorities Town Hall
April 2022

Roll-Ahead Strategic Goals (2019-2022)

▶ LEARNING EXCELLENCE

Presidential Assessment of Progress: MIXED

Indicators: Outstanding performance in national academic competitions
Stagnant and even declining retention and persistence
Possible misalignment of faculty resources

▶ DEMAND, NATIONAL REPUTATION AND VALUE PROPOSITION

Presidential Assessment of Progress: WEAK

Indicators: Declining applicant pools
Increased acceptance rate
Dropped one spot in USNWR Regional University Rankings (#5)

▶ EQUITY (Broadened Operationally to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion)

Presidential Assessment of Progress: STRONG

Indicators: First ever Executive Officer (Carmen Johnson) shared between DeLand campus and the College of Law
Significant advances through senior officer commitments, productive dialogue and considerable faculty engagement

Roll-Ahead Strategic Goals, Continued

▶ FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY AND TRANSLATION

Presidential Assessment of Progress: **STRONG**

- Indicators:
- Regular and productive meetings with Senate Exec. and Senate Finance Committee
 - Regular and transparent communications around financial implications of COVID
 - Multi-constituent budget reprioritization group in COVID response
 - Regular presidential meetings with Staff Advisory Council and Student Government Leadership, etc.
 - Weekly COVID communications, Regular Webinars, etc.
 - Faculty membership on Board Committees

▶ ADVISING AND ENGAGEMENT

Presidential Assessment of Progress: **EVOLVING**

- Indicators:
- Uneven advising loads
 - Labor shortages in middle management and service delivery
 - Student and faculty voices
 - Emerging Academic Advising Council (Brown Center)

PLEASE SEE ROLL AHEAD GOALS PROGRESS REPORTS

- ▶ <https://www.stetson.edu/other/strategic-planning/>

Stetson University USNWR Ranking

- ▶ Currently ranked #5 among Southern Regional Universities
- ▶ Over the last three decades, Stetson has been as high as #2 and as low as #6.
- ▶ Currently ahead of Stetson on this list are: 1. Rollins (Florida) 2. The Citadel (South Carolina) 3. James Madison (Virginia) and 4. Berry College (Georgia).
- ▶ The competitor list has changed considerably over time with schools like Elon, University of Richmond, Wake Forest, and Belmont, for example, moving into the National University category.
- ▶ Sub-categories of excellence for Stetson include “BEST” designations for 1. Undergraduate Teaching (#11) 2. Veterans Education (#12) 3. Value (#13) 4. Social Mobility (#24).
- ▶ Law School is ranked separately and now stands at #111 nationally with top rankings in Trial Advocacy (#3) and Legal Writing (#5).

Undergraduate Ranking Methodology

- ▶ **Outcomes=40%** (graduation rate, retention rate, social mobility)
- ▶ **Faculty resources=20%** (class size, faculty salary, highest degree completed by faculty, student faculty ratio, percent faculty that are full-time.)
- ▶ **Expert Opinion=20%** (surveys of presidents, provosts and deans of admissions)
- ▶ **Financial Resources=10%** (per student spending on instruction, research, student services and other educational investments)
- ▶ **Student Excellence=7%** (standardized test scores and high school rank)
- ▶ **Alumni Giving=3%** (average percentage of living alumni who give)

Emerging Strategic Priorities/Investments to Elevate Stetson University

INVEST MORE HEAVILY AND SYSTEMATICALLY IN THE FIRST YEAR LEARNING AND LIVING ENVIRONMENT

Strategy:

Incentivize full time tenured and tenure-track faculty to teach First Year Seminar Courses (FSEMs)

Starting in Fall, 2023, double the stipend (currently \$1100) to demonstrate the critical importance of this course to Stetson students' introduction to our academic community. This increased investment also acknowledges the additional effort this course requires in terms of course development, advising, student feedback, community building, etc.

Metric: Number of FSEMS taught by full-time tenured and tenure track faculty and full-time, continuing members of our community teaching FSEMS

Operational Leads: Academic Leadership, Academic Departments, Faculty

Emerging Strategic Priorities/Investments to Elevate Stetson University

IMPROVE RESIDENTIAL LIVING ENVIRONMENT

Strategy:

Complete a comprehensive audit of all residential beds on campus and address all deferred maintenance over time with top priority given to beds/rooms/bathrooms typically occupied by first year students. Consider expansion of single room availability and premium room availability for first year students. Incentivize commuting students to live residentially.

Metric: Bed vacancy rate, percentage of commuting students

Operational Leads: CLASS Leadership, VP for Finance and Administration, Facilities, Student Leadership

Emerging Strategic Priorities/Investments to Elevate Stetson University

IMPROVE RESIDENTIAL LIVING ENVIRONMENT, Continued

Sub Strategy:

Complete full assessment of living and social spaces in fraternities and sororities to address declining engagement (particularly among fraternities) and deferred maintenance. Greek life has the potential to be a point of distinction for Stetson and we retain Greek affiliated students at a significantly higher rate than non-affiliated students. Expand Greek life opportunities for traditionally underrepresented populations. Remove financial barriers to Greek affiliation, particularly at the point of pledging (can be as much as \$1000 additional expense which precludes engagement among students from lower income families). Contemplate significant investments in Greek life infrastructure (part of full audit of all residential beds on campus).

Metrics: Percentage of students engaged in Greek life, bed vacancy rates, Greek life persistence rates, residential living risk assessments

Operational Leads: CLASS Leadership, Fraternity & Sorority Involvement (FSI) Advisory Board, VP for Finance and Administration, Facilities, Chapter Presidents and Alumni, Board of Trustees

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Metrics: Bed vacancy rate, percentage of commuting students, student satisfaction measures, etc.

Operational Leads: CLASS Leadership, VP for Finance and Administration, Facilities

A BOLD AND LONGER TERM PROPOSAL: INVESTING IN OUR FACULTY AND OUR STUDENTS

MODERNIZE STETSON'S CURRICULAR PATHWAYS AND DEPLOY FACULTY RESOURCES MORE POTENTLY AND STRATEGICALLY

Strategy: Modernize and re-deploy faculty teaching loads to facilitate authentic and deep connections between faculty and students.

Strategy: Consider a move from “3:3 teaching load” to “3:2 plus one” teaching load for full-time tenured and tenure track faculty.

Strategy: The “plus one” in the faculty teaching load is intended to reallocate faculty time for close mentoring of students, action-research projects, community based-learning, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary collaboration, career/research advisement, asynchronous online course development, and other exciting innovations that the faculty themselves may contemplate and initiate.

Operational Leads: Operational Leads: Faculty and Academic Leadership, Department Chairs, Faculty, Board of Trustees.

A BOLD PROPOSAL: INVESTING IN OUR FACULTY AND OUR STUDENTS

KEY DRIVER: If Stetson does not improve its retention and graduation rates, the institution's value proposition will be severely challenged.

Strategy: Simplify graduation requirements, including rethinking general education requirements, requirements for the major, all to facilitate curricular pathways and success for our students.

Strategy: Limit the number of courses that can be required to major in a discipline to roughly 10 courses and 1 “intensively mentored” experience.

Note: External professional requirements may necessitate students going beyond major requirements. However, limiting the number of courses to major in a discipline to roughly 10 will promote students obtaining a broad liberal arts education, more fully acknowledges out of classroom learning, and enables students to achieve better balance in their lives.

Operational Leads: Faculty and Academic Leadership, Department Chairs, Faculty, Board of Trustees

A BOLD PROPOSAL: INVESTING IN OUR FACULTY AND OUR STUDENTS

Strategy: Incentivize faculty to be content and pedagogical leads in asynchronous online course development (assists students in their curricular pathways, enables students who are “retention risks” by enabling them to catch up/rebound off-cycle, establishes Stetson as a potential player in innovative online teaching). Students, now and into the future, will be “stacking” their course requirements and credentials.

Strategy: Contemplate how Stetson’s campuses can be better utilized throughout the calendar year. We are still essentially operating in an agrarian calendar and do not take full advantage of our human and physical plant resources throughout the calendar year. Use the summer months to promote retention.

Operational Leads: Faculty and Academic Leadership, Department Chairs, Faculty, Board of Trustees.

FACILITIES ASPIRATIONS SHORT AND LONG TERM

- ▶ ESTABLISH A STANDARD OF QUALITY FOR ALL RESIDENTIAL LIVING SPACES, PARTICULARLY FOR FIRST YEAR STUDENTS (and renewal of Greek Life spaces).
- ▶ A.D.A. Accessibility (EDMUNDS CENTER AND ELIZABETH HALL FIRST TARGETS).
- ▶ Environmental Sustainability (HVAC systems, building envelopes).
- ▶ Study the scope, feasibility, location, potential town/gown components, and interdisciplinary potential for a Performing Arts Center.
- ▶ Continue collaboration with City of DeLand for needed improvements to Melching Field and Spec Martin Stadium.
- ▶ Study the potential for innovative and adaptive re-use of Cummings Gymnasium. Presidential concept is for a Center for Social and Political Discourse and Cross Cultural Understanding. Highlight Stetson as a University that stands apart for its ability to foster dialogue across difference. Space as a gathering hub for particular communities, to promote multicultural exchange, and with the goal of engaged pluralism. Establish Stetson as an important player in public opinion and political polling (peer examples are Marist and Quinnipiac). Space for structured and moderated debates, mock trials, and intellectual and social exchange that is balanced with divergent and competing perspectives. Promote civil discourse.