

BETTER TOGETHER: 2030

*A Strategic Plan for
Columbus State University*



COLUMBUS STATE
UNIVERSITY



OUR VISION

Columbus State University aspires to be a leader in student success, academic excellence, economic development and community engagement through transformative education and strong partnerships.

OUR MISSION

Columbus State University empowers its community, drives innovation and creates opportunities.

To accomplish this, we will focus on:

Student Success

Responsible Stewardship

Community Impact

Economic Competitiveness

OUR CORE VALUES

Excellence

Actively engaging outstanding methods in teaching, academic discovery, creative pursuits, student success, cultural enrichment and the overall campus community.

Creativity

Pursuing distinction through inquiry and innovation, challenging convention and focusing on solutions.

Engagement

Dynamic civic involvement and participation of students, faculty, staff and alumni in the university experience.

Sustainability

Advancing fiscal responsibility, well-being, innovation, lifelong learning and environmental stewardship.

Inclusion

Cultivating and championing a campus environment that welcomes diverse backgrounds, ideas, perspectives and practices.

Servant Leadership

Leading through ethical empowerment and service.

Dear Colleagues,

I am thrilled to introduce “Better Together: 2030,” a strategic plan focusing on the things that matter most for Columbus State University’s future. This plan will propel us forward through hard work and intentional service to our students, to each other and to the community we serve.

I am deeply grateful to members of the Strategic Plan Committee for their work. Their dedication, time and efforts have laid a solid foundation for our future and helped identify the key priorities for our important work.

This plan focuses on four major areas: student success, responsible stewardship, community impact and economic competitiveness. By achieving positive and measurable outcomes in these areas, we will realize our mission and bring our vision to life.

Our greatest strength as an institution is the people who make us Columbus State University. CSU is all of us—and we are truly better together.

Our work is critical and makes a difference in our community and our world. Thank you for all you do now and will do in the future to serve our students.



Stuart Rayfield

President

“We value people. We dream big. We believe that we can accomplish anything we set our minds to. We work hard. We speak truthfully. We act with compassion. We lead with a servant’s heart.”
— President Rayfield



Learn more and monitor progress
toward Better Together: 2030
online at
columbusstate.edu/strategic-plan

PRIORITY: **STUDENT SUCCESS**

To prepare students as they advance toward graduation, careers and meaningful lives, we will:

- Intentionally engage in initiatives that focus on the growth and academic success of students.
- Prioritize student well-being, belongingness and safety.
- Ensure student career-readiness and employability.
- Create meaningful opportunities for students to be engaged on campus.

GOALS INCLUDE:

- ➊ Increase student retention rates to 85% from fall to fall.
- ➋ Increase undergraduate graduation rates to 60% by 2030.

Activities supporting this priority:

- Implement first-year, sophomore-year, junior-year and senior-year experiences.
- Redesign the academic advising standard of care for students.
- Design and implement a comprehensive career development center.
- Redesign the General Education/Core Curriculum.
- Track graduate employment and graduate school admission outcomes.
- Implement a campus traditions initiative.
- Develop an alumni mentoring and networking program to support student and career success.
- Invest in faculty and staff training based on the National Institute for Student Success results and the General Education/Core Curriculum redesign.
- Develop and deploy stackable credentials in appropriate degree programs.

PRIORITY: **RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP**

To promote the ethical and transparent management of resources for the individual student and for the university, we will:

- Manage resources responsibly and control costs whenever possible.
- Invest in people, programs and initiatives that support the strategic plan and lead to institutional sustainability.
- Prioritize and promote philanthropy and community giving.
- Engage and advise students in financial wellness activities.

GOALS INCLUDE:

- ➊ Increase the amount of scholarship dollars donated and the number of scholarships awarded annually by 10%.
- ➋ Decrease students' time-to-completion rates to below the 2024 state universities' average of 5.1 years.

Activities supporting this priority:

- Align institutional budget and priorities.
- Conduct an environmental and sustainability audit.
- Implement Target X/TouchNet financial wellness modeling.
- Focus on donor retention and annual giving campaigns.
- Engage new donors.
- Maximize the use of existing technologies and implement innovative technologies as appropriate to improve outcomes and efficiencies.
- Pursue grant funding in support of environmental best practices for college campuses.

PRIORITY:

COMMUNITY IMPACT

To drive innovation and create opportunities for continued economic development and improved quality of life in our region, we will:

- Align degree programs to workforce needs in our region and the state of Georgia.
- Drive economic advancement for all in our community.
- Prioritize partnerships in the community—with an emphasis on the Chattahoochee Valley and U.S. Army Fort Moore and The Maneuver Center of Excellence.
- Deliver opportunities for the community to engage in and benefit from activities hosted and/or sponsored by the university.

GOALS INCLUDE:

- 1 Increase the number of students who participate in experiential learning opportunities with industry partners to 100% by 2030.
- 2 Implement a strategic enrollment management plan that leads to increased traditional and non-traditional new student enrollment annually.

Activities supporting this priority:

- Redesign the General Education/Core Curriculum.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive strategic enrollment management plan.
- Support the community-university Better Together partnership initiative.
- Conduct a campus culture analysis to improve employee retention, well-being and morale.
- Partner with regional school districts to enhance innovations in teaching and learning for P-12.
- Expand the number of student courses with an experiential learning component and track students' participation.
- Deploy a robust professional education model tied to specific workforce needs in the Chattahoochee Valley.

PRIORITY:

ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

To elevate the university to be a destination for higher education and to contribute to the vitality of the Chattahoochee Valley, we will:

- Fuel innovation through advances in research, technology, creative endeavors and problem-solving.
- Develop and maintain unique community and industry partnerships.
- Align degree programs to workforce needs in the Chattahoochee Valley and throughout Georgia.
- Advance Columbus State's visibility and brand awareness throughout the state.

GOALS INCLUDE:

- 1 Increase the number of degree and certificate awards in high-demand knowledge, skills and abilities.
- 2 Increase the number of corporate sponsorships and academic partnerships.

Activities supporting this priority:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive strategic enrollment management plan.
- Invest in research, scholarship and creative endeavors that advance the university's and region's economic impact.
- Expand professional education offerings driven by industry needs.
- Engage in an institutional image and perception study.
- Implement degree programs that align with emerging markets, technologies, modality demands and areas of study.
- Increase partnerships with peer University System of Georgia institutions to offer innovative career-focused programs in high-demand areas.
- Expand collaborative programs and courses such as eMajor, the Georgia Fintech Academy, and the Georgia Film Academy.
- Align and implement unique online programs in response to industry needs and strategic enrollment goals.

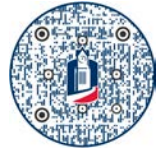


PRESIDENT'S INNOVATION FUND

Established in conjunction with President Rayfield's October 2023 investiture, the President's Innovation Fund equips Columbus State University leaders to implement these strategic priorities.



Tax-deductible gifts can be made online at columbusstate.edu/presidentsinnovationfund or by scanning the accompanying QR code.



Contributions by mail should be made out to the CSU Foundation, with "President's Innovation Fund" noted on the check, and mailed to: CSU Foundation, 4225 University Ave., Columbus, GA 31907



For questions or to discuss other giving methods to support the President's Innovation Fund, contact the Office of University Advancement at 706.507.8956.

"Now more than ever, students and their future employers require universities like ours to be on the leading edge of knowledge and experience —no matter the discipline. To me, that means being nimble, and by supporting this President's Innovation Fund, our alumni, friends and partners can invest in making Columbus State more responsive and adaptive to the needs of our students, faculty, staff and community."

— President Rayfield





"Community to the Core"

This painting by 2024 art education graduate Greysen Strumpler was one of five student art pieces designed to celebrate President Rayfield's October 2023 investiture. Strumpler described his work as focusing "on the community aspect of Columbus State. ... at the core of [what makes Columbus State great] is community and the love for one another that CSU fosters."



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