



# Strategic Plan 2023-28

**Create. Empower. Innovate.**



# From the President

Dear Panther Community,

The 2023-2028 Strategic Plan is a result of two years of engaging the campus community, the Cedar Valley, the State of Iowa, and beyond to gather feedback, refine metrics, and build capacity for strategic planning and organizational learning and change across campus. I thank all of you who engaged throughout this time - as we visioned, dreamed, and deliberated on the appropriate goals, values, and metrics.

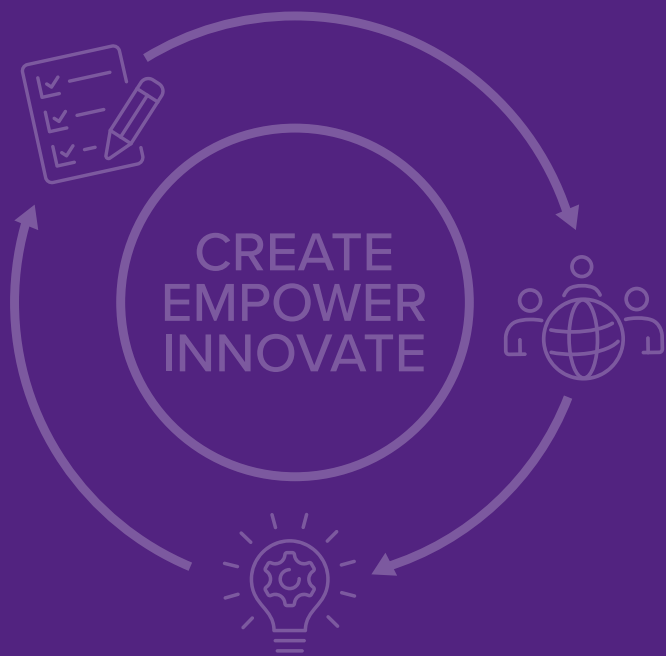
We need to be thinking and planning well into the future. The decisions we make today will impact UNI 30 years in the future and beyond. The 2023-28 Strategic Plan — Create. Empower. Innovate. — was established to begin achieving our future vision.

Institutionalizing strategic planning on campus and embedding it into our daily practices is new for us. I call upon each and every one of you to embrace the new plan and find your unique place within it. We can only achieve our shared vision if we continue to work together. What you do today, no matter how small, will impact our future.

I cannot be more proud of the extraordinary campus community that is UNI. We come together in times of need, uplift and support each other, create, empower, and innovate together. Our work remains guided by our commitment to excellence and student success, and this culture of commitment has been a hallmark of the University of Northern Iowa experience throughout our history. With the new 2023-2028 Strategic Plan, let us continue building the foundation for our future together.

**Panther Proud,**  
Mark A. Nook





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**“We are all faced with a series of great opportunities brilliantly disguised as insoluble problems.”**

— John W. Gardner

Facing an extremely competitive market for an increasingly diverse population of current and prospective learners, shifts in public and private finance to higher education, rapid innovation in every industry sector, lingering inequities that fall along demographic lines, and myriad other adaptive challenges of our time, the University of Northern Iowa, like other colleges and universities across the United States, must answer an essential question: How might we best adapt in the midst of profound change to higher education and society at large to assure our UNI meets the needs of the learners, industries, and communities we serve today and for generations to come?



# Building the Foundation for Our Future

Answering this question began five years ago with the launch of the UNI Future Visioning Initiative. Tasked with analyzing key forces of change to higher education, the UNI Future Visioning Workgroup—composed of students, faculty, staff, and community members—focused on five broad themes:

## **Creating Ethical Professionals, Occupations, and Industries:**

In what ways are job functions and industries shifting, given the rising presence of technological disruption; the creation and discovery of knowledge that leads to new industries; and the myriad ethical considerations that also help to shape the preparation of future leaders, scholars, and practitioners.

## **Innovating Solutions to Create an Inclusive Society:**

A rapid shift in racial/ethnic diversity in Iowa and throughout society is also met with lingering inequities that fall along demographic lines as it relates to higher education access and success. How might we re-envision our university's climate, policies, and standards of practice to best live our values and be a welcoming and inclusive place for all?

## **Empowering All Learners to Succeed through Dynamic and Accessible Programs:**

Taking responsibility for the barriers minoritized and underserved populations have long faced to pursue and attain a college degree, how might UNI establish new pathways and widen the pipeline to serve the diverse needs and characteristics of all learners?

## **Creating New Partnerships to Increase Revenue for UNI's Mission:**

With a financial outlook that suggests colleges and universities across the United States should become more reliant on an increasingly diverse portfolio of revenue streams, what partnerships might UNI forge that align with Our Values and advance the work of the university?

## **Effectively Utilizing Physical Space and Stewarding Resources:**

As the digital age takes hold and creates less reliance on physical facilities to be the destinations where learners gather to pursue their degrees, how might we best manage the physical needs of our campus while investing in new resources to serve a population increasingly reliant on remote and hybrid work and learning environments?



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*Create. Empower. Innovate. is UNI's vision for the great opportunities we will seize in the midst of a seemingly endless set of insoluble problems facing higher education and society.*

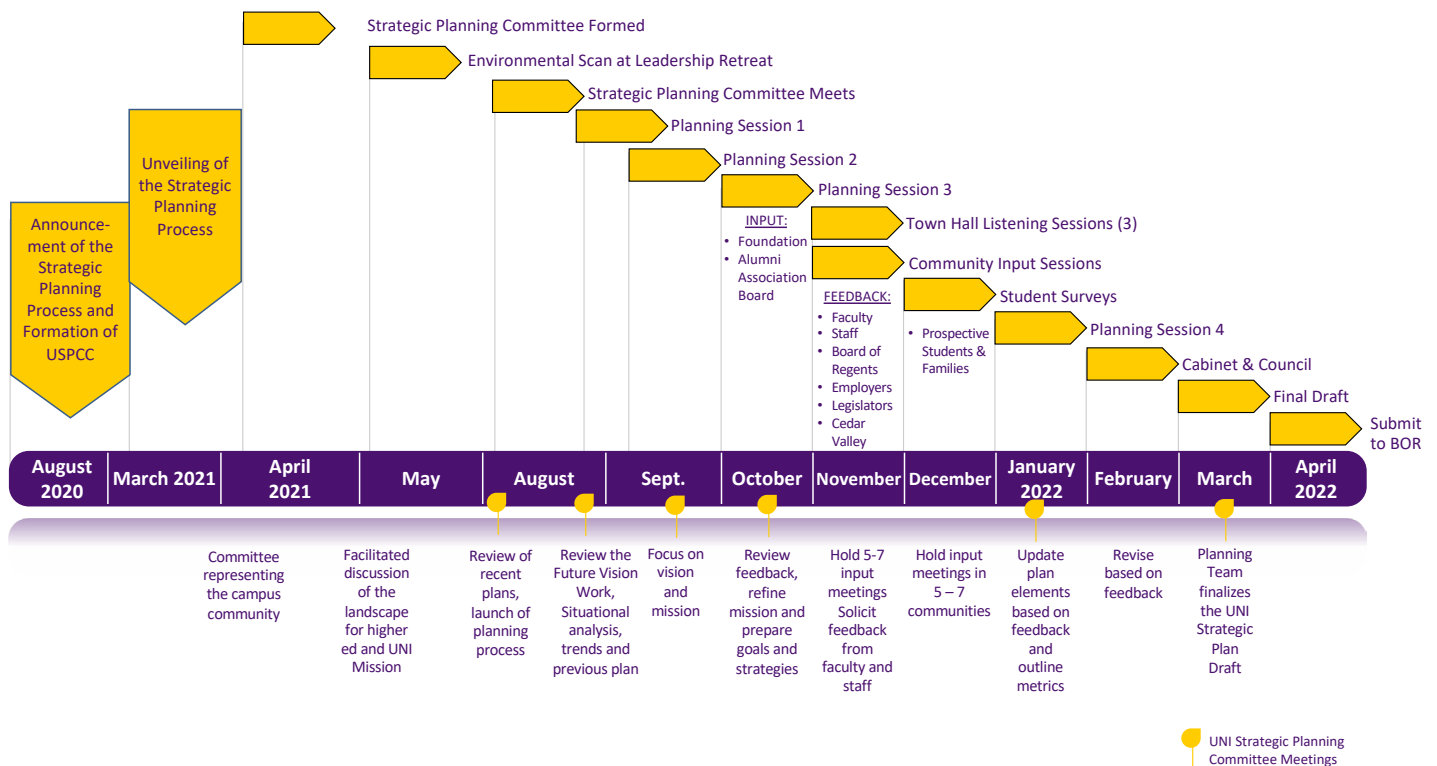
UNI's Future Visioning Workgroup facilitated a collaborative and inclusive process that resulted in two major guideposts for strategic planning. First, the Future Visioning Workgroup captured the fundamental purpose of the University of Northern Iowa: "To enrich lives, communities, and the world through our students, faculty, staff, and alumni." Second, the Future Visioning Workgroup created Our Future Vision, a framework for future strategic planning.

UNI's 2023-28 Strategic Plan — Create. Empower. Innovate. — was established to begin achieving Our Future Vision. Create. Empower. Innovate. is a bold and attainable plan that positions UNI to become a dynamic, equitable, and socially just destination for all learners and employees. The plan charts the next course for how UNI faculty, staff, and students will partner with industries and communities to enrich lives and overcome the seemingly insoluble problems of our time. Finally, Create. Empower. Innovate. envisions a set of actions to enhance resource stewardship to support UNI's strategic priorities.

Create. Empower. Innovate. is UNI's vision for the great opportunities we will seize in the midst of a seemingly endless set of insoluble problems facing higher education and society. As UNI pursues the goals, strategies, and tactics described throughout the plan, we will do this work the best way we know how—together.

# Developing Create. Empower. Innovate: A Collaborative and Inclusive Process

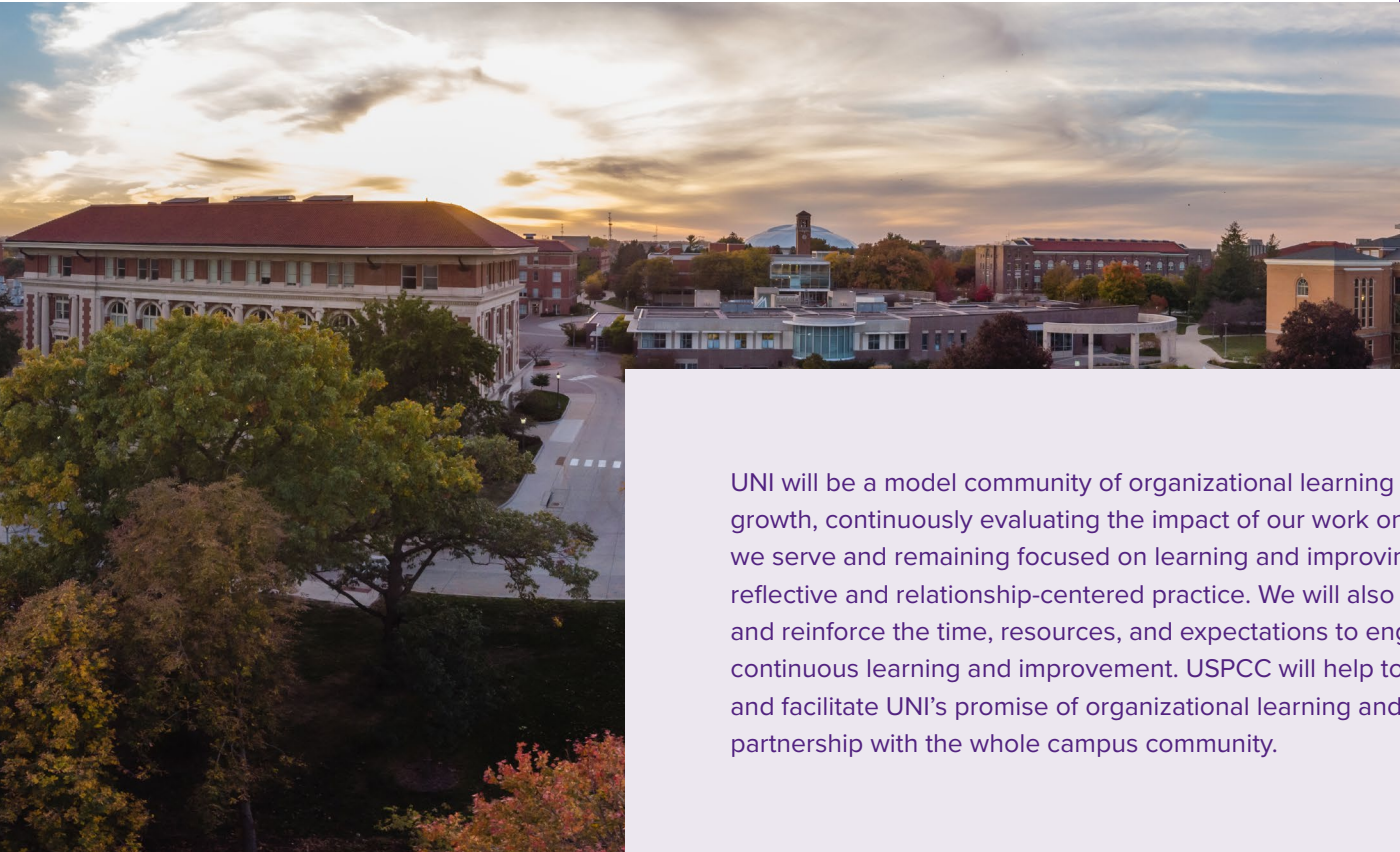
The UNI Strategic Planning Committee, led by Nicki Skaar and Drew Conrad, hosted a year-long process to engage the campus community, Cedar Valley, State of Iowa, and beyond in the work of preparing Create. Empower. Innovate. Through on-campus idea walls and a survey of faculty, staff, and students, community town halls throughout Iowa, and work sessions with Iowa community college leaders and the UNI Foundation and Alumni Boards, the UNI Strategic Planning Committee had thousands of voices to help shape the contours of the plan. A visual representation of the timeline and process is below.





# The USPCC: UNI's Process for Organizational Learning and Change

To assure UNI commits to the organizational learning that must occur to effectively create sustainable and high-impact changes outlined in Create. Empower. Innovate., the university founded the University Strategic Plan Coordinating Committee (USPCC) in 2021 to build capacity for strategic planning and organizational learning and change across campus. Established by Andrew Morse, Chief of Staff, and Kristin Moser, Assistant to the President for Institutional Effectiveness & Planning, the USPCC—composed of faculty, staff, administrators, students, and shared governance leaders across campus—is a standing committee responsible for ensuring university strategic plans remain living documents at the University of Northern Iowa. The USPCC is responsible for the following:



UNI will be a model community of organizational learning and growth, continuously evaluating the impact of our work on those we serve and remaining focused on learning and improving from reflective and relationship-centered practice. We will also establish and reinforce the time, resources, and expectations to engage in continuous learning and improvement. USPCC will help to guide and facilitate UNI's promise of organizational learning and change in partnership with the whole campus community.



- + Monitoring unit/department, college, division, and university-level progress in achieving the University's Strategic Plan Goals for each cycle, as well as progress toward achieving Our Future Vision;
- + Creating, refining, and implementing a Strategic Data Plan with staff support from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning; Information Technology Services, which will include the collection, use, and publication of unit/department, college, division, and university-level qualitative and quantitative information that showcases progress or areas of improvement in achieving University Strategic Plan Goals and Our Future Vision;
- + Coordinating with the time-designed University Strategic Planning Committee for each strategic planning cycle to ensure University Strategic Plan Goals, Strategies, and Metrics complement one another and work toward achieving Our Future Vision;
- + Consulting with university faculty, staff, administration, and students, as appropriate, to align department-, college-, and division-level strategic plans and their associated metrics and progress reports with the achievement of the 2023-2028 University Strategic Plan Goals and Our Future Vision;
- + Providing an ongoing set of workshops and professional development sessions designed to build organizational capacity for learning and change in fulfillment of strategic planning goals, strategies, and tactics; and
- + Providing broad recommendations to the President, University leaders, and other constituency groups, as appropriate, on action plans to address challenges and opportunities in achieving the University Strategic Plan Goals and Strategies, and Our Future Vision.

## Definitions

**Learner:** A newer way to describe a student. By adopting this term, we seek to be all encompassing for those we serve through our programs, resources, services, and activities, including those who come to campus, take a course online, or complete a certification or microcredential. And a learner shows the continuation of their experience...could be starting as a "traditional" 18 year old, or taking a class in their "golden" year.

**Geographically Place-Bound Learner:** Another way to describe a non-traditional student or someone who would not be "moving to campus" to take courses. This term in 2022 context could mean someone who lives across the state of Iowa can and can not move or someone who is working full time and unable to attend class in person and therefore needs to be an online or distance learner.

# University of Northern Iowa's 2023-28 Strategic Plan



## VISION

We serve the public good through equitable and inclusive excellence in teaching and learning, scholarship, and service.

## MISSION

The University of Northern Iowa creates, empowers, and innovates to enrich Iowa and beyond.

## VALUES

- + Academic Freedom: The freedom of inquiry and expression in teaching and learning, scholarship, and service.
- + Access: An inclusive educational environment that is supportive, equitable, and affordable.
- + Integrity: A commitment to accountability, responsibility, and the highest ethical standards are integrated into all university practices.
- + Collaboration: A commitment to work together to achieve our shared vision, mission and goals, and to develop and improve institutional policies, programs, and processes.
- + Community: A caring, safe, and diverse community characterized by appreciation, respect, and a sense of belonging.
- + Equity: The cultivation and nurturing of a diverse, just, and inclusive community, culture, and environment.
- + Empowerment: Active engagement in transformative, innovative and lifelong learning in service to the public good.
- + Excellence: A commitment to pursuing the highest levels of achievement in teaching and learning, scholarship and service.
- + Sustainability: A resilient community and campus that balances innovation and stewardship, is economically sound, environmentally responsible, and socially just.



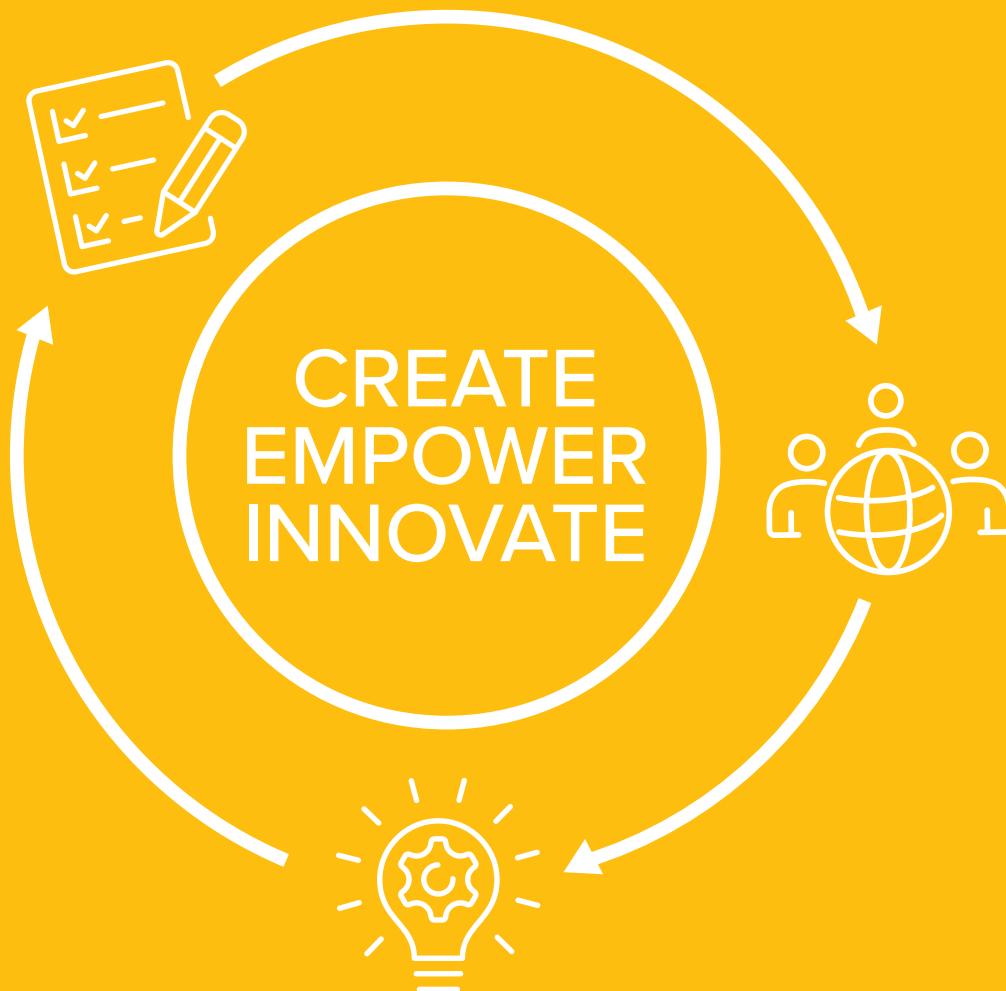
## GOAL 1

Create equitable, diverse, and inclusive opportunities.



## GOAL 2

Empower communities to shape their future.



## GOAL 3

Innovate for learner success.



## GOAL 4

Steward resources effectively.





## GOAL 1

# Create Equitable, Diverse, and Inclusive Opportunities.

*Create an equitable and inclusive living, learning, and working environment for all.*



**Strategy 1.1:** Increase diversity among faculty, staff, and learners by addressing barriers that lead to disparities in access and success.

**Strategy 1.2:** Improve university-wide standards of practice for the UNI community to ensure a welcoming and inclusive environment.

**Strategy 1.3:** Nurture a sense of belonging and inclusion through a culture of care where all can achieve their educational, professional and personal life aspirations.



## GOAL 1

# Goal 1 Metrics:

- + Eliminate the *institutional gap* in student success rates of traditionally marginalized students by 2028.
  - + Retention Rates
    - + Increase retention rates of first-time in college students of color (specifically American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian; Black or African American; Hispanic/Latinx; Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander; and two or more races) to the overall retention rate goal of 85%.
    - + Increase the retention rates of veteran students to the overall retention rate goal of 85%.
    - + Increase the retention rates of individuals registered with Student Accessibility Services to the overall retention rate goal of 85%.
  - + Graduation Rates
    - + Increase 4-year rate of first-time in college students of color (specifically American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian; Black or African American; Hispanic/Latinx; Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander; and two or more races) to the overall 4-year graduation rate goal of 50%.
    - + Increase 6-year rate of first-time in college students of color (specifically American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian; Black or African American; Hispanic/Latinx; Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander; and two or more races) to the overall 6-year graduation rate of 70%.
- + Increase the percentage of students of color (specifically American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian; Black or African American; Hispanic/Latinx; Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander; and two or more races) in the first-time in college entering class to 20% during the next 5 years.
- + Meet or exceed the racial/ethnic and sex/gender composition annual availability of employees by job category in areas that are historically underrepresented on our campus.
- + Achieve an average of 75% faculty/staff reporting that perceived university procedures, interactions and outcomes are fair in nature during each institutional climate survey cycle.
- + Achieve an average of 75% of students reporting that they feel a sense of belonging at the institution annually.
- + Evaluate and create a systematic mechanism to track and report faculty, staff and student self-reported gender identity to allow for additional analysis as needed.



## GOAL 2

# Empower Communities to Shape Their Future.

*Empower and engage learners and communities to confront challenges and seize opportunities that advance the public good.*

**Strategy 2.1:** Enhance faculty and staff engagement in the application of scholarship and service to address local, state, national, and global problems.

**Strategy 2.2:** Expand flexible community-based learning opportunities to enable learners to gain specialized skills and experiences and address community needs.

**Strategy 2.3:** Partner with communities to identify, address, and overcome societal barriers.

**Strategy 2.4:** Establish mutually beneficial linkages between the university and communities throughout the Cedar Valley and State of Iowa to enhance economic well-being and quality of life.

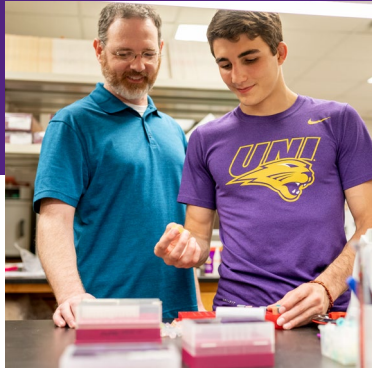




## GOAL 2

### Goal 2 Metrics:

- + Increase the number of external funding proposals 7.5% annually over five years.
- + Increase community and economic development client projects with businesses, organizations, and nonprofits across Iowa by 10% by 2028.
- + Launch and develop a plan to institutionalize a collective, campus-wide community engagement project by 2028.
- + Increase the number of service-learning designated courses approved by 100% (50 courses approved by 2028) assuring at least five courses in each college.
- + Retain the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement Status (application submitted by 2026).





## GOAL 3

# Innovate for Learner Success.

*Enhance access and support services for all learners through innovative and relevant academic curriculum and out-of-class experiences.*

**Strategy 3.1:** Develop inclusive opportunities for learners to earn relevant certifications, licenses, endorsements, and degrees for success in ever-changing industries and communities.

**Strategy 3.2:** Develop intentional, timely, and adaptive processes that enable faculty to implement undergraduate and graduate curricular innovations that will meet learner, industry, and community needs.

**Strategy 3.3:** Expand programs to serve geographically place-bound learners in Iowa and beyond.

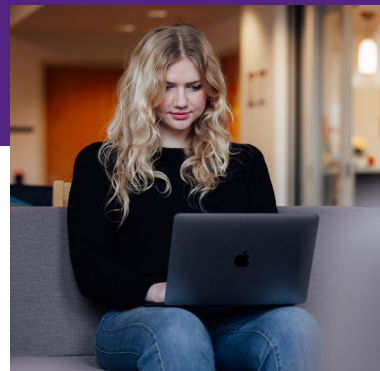
**Strategy 3.4:** Elevate high impact practices that focus on learner engagement, individualized education, and learner success and retention within courses and programs.



## GOAL 3

### Goal 3 Metrics:

- + Increase enrollment in online and distance programs by 5% annually over five years.
- + Create at least two new, fully online undergraduate degree completion programs in high-demand areas, guided by market research, by 2028.
- + Create at least two new, fully online graduate programs in high-demand areas, guided by market research, by 2028.
- + Increase **innovation** related to programs/courses of new or existing courses/programs over five years (e.g. new 4+1, new Master's MAIS, Purple Pathway).
  - + Review and simplify UNI's curriculum approval process.
  - + Grow program offerings and student enrollments in health related fields, data analytics, and engineering and technology to emphasize interdisciplinary scholarship and new degree pathways and programs for learners.
  - + Increase the number of targeted credentials and courses in high demand areas by 10% by 2028.
- + Create curricular designations for courses that have engaged learning or high impact practices within the system to encourage enrollment growth in those courses.







## GOAL 4

# Steward Resources Effectively.

*Align and effectively utilize University resources to improve equitable access, affordability, and quality.*



**Strategy 4.1:** Enhance financial stewardship and operational effectiveness through mission-centric and strategic prioritization of resources with a focus on enrollment, physical and operational needs, and human capital.

**Strategy 4.2:** Reimagine space allocation and workplace practices to emphasize interdisciplinary collaborations, community partnerships, and operational effectiveness.

**Strategy 4.3:** Establish strategic partnerships that align with Our Values and create new revenue streams to invest in Mission-critical priorities.



## GOAL 4

### Goal 4 Metrics:

- + Recognizing that enrollment growth is essential to effective resource stewardship, enhance existing enrollment targets by refining metrics related to key enrollment subgroups (e.g. undergraduate students, graduate students, new freshmen, new transfer students) as outlined in the 2023-28 strategic enrollment management plan for sustainable and predictable enrollment growth with targets in the fall of 2028 of 11,116.
- + Increase external funding amounts by 10% from a range of sources such as agencies, federal funding, industry partnerships, foundations and philanthropy by 2028.
- + Attain a 70% target utilization, based on 45 hours per week, and 70% seat fill for 110 classrooms and a 45% utilization, based on 45 hours per week, with 80% seat fill for 210 classrooms annually.
- + Increase the percentage of community partners sharing spaces and programming on the UNI campus by 20% by 2028.





