

2023
2027

FISK UNIVERSITY

EXCELLENCE AND BELONGING

STRATEGIC PLAN



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STRATEGIC PLAN
2023-2027

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FISK UNIVERSITY

ACHIEVING ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE SINCE 1866

Fisk University is a premier private liberal arts institution, located in Nashville, Tennessee. Founded in 1866, we are one of the oldest Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the nation.

The University has distinctive strengths in science, business, arts, and health which are all outgrowths of a strong liberal arts foundation. Our internationally renowned flagship programs in music, fine arts, and natural sciences are showcased by the acclaimed Fisk Jubilee Singers®, the unrivaled art collection, and our world-class research. The dual focus on liberal arts and science provides students with the holistic, 21st century education they need to lead successful, significant lives. The careful arrangement and rigor of the curriculum prepares students to be critical thinkers and problem solvers, with strong moral values and commitment. Social Justice is a hallmark of Fisk and is interwoven into the very fabric of our institution. We teach our students to be conscious of societal trends and impacts, to ensure they courageously advocate for themselves and those less fortunate.

The Fisk tradition of leadership and excellence is affirmed year after year by leading third party reviewers, as well as by the pool of talented applicants and the large percentage of alumni who complete graduate or professional degrees and become leaders and scholars in their fields. Fisk University is ranked #11 among historically Black universities, according to U.S. News and World Report, and is #1 in academic stewardship, a metric to measure and rank colleges based on how effectively they use their financial resources to produce academic impact, according to AcademicInfluence.com.

Our foremost commitment is to serve our students, as they are the reason Fisk University exists. For over 150 years, we have admitted students from around the world, and challenged them to shatter ceilings, be aspirational thinkers, and creators of change. We use the intimate setting of Fisk University to engulf our students in a highly intellectual research climate which inspires them to reach their full potential. Our interdisciplinary and diverse approach, reinforced through our superb faculty and staff, ensures students are exceedingly prepared for their career of choice. Fisk University students lead, make a difference, and create generational change.

The Fisk University tradition of leadership and excellence is intentional, resulting from a disciplined process of planning and executing strategies to ensure the University continues to deliver a superior educational experience. Fisk University embraces a bright future via a new five-year Strategic Plan for 2023 - 2027.

FISK UNIVERSITY

FISK UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

At Fisk University, comprehensive strategic planning involves the input and participation of a cross-section of the entire campus community—both internal stakeholders (faculty, administration, staff, students, alumni, board members) and external stakeholders (community members, employers). The University utilizes a comprehensive and broad-based process for assessing, measuring, and tracking the institution's academic quality and strategic planning.

MISSION

Fisk University produces graduates from diverse backgrounds with the integrity and intellect required for substantive contributions to society. Our curriculum is grounded in the liberal arts. Our faculty and administrators emphasize the discovery and advancement of knowledge through research in the natural and social sciences, business, and the humanities. We are committed to the success of scholars and leaders with global perspective.

VISION

Fisk University will be recognized as a premier liberal arts college that prepares reflective practitioners, pioneering leaders, and thriving graduates dedicated to the public good.



FISK UNIVERSITY

CORE VALUES

The core values of Fisk University have remained consistent over time. Represented by the acronym D.E.T.A.I.L.S., the values reflect our overall ethical and moral engagement as members of the Fisk community. We, the Fisk Family, have historically sought to internalize these principles and apply them in our work and every aspect of our lives.

Diversity

We believe that our individual differences are a collective strength. We will support and encourage a culture of opinion which aids us in building a collective wisdom that results in more powerful and relevant solutions to our challenges.

Excellence

We believe that excellence is the result of a lifelong pursuit of the highest standards. At Fisk, our collective quest is to earn merit through commitment and rigorous scholarship, cultural literacy, and high ethical standards.

Teamwork

We believe that individuals achieve high standards when supported by the collective work of others. We reinforce this value at our University by constantly creating opportunities to collaborate both inside and outside of traditional alliances, our University, our proximate community, and throughout the world.

Accountability

We believe that we must hold ourselves to the highest standard when we make commitments. Consistent and measurable follow-through is essential for individual and team progress. We are forthright about our successes and shortcomings and we will position Fisk for continued achievement.

Integrity

We believe that it is our responsibility to prepare young people to be stewards of an ever-changing world. That means that we must model behavior grounded in truthfulness and compassion.

Leadership

We believe that leaders are obligated to empower those around them. We are consistent, transparent, and accountable. Through our words and behaviors, we encourage others to exhibit these same attributes.

Service

We believe that service is our ability to give the gift of knowledge to humanity. As we serve, we become transformed and so do our communities.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In addition to Fisk University's mission, vision, and core values, these guiding principles have informed the strategic planning process. The principles are key to effectively articulating the University's qualities and attributes that set it apart from all other institutions of higher education and address the diverse needs of 21st century students.

Transformational Student Experience

Fisk University encompasses a student-centered culture. Earning a Fisk University degree is the culmination of the unique Fisk experience which includes strong adherence to shared fundamental values. Fisk University graduates become future leaders who impact the world.

Academic Excellence In Liberal Arts And Sciences

The value of the liberal arts education transcends economic and civic benefits. Since their formation in the ancient world, the liberal arts have provided a holistic and humanistic viewpoint of the world. The intellectual foundation of Fisk University is grounded in our liberal arts and science curriculum and essential to strengthening the University into the 21st century.

Fiscal Responsibility

Operating an institution requires an optimized financial model with many complex and interwoven components. Fiscal sustainability is at the heart of ensuring the ongoing stability and growth of the University.

Diversity And Social Justice

Fisk University has enjoyed its status historically at the forefront of diversity and social justice issues. The University and our students, however, are mindful of new challenges and informed participation in a diverse, multi-cultural society. Fisk University will continue to position itself as a leader in the national debate and action on diversity and social justice issues.

Corporate And Community Partnerships

Fisk University does not exist within a vacuum of higher education. Community and corporate relationships are essential for establishing a higher quality, 21st century education. Whether it is service in the community or with partnerships community organizations or corporate entities, new and existing relationships will be formed and strengthened.

Continuous Improvement

The experience of students, their families, faculty, staff, alumni, and community stakeholders with Fisk University directly shapes how they view Fisk. The University is committed to maximizing overall effectiveness of our interactions with all constituents by strengthening organizational operations and enhancing resource development.

Globalization

Fisk University celebrates its outstanding global footprint. Quality students from throughout the world have earned Fisk University degrees. Ideas, cultures, and people from around the globe will define how we all live and what jobs will be available in the 21st century. Global perspectives and understanding of different cultures will therefore be essential for Fisk graduates as they position themselves as societal leaders.

STRATEGIC GOALS 2023 – 2027

Elevate the Fisk Brand

Fisk University has a rich history and a vibrant present. We must ensure that our constituents, e.g., prospective students, potential donors, potential faculty members, alumni, are exposed to these experiences.

- Effectuate a comprehensive branding and marketing plan to raise the national profile of Fisk University and its impact on society.
- Utilize owned, social, and earned media to communicate outcomes of a Fisk education.
- Enhance reputation for excellence by continuously showcasing notable achievements associated with the University including research endeavors, current student accomplishments, athletic teams, alumni success and impact on society.
- Promote the student experience at Fisk University to attract and retain students.

Cultivate Leaders and Scholars

The student experience is at the center of our strategy. It must be rich inside and outside the classroom. That requires superior faculty, relevant curricula, diverse extra-curricular activities and students ready to seize the opportunities Fisk provides.

- Increase student enrollment, retention, and graduation rates, including through the provision of supportive services to freshman, first generation, transfer, international and other targeted populations of enrolled students.
- Provide a curriculum that prepares graduates for leadership and success.
- Cement and enhance Fisk University's reputation as a leader in STEM disciplines, psychology, and social justice.
- Develop academic programs that build on Fisk University's status as a leader in new, cutting-edge disciplines and disciplines that are increasingly in high demand.
- Obtain accredited status in additional disciplines.
- Expand graduate studies, including gaining approval to offer the Ph.D. in appropriate disciplines.
- Offer relevant, highly competitive academic programs and undergraduate research opportunities.
- Attract and retain superior faculty.
- Prioritize faculty and staff development and strengthen exposure to emerging educational policies, technologies, and best practices.
- Support and increase research opportunities among the faculty.
- Collaborate with community representatives, alumni, and other stakeholders for learning opportunities both on, and beyond, the campus.
- Strategically align resources to support institutional priorities, particularly student engagement and academic success.
- Develop and enhance advising and mentoring programs to assist in student success.
- Strengthen career development and placement opportunities for students to enhance their readiness to meet in-demand skills.
- Develop co-curricular opportunities that enhance students' career competitiveness.

Provide a Transformative Student Experience

Fisk University's vibrant campus life helps students develop leadership skills, character, and discipline. As part of our commitment to cultivating leaders and scholars, we give students a place to grow as individuals and learn to become accountable for their actions. Campus life at Fisk University is a great way for students to explore their interests, develop leadership and social skills, make life-long friends, have fun, and make the most of their Fisk experience.

- Enhance student social and recreational spaces and learning environments that meet student needs.
- Create environments that enhance diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in both academic and extracurricular activities covering
- Increase participation of students in university, civic, service, leadership, and stewardship activities.
- Build on recent successes in providing creative and innovative extracurricular activities, including in the areas of athletics, music, and STEM.
- Support the potential success, and promote the wellness, of the whole student via mental health counseling practices that reflect current research and contribute to personal development.

Enhance Fiscal Strength

Financial strength is necessary to achieve any of the goals we set. Execution of this strategy requires investment. Investment requires capital.

- Accelerate improvement in the University's financial position by maximizing diverse revenue streams and controlling expenses.
- Optimize student enrollment in alignment with the University's capacity.
- Compete successfully for government contracts and increase sponsored research and project funding.
- Create sustainable long-term growth via effective capital campaigns focused on building and improving relationships with the high wealth community in Nashville and throughout the nation.
- Develop partnerships that connect America's corporate wealth to the University in ways that increase both unrestricted and permanent endowments.
- Optimize strategic partnerships to leverage incremental resources, assets, and opportunities.

Modernize Facilities and Technology Infrastructure

Modern facilities in which Fisk students study and live are required to attract and retain top students.

- Enhance technology campus wide to support digital transformation.
- Assess and upgrade physical plant and technology infrastructure to maximize data security and campus security.
- Assess, upgrade, retire and / or build student residential and educational facilities, as needed, to deliver a quality student experience.

Strengthen Operational Processes

Fisk's support services must meet the demands of the population on campus and outside Fisk's campus. The University's decision making must reflect its values and must be effective and accountable.

- Maintain an ongoing focus on improving the efficacy and efficiency of operational processes.
- Ensure operational processes are cost-effective and appropriately resourced.
- Employ a strategic, stratified approach to enrollment management that goes beyond the traditional boundaries of admissions.
- Promulgate a culture of excellence in customer service via the optimization of processes and engagement that extend across all areas of the University's operations.
- Refocus on data-driven decision making, planning, and operational execution.
- Operationalize objectives, strategies, and tactics aligned with each strategic goal.
- Establish metrics and accountability for action steps and regularly report progress.
- Engage in a continuous planning process that utilizes reported metrics to determine needed adjustments.
- Accommodate students by increasing online offerings and automating admissions, financial operations, and registration.





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