2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

A Private Nonprofit Educational System Serving the Public Good
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Since the creation of the National University System, we continue to build on the foundation that National University laid in 1971 when it began its pioneering work serving adult learners in new and creative formats. Today, NUS is comprised of nonprofit universities and education related affiliates that have proven successful for over 45 years. System affiliates include:

- National University: The founding institution, which continues to provide innovative educational solutions to adults and military veterans
- City University of Seattle: Emphasizes master’s and doctoral degrees, while establishing choice through competency programs
- John F. Kennedy University: Focuses on community and social justice, largely through differentiated graduate programs in psychology and law
- The Division of Pre-College Programs: Caters to the success of the next generation of K-12 learners through the National University Academy and the National University Virtual High School
- WestMed College: Promotes education and training for high-demand careers in healthcare

NUS 2020 is our roadmap to the future as we uphold a standard and commitment to be the “best in class” provider of educational degrees to adult learners nationwide; a brand synonymous with Accessibility, Quality Learning, and Completion. We will deliver an exceptional experience to every learner, focus on student success, and ensure programs and degrees are market-relevant and aligned with workforce needs.

As the population of adult learners continues to grow alongside technological advancement, the demand for new educational models and high-choice pathways in higher education also will grow. We embrace this changing landscape and will continue to draw on our proud history as we embark on mission-driven innovation to serve our students and communities.

It is with these thoughts in mind that I proudly share NUS 2020, our first system-level strategic plan. Through NUS 2020, we will become a model provider of educational solutions to adult learners nationwide, with the student at the center of all we do. We look forward to serving you!

Dr. Michael R. Cunningham, Chancellor, National University System
The scans provide context for the entire strategic plan:

- **Environmental scan** – Examines the external landscape and identifies trends that present both opportunities and threats

- **Organizational scan** – Assesses internal strengths and weaknesses; incorporates financial and organizational analysis; and includes critical feedback from faculty and staff

**Environmental Scan Findings**

- **Consolidations and Closures**
  - Institutional closures and consolidations across sectors of higher education are expected to continue for those institutions that have not adapted to environmental changes. The for-profit sector will continue to experience regulatory pressure. Both of these trends represent an opportunity for institutions that are responsive to student, community, and workforce needs.

- **Innovation in Education**
  - An increasing number of students are enrolling in online or hybrid (online and on-campus) course formats, demonstrating receptivity to more innovative course delivery options.

- **Projected Growth**
  - The largest projected growth in most states is among the adult population, and increasingly among minorities. The demand for college-educated workers also is growing, which has led to national and state-level goals to increase the number of college graduates in a variety of fields.

- **Cost of Education**
  - Competitive forces, state and federal policy makers’ focus on affordability, and the unbundling of higher-education services exert pressure on institutions to reduce tuition and operate more efficiently.
More than 75% of faculty and staff believe NUS should remain focused on adult learners.

Adult students increasingly demand high choice: options of online, hybrid, face-to-face, or other innovative delivery systems.

Top-ranked NUS values are: quality, access, market-relevant programs, and affordability.

Over 67% of faculty and staff see the system expanding throughout the United States.

Organizational Scan Findings

In addition to an assessment of NUS institutions, responses from an NUS faculty and staff survey provided key insights for the development of NUS 2020 strategies.
2020 Vision

Our Vision in Focus:

Create cross-institutional pathways, delivery options, and degree choices; provide “Any Time, Any Place, Any Pace” access to education

A national network of physical campuses, complemented by a dominant online presence

Integration of next-generation learning technologies into all programs and courses

Sophisticated application of big data and predictive analytics to improve the student experience

Transforming our students means reimagining education and empowering our institutions. NUS envisions a new age of precision learning conveyed through the application of innovative technologies, a national physical and online distribution network, and a diversified, market-driven menu of programmatic offerings. Meeting the students where they are, and helping them accomplish their educational goals, requires a personal and unwavering commitment to their success.

“To be an educational system whose graduates are transformed and positively contribute to society.”
The NUS vision is manifested through inspirational leadership, transformational human resource models, and the system-wide scaling of innovation, best practices, and key support processes.

Our accelerated course formats, innovative hybrid learning models, and Competency-Based Education (CBE) programs demonstrate progressive offerings that maximize student choice.

As a nonprofit organization, we are ambassadors devoted to our local communities, partnering to provide resources and support to local businesses. Community engagement enables us to understand the needs of local employers, and allows us to better meet the demands of our students and business partners.

SANFORD EDUCATION INITIATIVES

T. Denny Sanford’s visions of a “positive societal change” begin with National University’s Sanford programs. The Sanford Education Center takes a three-pronged approach to achieve its goal:

Sanford Harmony – A program that provides teachers with a set of tools to develop stronger social connections among students, “changing the world one classroom at a time”

Sanford Inspire – A movement with a consistent approach and philosophy designed to make the world a better place by inspiring teachers to be transformational

Sanford Institute of Philanthropy – Designed to help nonprofit leaders and private sector executives to be effective fundraisers

To date, T. Denny Sanford has contributed more than $40 million to National University and committed to a legacy gift to support the University and the Sanford programs.
Our mission is to deliver an exceptional student experience by providing superior services, meaningful learning and market relevant programs.

Our superior services, include personalized student advising and academic planning; efficient delivery of support services; abundant and accessible student learning and career resources; and rewarding alumni engagement and support.

NUS translates meaningful learning through success-oriented courses that balance theory and practice. NUS faculty are practitioners in their fields with expertise and experience they pass on to students. Student performance is elevated through constructive feedback and expectations that mirror real-life challenges in the workplace.

Our market-relevant programs ensure graduates can readily contribute to their fields. Opportunities in top labor markets such as education, cyber-security, psychology, and health sciences are accessible through our menu of program offerings.

As we move toward serving the next generation of learners and endeavor to provide an exceptional experience, we continue to explore and pilot new alternatives and approaches to supporting students, developing high-quality curriculum, and transforming teaching and learning.

NUS cultivates innovation through its selective Innovation Grant initiative. The initiative provides funds to NUS faculty and staff who have proposed creative and bold plans to help NUS achieve its mission. Recently funded proposals range from technological solutions to strengthen student services and retention of academic content, to the reconfiguration of classroom design to optimize learning and interaction.
The National University System 2020 Strategic Plan

QUALITY
We are dedicated to providing an exceptional student experience, from initial contact to degree completion and alumni engagement. This high standard of quality is passed on to our students through personalized student services and our goal to exemplify academic excellence.

INNOVATION
We invest in the cultivation of innovation internally and remain abreast of the latest developments that impact our students. Investing in discovery allows us to identify contemporary services, products, processes, and business models that may better serve our students. We remain nimble to industry disruptions and respond to new demands.

COLLABORATION
As a system of institutions, we rely on our internal talent and external partners to create cooperative work relationships, enabling us to develop the best services, learning solutions, and academic pathways for our students. We are a culture that values shared best practices and encourages “next-generation” thinking.

DIVERSITY
Diversity brings a new perspective to every industry and is especially important as we prepare our students for the future workplace. We embrace differences in race, gender, age, ability, and geography into our academic fabric and appreciate them as drivers of change. Welcoming diversity keeps us relevant, adaptable, and sustainable.

ACCESS
Our NUS mission drives us to reach beyond current limitations to offer flexible, convenient, and affordable courses and programs for any qualified and motivated lifelong learner. We believe that education should be available any time, any place, and at any pace.
LEADING STRATEGIC FOCUS
The environmental and organizational scans affirm a student-centric focus on lifelong learners. NUS will focus its geographic expansion on strategic metropolitan areas throughout the country, where the adult population and the demand for college-educated workers are growing and intersect with current or developing NUS affiliate programmatic strengths.

We are committed to a High Tech, High Touch, High Choice student value model:

• **High Touch**: Customized to the needs of lifelong learners
• **High Tech**: Innovation woven into everything we do
• **High Choice**: Any time, Any place, Any pace

National University continues its leadership role serving adults among postsecondary providers in California and Nevada. As NU's progressive delivery model has helped it become a leader in such fields as education and business, the university also is committed to investing in the future. NU is launching a unique effort to develop “Proof Points,” which will engage internal and external partners in groundbreaking research, exploration, and innovation in areas such as machine learning, micro-credentialing, competency-based approaches to learning, and infusing trending technologies into the entire student experience.
NUS AFFILIATE DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGY

Each affiliate institution strategically contributes to our mission in a unique way. Institutional goals and strategies align with the larger system and promote synergies across affiliates.

**National University** – Geographic and online expansion of scalable, market-relevant undergraduate and graduate programs

**City University of Seattle** – Differentiation through focused programmatic investment and increased distinction in doctoral, competency-based, and international programs

**John F. Kennedy University** – Differentiation through focused programmatic investment and increased distinction in psychology and law disciplines with a cultural emphasis on community and public service

**Division of Pre-College Programs** – Expansion of National University Academy and National University Virtual High School programs and modality offerings to meet changing needs of next-generation learners

**West Med College** – Focused and targeted healthcare programs that align with regional needs

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*City University of Seattle is an inaugural member institution of the Competency-Based Education Network (CBEN) and proactively involved in the transformation of competency-based programs.*

*CityU offers two graduate competency-based programs in teaching and one undergraduate business program in partnership with The Boeing Company in Seattle.*
NUS PRIORITIES

NUS priorities link the mission and vision to the Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan consists of goals and metrics at the system and affiliate levels, and ensures accountability and fidelity to our mission and vision.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
Continuous quality improvement in teaching, learning, and student outcomes
- Yearly improvement of student success, retention, and graduation rates
- Regional and national accreditation approvals and acknowledgements
- Investment in faculty development, expertise, and engagement
- Measurable career advancement after graduation and low loan default rates

SUSTAINABILITY
Effective and efficient stewardship of resources
- Transfer savings to students through decreased overhead costs
- Serve students responsibly and in accordance with industry best practices
- Operate responsibly as a community partner and contributor to our local economies
- Transparently represent our intentions and purpose

GROWTH
Geographic and programmatic expansion
- Expand geographic footprint while reinforcing with complementary online programs
- Build pathways between and among NUS institutions
- Match NUS program offerings with the market needs through research, value, and employer expectations
- Attract a diverse student base by offering customized course modalities to suit individual needs
“Learning should take place any time, any place, and at any pace.”

TECHNOLOGY
Implementation of innovations that facilitate effective communication, optimal service, and student success
- Integration of administrative systems to scale and expedite student services and assessment
- Business intelligence to personalize student interactions
- Develop user-friendly learning platforms that enhance online learning and encourage engagement
- Manage IT systems security and risk management

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Enhancement of professional knowledge, competence, skill, and effectiveness
- Effective talent management; align talent and functions
- Talent learning and development programs
- Performance and rewards management
- Promote career pathways within and across affiliates

PARTNERSHIP AND COMMUNITY
Internal and external service for the public good
- Contribute to local communities through rewarding partnerships
- Celebrate alumni through meaningful engagement and lifelong support
- Provide skilled graduates for local businesses
- Sponsor volunteer time for staff