

FORWARD >>> >>> **TOGETHER**

LED BY PURPOSE. DRIVEN BY PEOPLE.



2025–28 STRATEGIC PLAN



Dear NKU campus community,

Our new strategic plan, **Forward Together**, builds upon our unified vision to advance student success, empower our employees and strengthen our region through collaboration and innovation ... and our core values speak to that vision as we foster a community of belonging where individuals are valued, supported and empowered to thrive. Thank you for your work, your ideas and your collective innovation as we fine tune this strategy and continue the student-centered and regionally engaged work of our great university.

With gratitude,

Cady Short-Thompson, Ph.D.
President, Northern Kentucky University



OUR STUDENTS

Expand and enhance student access, success and career readiness to ensure equitable outcomes and promote the economic and social mobility of all learners.

Enhance access to higher education.

- Simplify admissions, enrollment, and transfer processes and experiences to reduce barriers for students.
- Improve affordability through increased external scholarship funding, wraparound supports and other resources.
- Expand partnerships with P-12 schools, higher education institutions, nonprofits and local employers to increase educational opportunities.

Strengthen student success and a supportive university culture.

- Provide holistic support through NKU's Coordinated Care model using tools and technology to make data-informed decisions and impact student success through timely communications and personalized interventions.
- Foster a dynamic and supportive university culture of warm welcome, engagement and belonging.
- Identify and address opportunities to positively impact the academic experience through strategic course offerings and flexible learning pathways.

Prepare students for career and lifelong success.

- Provide support and infrastructure to strengthen engagement and mentoring opportunities between students and university employees.
- Build experiential and cocurricular learning, and career planning into all majors to enhance students' career readiness and lifelong learning.
- Provide students with curricular and cocurricular opportunities to cultivate the essential workforce skills identified in the Kentucky Graduate Profile.



OUR COLLEAGUES

Create a supportive and sustainable work environment that attracts and retains talent, promotes employee well-being and enhances institutional success.

Enhance employee morale, well-being and professional growth.

- Provide a more competitive salary and benefits package, along with greater access to professional development and career advancement opportunities.
- Cultivate programs and benefits that focus on improving employee morale and a culture of wellbeing.
- Develop workplace policies that effectively support institutional goals while acknowledging and accommodating the diverse responsibilities of employees.

Strengthen long-term institutional success.

- Improve resource management, financial sustainability and operational efficiency with a focus on shared governance, accountability and clarity.
- Modernize systems and processes to improve operational efficiency and effectiveness.




OUR COMMUNITY

Advance economic, social and civic vitality through community partnerships and regional engagement.

Bolster workforce readiness and regional growth.

- Strengthen alignment of academic programs and regional needs through employer and community collaboration.
- Prepare students to meet evolving workforce demands, fostering talent that drives regional economic growth and enhances social mobility.
- Expand career credential and upskilling opportunities for current professionals and foster innovation through public-private partnerships.

Drive community engagement and impact.

- Lead civic literacy and leadership development to strengthen community connections and foster active citizenship and stewardship.
 - Strengthen P-12 collaborations to support educator development and postsecondary matriculation in the region.
 - Advance research, creative activity and other initiatives that address regional needs, promote innovation, enhance peoples' lives and drive prosperity.
 - Deepen alumni engagement to create stronger connections with students, employees and the region.
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KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

OUR STUDENTS

Enhance access to higher education.

- Undergraduate Enrollment
- Graduate and Law Enrollment
- Second-Year Retention Rate
- Average Debt at Graduation

Promote student success and campus culture.

- Year-to-Year Persistence Rate
- Undergraduate Graduation Rate (FTF 6-year)
- Undergraduate Degrees Conferred
- Graduate and Law Degrees Conferred
- Quality of Campus Interactions & Supportive Environment

Prepare students for career and lifelong success.

- High Impact Practices Participation
- Post-Grad Outcomes—Employment & Median Earnings

OUR COLLEAGUES

Enhance employee morale, well-being and professional growth.

- Voluntary Turnover Rate
- Job Satisfaction & Employee Well-being

Strengthen long-term institutional success.

- Cash and Investments
- Unrestricted and Auxiliary Net Surplus
- Net Tuition Revenue
- Personnel Expenses v. Net Tuition Revenue Alignment

OUR COMMUNITY

Bolster workforce readiness and regional growth.

- Internship/Co-Op Participation Rate
- Graduates Employed in Region

Drive community engagement and impact.

- Voter Registration and Participation
- Community Engaged Course Enrollment Rate
- P-12 Engagement
- Dual Credit Enrollment