

FDU Will Soar Strategic Action Plan 2023 – 2027



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— Message from the President —



Dear FDU Family and Friends,

Higher education is facing great challenges ahead, but the environment is also filled with opportunities for those willing to adapt. Fairleigh Dickinson University is poised and ready for this brave new world. Our institution has long enjoyed a legacy of innovation and responsiveness to real-world concerns and changing students' needs, and we are prepared to build on this record of success.

Our institution has embarked on a pivotal period of strategic planning, and we are in the midst of making critical and necessary decisions to continue our legacy of providing every student with innovative programs, high-value resources and a living-and-learning environment that offers transformational opportunities and prepares them to move upwards and thrive in whatever career they choose to pursue.

There is an urgent need today for colleges and universities to transform themselves. The challenges include changing demographics, fewer students applying to college, increased scrutiny of all programs and a declining perception of the value of a college degree (even though the evidence continues to reinforce that value). Above all, we have seen significant changes in the way students learn, interact and live.

In response, FDU's focus and guiding light for today, tomorrow and long into the future is "Students First." In the plan outlined here, and in all efforts, our decisions will be based on how we can foster the greatest impact on the student experience. We need to reimagine FDU

to truly meet learners where they are. We need to emphasize distinctive and immersive learning opportunities. We need to become more flexible, nimble and adaptable. This is the goal in our strategic action plan titled "FDU Will Soar." The plan features both short- and long-term initiatives that will strengthen programs, generate resources and ensure the sustainability of this extraordinary institution. We are confident and excited for the road ahead. The core educational values of Fairleigh Dickinson University — personal, global and transformational — provide a solid foundation for continued impact and development. And, our talented and devoted community members offer a level of instruction and inspiration second to none.

As an alumnus of FDU, I know personally how transformative this institution can be, and I am committed to helping us continue to profoundly influence more lives for generations to come. Knowing FDU so well, I believe strongly that the strategic goals outlined in the plan are the right priorities for us at this time and will enable us to best direct our efforts to make the biggest difference possible for our students — and for the future of the institution. We are thankful for all those who contributed ideas and insights that helped inform this plan. And even those ideas that are not mentioned directly in the plan have been useful and important in helping us to plant other seeds that indeed may bear fruit at some point.

And now the real work begins. The University is moving aggressively on these goals, starting with initial efforts to improve enrollment, retention and fund-raising, to reduce inefficiencies and continue to better define and differentiate programs while also moving toward longer-term goals such as new partnerships that will benefit our students.

The challenges for all colleges and universities across the nation indeed are significant, and we urgently need to generate resources to support the many needs of students today, to strengthen key programs and to better support our students, faculty and staff. I am very confident that with the support of our community and friends, we will be very successful. We look forward to sharing updates on these goals and related initiatives that will help enhance our great University and provide a prosperous path to tomorrow.

Michael J. Avaltroni, Ph.D.
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "MA", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.



Strategic Focus

FDU distinctively recognizes, welcomes and supports students when, where and how they are ready to learn; propels them forward; and provides the education and credentials that matter to them and their potential or current employers.

Strategic Goals

Goal 1: Recruit

Make FDU an institution of choice within the three key areas of student populations (pre-college pipelines, traditional-path students and lifelong learners) using targeted recruitment, differentiable products and services and a robust set of offerings and support.

Objective 1a: Pivot away from an overreliance on traditional undergraduate tuition revenue to a focus on growing enrollment in areas responsive to market demands, changing demographics and student dynamics and needs.

Objective 1b: Reimagine undergraduate education to achieve a more cost-efficient curriculum that allows students to pursue high-demand career opportunities in less time within a lower-cost institutional structure — including program consolidation, reduced operating overhead through campus consolidation and elimination or reduction of some associated expenses to support a smaller campus footprint and fewer programs.

Objective 1c: Enhance graduate programming by developing a graduate center and an increased value proposition through accelerated programming.

Strategy 1c (1): Create the FDU Graduate Center, featuring flexible options for students to pursue graduate education and degrees online, on campus or through blended delivery models — while reducing facility and overhead requirements.

Strategy 1c (2): Deploy a comprehensive 4+1 combined degree strategy and other pipeline pathways to increase enrollment in graduate programs.

Strategy 1c (3): Re-evaluate FDU's position in online learning and particularly consider enhancements/changes to the online graduate program offerings.

Strategy 1c (4): Develop a comprehensive domestic and international student marketing and recruitment plan, leveraging centralized branding, paid search and targeted messaging and marketing.

Objective 1d: Enhance programming and leverage opportunities for growth and distinction at FDU's Vancouver Campus.

Strategy 1d (1): Add new programs to the Vancouver portfolio (including health care administration, industrial-organizational psychology and business administration, with others to follow).

Strategy 1d (2): Develop a comprehensive recruitment and placement strategy for international students seeking to learn at the Vancouver Campus and gain meaningful post-graduation employment in Canada, leading to pathways to Canadian citizenship.

Objective 1e: Create a comprehensive set of pre-college pipeline programs that provide new opportunities to increase the number of students in our undergraduate programs.

Strategy 1e (1): Establish a direct-entry pipeline program at flagship high schools (that now offer substantial numbers of courses through our Middle College program) to provide advanced standing for students who attend FDU as undergraduates, leading to time and cost savings.

Strategy 1e (2): Launch a marketing strategy for pre-college program students, including early admit, dual enroll and other value-enhancement opportunities that will increase the number of students in undergraduate programs.

Strategy 1e (3): Leverage community college partnerships and create a strategic marketing and pricing campaign so students can enter FDU from community college with scholarship aid and a three-year pathway to a combined bachelor's/master's degree.



Objective 1f: Enhance programming for adult learners, including degree completion programs, graduate degree offerings, certificates, professional development, executive education and other credentialing.

Strategy 1f (1): Create competency-based, highly focused and facile learning opportunities that acknowledge and reward prior learning, feature customizable programming and offer degree completion, certificates, badges, credentials and flexible learning options inside the community, at the workplace or anywhere the learner chooses.

Strategy 1f (2): Target students who have some college but no degree for degree completion at FDU, with a combined degree option that allows students to complete undergraduate degrees with an option to simultaneously begin their graduate study.

Goal 2. Retain

Advance, promote and celebrate the success of all students through comprehensive advising, customized student support services and support for mental health, well-being and belonging.

Objective 2a: Create a best-in-class transformational experience for students that is focused on meeting students' needs and recognized for excellence in academic programming, student outcomes and increased student persistence, retention and graduation rates.

Strategy 2a (1): Place a chief student experience officer and CARES team on each New Jersey campus to support student retention (leading to increased tuition revenue), more students choosing to live on campus (leading to higher auxiliary revenue), and increased graduation rates.

Strategy 2a (2): Create a centralized student advising system, with professional advisers supporting and guiding students through course selection, cooperative learning opportunities, career counseling and navigation of academic challenges.

Strategy 2a (3): Invest in significant upgrades to living-learning communities and residence halls — enhancing

student programming, improving housing facilities, increasing students' options and capturing greater numbers of residential students.

Objective 2b: Offer a personalized student experience focused on belonging, resilience, mental health and wellness and support for diverse learners and empathy — creating a distinctive opportunity for students and families seeking a supportive college environment that responds to their challenges and meets them where they are.

Strategy 2b (1): Provide customized social and emotional support, including high-quality, accessible mental health services and evidence-based programs to support students from underrepresented and minority populations.

Strategy 2b (2): Implement a group of fully grant-funded resilience training programs for students, focused within a newly created Center for Student Resilience (underwritten by a philanthropic gift and supported by state funds).

Strategy 2b (3): Ensure that students experience the living and learning environments on all FDU's campuses as welcoming, inclusive and embracing diversity.

Objective 2c: Reallocate resources and draw upon other sources to fund offices, programs and positions required to stabilize retention and moderate or stop declines in enrollment on the New Jersey campuses.

Goal 3: Graduate

Provide students the skills, tools and network to successfully graduate, find pathways to graduate programs (either within or outside FDU) and/or open doors to opportunity for successful entry into or advancement within the workforce.

Objective 3a: Embed professional career counselors in each academic vertical area to increase student career placement, internship opportunities and cooperative learning.



Goal 4: Partner

Establish robust partnerships with corporations, peer institutions and other third parties that provide opportunities for shared services, economies of scale and meaningful collaborations with corporations, industries and other entities.

Objective 4a: Create an FDU Health brand that aligns existing programs, explores new opportunities for strategic growth and establishes strategic partnerships with regional health systems to enhance programming, build pipelines for new students and create opportunities for reputational enhancement.

Strategy 4a (1): Develop a mutually advantageous partnership with an academic health system to leverage opportunities, including post-graduate employment, clinical site placement and fiscal support.

Strategy 4a (2): Create new programs (certificate, undergraduate and graduate) to respond to increasing market demand for allied-health professionals.

Strategy 4a (3): Create partnerships with high schools, community colleges and health care organizations and systems to elevate the stature and prominence of FDU Health as a respected and successful institutional brand.

Objective 4b: Leverage current or future partnerships (with corporate and government entities) to create a meaningful workforce development plan through which employees of those entities gain opportunities for degree and non-degree educational options with employer reimbursement.

Strategy 4b (1): Hire a government and community affairs liaison to build relationships and advocate for local, state and federal funding support and partnerships.

Strategy 4b (2): Engage corporate and organizational partners in strategic partnerships to offer members of their workforce educational opportunities that lead to

professional development, upward mobility, employee satisfaction and long-term retention.

Objective 4c: Identify, explore, and implement strategic relationships and partnerships with other institutions of higher education in the region to support FDU's long-term sustainability.

Strategy 4c (1): Explore the viability and practicality of establishing a higher education consortium or "system" within the state of New Jersey for increased purchasing and leveraging power through greater size and the strength of scale.

Goal 5: Give

Create "FDU Students First," a fundraising campaign with a strategic focus on ways to provide support for students in every aspect across their academic and social journey.

Objective 5a: Aggressively pursue a philanthropic campaign to generate short-term support for immediate needs, including scholarships, a student hardship fund and other pressing operational needs.

Objective 5b: Secure a continuing flow of philanthropic dollars to enable the University to take full advantage of its opportunities, invest in innovations and implement a long-term facilities improvement master plan.

Goal 6: Position

Develop a comprehensive presence of robust communication to tell the story of FDU and its achievements to internal stakeholders, alumni, parents and families, partners and the external world at large.

Objective 6a: Develop and implement a full-scale communications, marketing and messaging plan specifically targeted to each of FDU's key audiences.





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