

VISION 2040

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UNIVERSITY MISSION

Southeastern Oklahoma State University provides an environment of academic excellence that enables students to reach their highest potential. By having personal access to excellent teaching, challenging academic programs, and extracurricular experiences, students will develop skills and habits that promote values for career preparation, responsible citizenship, and lifelong learning.

INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE AND PREAMBLE

Known as the "Campus of a Thousand Magnolias," Southeastern Oklahoma State University is a

mature institution of 114 years old. By Oklahoma Statute, the University primarily serves the ten-county region of Atoka, Bryan, Carter, Choctaw, Johnson, Latimer, Love, Marshall, McCurtain, and Pushmataha counties. About one-third of all Southeastern students are from this geographic region, and a firm majority of more than 60% of the student body are from Oklahoma.

With the main campus built on a former peach orchard in Durant and a branch campus in Idabel, the physical and digital footprint of the institution has grown steadily since being founded



in 1909. Classes are offered across the region in Oklahoma City, McAlester, Ardmore, and Denison TX, and through a vast and growing online curriculum. Today approximately 70% of all enrolled students are considered "online only," as the University has embraced digital course delivery and marketing for such programs in a significant manner since 2016. More than 80% of Southeastern students receive some form of Financial Aid.

Designated as a Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institution (NASNTI) by the U.S. Department of Education, a full 26.9% of Southeastern students are of Native American descent, and the University is located on the 10,864 Sq. Mi. reservation of the sovereign Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma tribe.

The specialty program of Occupational Safety and Health remains the undergraduate major with the highest total enrollment. The most popular major among new freshmen, however, is General Business, followed by Psychology and Aviation - indicating some flux in which programs are most sought by students in recent years. Among graduate students, the most sought degree is the MBA, comprising more than 30% of all graduate enrollment at the University. Across all graduate degrees offered, the departments of Education and Behavioral Sciences have the highest enrollment overall. In a drastic shift over the past decade, the University now confers more master's degrees than undergraduate degrees, with graduate programs producing about 70% of all degrees conferred.



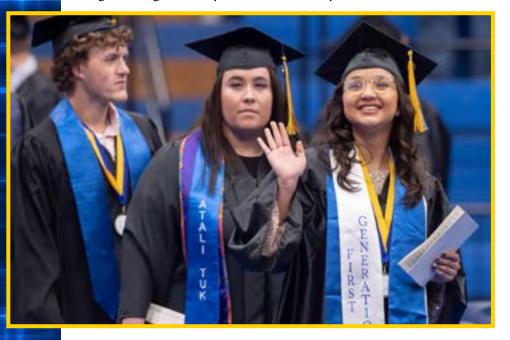
Despite nationwide and statewide trends of declining enrollment, Southeastern has set institutional records for enrollment in recent years, and the Fall 2022 class of 5,376 was the highest the University has ever recorded.

This Strategic Plan was primarily developed by a Strategic Planning Committee designated by the University President in August of 2022, comprising a cross-section of administrators, faculty, staff, and students. That committee collected institutional data to aid in the development of this document, including historical budget information, retention and graduation rates, labor force data, DFW rates, residual unpaid student balances, student-reported class withdrawal rationales, prior accreditation reports, and historical student survey data. To supplement this data collection, the Strategic Planning Committee additionally held multiple town-hall format information collection opportunities, with one such event focusing on faculty and staff, one focusing on the campus student population, and two online events to collect information from distance learning students. Finally, an online form and drop box was broadcasted to all enrolled students and employees at the University for input in this plan.

The principal observations of the Strategic Planning Committee primarily fall in three broad categories:

1. Enrollment Trends Have Changed

There has been tremendous recent increase in enrollment numbers; the format of enrollment has shifted from face-to-face to digital format; and the graduate student population at the University has grown significantly over the last ten years. For the future success of the University, we must



recognize that the primary driver of these changes is the national trend of digital curricular delivery and adjust our strategies accordingly. Simultaneously, the University must remain good stewards of in-person enrollment in a Higher Education environment that is increasingly multi-modal. It is notable that even though 24% of University students still take face-to-face classes, only a much smaller group, 7%, take only face-to-face classes. It is similarly notable that the University's population in res-

idence halls has dropped from 639 in 2018 to only 424 in 2022, possibly reflecting a combination of unpredictable COVID-19 consequences and the growth of online/digital learning.

The University must maintain academic rigor in this increasingly complex landscape, while maintaining healthy levels of enrollment. It must meet ever-evolving student expectations, accreditation expectations, and provide faculty and staff the necessary tools and supportive workplace environment to sustain excellence.



2. Students and Employees Face Financial Challenges

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation in the United States has been rising faster than any time since 1982, and inflation has increased by about a full 20% just over the past five years, with the steepest increase happening in just the past two years. The consequence of inflation is that it decreases the buying power of each dollar, which effectively increases the cost of living when wages do not keep pace.

Students are additionally affected by the general decrease in State of Oklahoma funding of Higher Education over the past decade and a half. The institution's budget is comprised of tuition and fees,

in a higher portion than ever before, with only 20% of the overall budget coming from state appropriations today compared to approximately 50% in 2007. The cost of childcare and housing has risen over recent years as well, causing even further affordability crises for students, faculty, and staff. More students than ever before are employed while pursuing their education, and there are nearly as many part-time enrolled students as there are full-time enrolled students. This, by necessity, means that the University will need a renewed focus on ensuring student persistence and retention by making the University "student-ready" and



focusing on advising, mentarship, mental-health initiatives, and fostering a sense of student belonging.

The University must make substantial efforts to ameliorate these financial stressors in order to remain competitive in a Higher Education landscape where there is more intense competition among institutions on the cost of tuition, salary levels, benefits packages, access to childcare services, and other factors that are fundamentally about the cost of living and the cost of an education. Our recruitment and employment strategies must reflect a nuanced understanding, and substantial responsiveness to, this emerging reality. As a mature University, Southeastern is a resourceful institution, with a tremendous ability to adjust to shifting circumstances and statewide challenges.

3. Physical and Digital Infrastructure of the University Must Continue to Modernize

The University has made great strides in recent years toward the development of a Campus Master Plan for the future physical landscape of the University grounds. This is a starting point, but not an end point, as continued attention must be paid to the full suite of tools and facilities the institution utilizes to further its academic mission. Especially as the University increasingly grows and relies on online instruction, the software, hardware, and technical human resources needed to maintain excellence will be of the highest importance, and these interests must be balanced against the needs of the physical campus infrastructure.



PLANNING PROCESS

In June of 2022 Southeastern Oklahoma State University President, Dr. Thomas W. Newsom formed a committee to develop a new strategic plan for the university. Dr. Newsom issued the following charge to the committee:

> "The strategic planning committee is charged with developing the next strategic plan for Southeastern Oklahoma State University. The plan should anticipate the overall strategic direction of the University for the next decade. A draft of the plan should be completed by Spring 2023 to be shared with campus constituencies. The strategic plan should address the challenges and opportunities facing Southeastern through the five strategic pillars to inform the plan. 1. Academic Excellence, 2. Affordability, 3. Sustainability, 4. Campus Facilities and Infrastructure, and 5. Student Ready University."



The five strategic pillars, that have now become Focus Areas, were developed during a planning session of the University Executive Team in order to give the committee a foundation for the plan. These focus points were informed by the guiding principles and vision that Dr. Newsom and the Executive Team had used to navigate the university through the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Strategic Planning Committee, Co-Chaired by Dr. Michael Davis and Dr. Jeremy Blackwood, worked tirelessly through the remainder of the Fall 2022 semester and completed the plan in the Spring of 2023.

Vision 2040 looks towards a bright future at Southeastern and confirm the university's mission and committment

to provide an environment of academic excellence that enables students to reach their highest potential.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Dr. Michael Davis Co-Chair
- Dr. Jeremy Blackwood Co Chair
 Ms. Katie Webb
- Mr. Austin Harman
- · Mrs. Christala Smith
- Mr. Michael Stout

- Dr. Katheryn Shannon
- Mr. O.L. Kelly
- Dr. Sondra Petty
- Ms. Jennifer Maple
- Dr. Stewart Mayers
- Dr. Kitty Campbell
- Dr. Matthew Sparacio
- Jake Popowski, Student



ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE



STRATEGY I

Elevate Teaching and Learning Through Ongoing Faculty Development and Academic Mentorship of Students

Tactic: Scholars Day and Other Scholarly Mentorship

- To promote a culture of academic success, encourage mentorship and academic opportunity, and highlight undergraduate and graduate research, Southeastern will implement an annual forum for the presentation of research by students, faculty, and staff. This "Scholar's Day" event will result in a Proceedings publication, giving students an opportunity to publish research.
- In light of the university's new Ronald E.
 McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement
 Program grant from the U.S. Department
 of Education, the University will intentionally prepare cohorts of low income,
 first-generation, and minority college
 students for graduate study and research
 by providing undergraduate sophomores
 through seniors assigned faculty mentors.

Tactic: Faculty Development

- In the interest of developing the teaching skills and research acumen of Southeastern's faculty, the University will pursue the implementation of a Faculty Development Program in which faculty members may receive training on pedagogical/andragogical approaches, teaching strategies, technological developments, and other information benefitting the professoriate.
- In the interest of supporting all employees in their professional development, and to further centralize staff development needs, Southeastern's current "Southeastern Oklahoma Leadership Development" (SOLD) program shall be utilized to provide more direct value to institutional

employees by providing cross-training for marketable skills in Higher Education.

• Southeastern's current pilot program, Mutual Mentoring, for junior faculty working toward promotion and tenure will be expanded and organized as a permanent institute, for the aid of all faculty in developing their teaching skills, research acumen, and proficiency at service to the University.



3. Aviation

Tactic: Department Chair Training and Mentoring

• The University will further develop efforts at preparing, training, and mentoring academic Department Chairs to better ensure high quality departmental leadership.

Tactic: Adjunct Utilization Rate

• Southeastern currently has one of the lowest adjunct instructor utilization rates among similarly situated Oklahoma institutions and, to preserve and maintain programmatic academic quality, shall seek to maintain this status. Adjunct instructors will be appropriately trained and mentored in a planned and coordinated manner.

STRATEGY II

Expand Academic Programs to include Allied Health, Hospitality and Technology

Tactic: Allied Health

- Southeastern will expand its curricular offerings and academic programming to include areas of Allied Health suitable for the region and the University's capacity. The University will also continue to develop the existing partnerships for growth in Nursing and Allied Health Programs at Southeastern.
- Implement the following new academic programs: Nursing (BN-RSN), Respiratory Health (RN-BSN), Nursing Leadership (MSN), Nurse Education (MSN), Health Sciences (MS), Health Administration (MS), and Community Health (MS).

Tactic: Hospitality

• The University will create emphasis areas for existing academic programs in Business for success in the Hospitality and Restaurant industry in collaboration with the Career Manage-



- ment Center. Southeastern will expand course offerings and emphasis areas for the MBA and BBA in the John Massey School of Business in the areas of Hospitality and Hospitality Management.
- The University will seek to develop a twoyear college partner for degrees, such as Culinary Arts, that create a pathway to the BBA and MBA in hospitality management.



Tactic: Technology

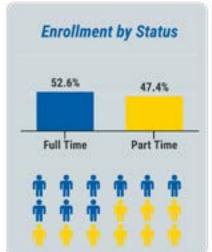
• The University will create emphasis areas for existing academic programs in Technology and Computer Science (BSEET) in order to reach the growing demands due to the increase computer chip production as a result of the growing industry in the Texoma region.

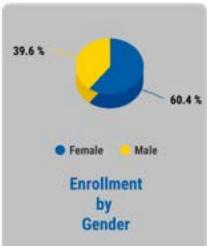
STRATEGY III

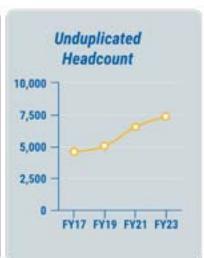
Enhance Relationship Building and Collaboration

Tactic: Provide Opportunities for Campus Leaders and All Constituencies to Collaborate in University Governance

- Continue and enhance opportunities for all University constituencies to participate in decision-making.
- Publicize opportunities for, achievements resulting from, and collaboration in the University decision-making process.











AFFORDABILITY



STRATEGY I

Expand Revenue from Non-Tuition Sources Through Enhanced Grant Writing and Fundraising

Tactic: Continue to Expand Scholarship Opportunities Through Fundraising

Academic scholarships should continue to expand in size and availability, and a concerted
effort should be made to promote fewer restrictions on eligibility requirements so that a
broader array of students may apply. The University should explore methods for "automatic"
scholarshipping, outside of the Foundation Application pathway, by automatically awarding
certain scholarships on the basis of need or merit. This will simplify expectations and can be
used as a marketing device.

Tactic: Full-Time Grant Writer

• Southeastern has reached the institutional size warranting the utilization of a full-time grant



writer position to expand the University's capacity for seeking and obtaining external funds and to assist other University professionals who seek grants.

Tactic: Capital Campaign

• In light of the recent re-development of a Campus Master Plan, a Presidential-Level Capital Campaign will be commenced to raise funds for the principal elements of this campuswide improvement concept.

Tactic: Giving Day or Giving Week

Based on the success of other institutions hosting a designated "giving day" for online fundraising, Southeastern will implement an Annual "Giving Day" or similar event for alumni and donors of all kinds to

contribute to institutional programs on a simple webform. Various departments, organizations, and entities on campus can be organized to help intentionally solicit donations to the University surrounding this event.



Tactic: Estate Giving Program

• To promote the estate designation of Southeastern as a beneficiary to alumni and donor estates, a marketing plan will be developed and implemented to instruct key partners on the methods of bequeathing gifts to the University through a will or trust.

STRATEGY II

Reduce Ancillary Costs to Students Through a Textbook Affordability Project

Tactic: Textbook Affordability

• To promote the selection of low-cost, open-source, and otherwise affordable textbooks and supplementary course material options, the University will seek initiatives that lower the cost of

assigned of course materials on a per class basis.

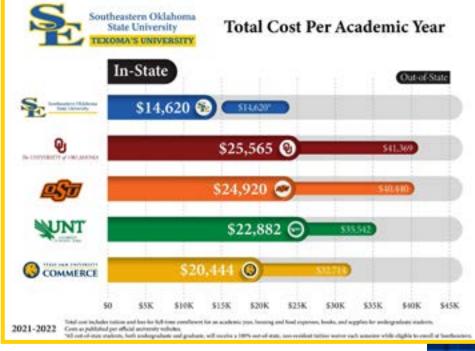
Tactic: Textbook Access

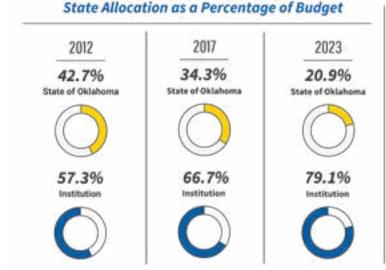
Work to obtain additional funding to expand the current John
Massey textbook program at the
Henry G. Bennett Library to
include copies of textbooks beyond general education courses,
particularly for academic programs with the most expensive
textbooks.

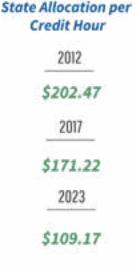
Tactic: Open Education Resource Development

 Academic Affairs will implement a sufficient reward program for instructors who develop their

own research-based, curriculum-appropriate course materials in lieu of a textbook for purchase by enrolled students, as well as incentives for using open education resources created by others.









SUSTAINABILITY



STRATEGY I

Become a Choice Employer and Promote Employee Recruitment and Retention by Expanding Work/Life Benefits

Tactic: Expand Available Funding for Faculty and Staff Development and Travel

• In acknowledgement that a workforce is better prepared for new and evolving challenges through networking, training, and development, the University will seek to expand opportunities for employees to access developmental training, conferences, and events.

Tactic: Full-Time Remote Faculty and Staff

• To supplement faculty and staff benefits and to make a career at Southeastern more attractive, the University will expand the number of full-time tenure-track and instructor positions that have the option of remote-work on a case-by-case basis for the instruction of online classes. Such expansion will include the exploration of a technology bank or technology stipend for such digital devices as needed to complete remote-work. Additionally, staff opportunities for full-time remote work shall be expanded and the process for such remote-work requests simplified.



Tactic: Staff and Faculty Housing

 As part of the campus facilities master plan, Southeastern will strive to develop a more consistent opportunity for faculty and staff to live on campus.

Tactic: Greater Flexibility for Part-Time Telework

• Expand the availability of opportunities for part-time telework.



STRATEGY II

Become a Choice Employer by Ensuring Salary Competitiveness

Tactic: Achieve Compensation Enhancements Through Shared Governance

• The University will work toward a compensation structure that meets the needs of the university, grounded in a philosophy that faculty and staff compensation supports the mission of Southeastern Oklahoma State University to provide an environment of academic excellence that enables students to reach their highest potential. The structure should be one that supports competitive compensation and that ensures that salaries are not effectively reduced over time as a result of inflation.

Tactic: Increase Faculty and Staff Longevity

• Southeastern will strive to reduce turnover and promote retention of both junior and senior faculty and staff through the exploration of iniatives such as a longevity bonus.

Tactic: Enhance Access to Work Study Campus Jobs

• Require completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid for all prospective student employees to facilitate eligibility determination for Work Study status, thereby increasing the number of students who receive Work Study assistance during their college career.

STRATEGY III

Promote Student and Employee Retention Through a Sustainable and Welcoming

Campus Environment

Tactic: Improve and Sustain a Welcoming Campus Workplace Climate

- Southeastern will make a concerted effort to ensure that employees receive proper training for their roles at the University in addition to cross-training so that lateral and advancement opportunities are paved.
- Continue to ensure that policies are appropriately operationalized and periodically reviewed for currency, compliance, and consistency with the University mission.



Tactic: Promote a Multicultural and Welcoming Campus

- Southeastern will expand the charge of the Diversity Task Force to develop a formal multicultural campus plan with a goal of a staff position to lead these efforts. This plan shall contemplate the recruitment and retention of a student body and a workforce that is demographically diverse across all classes while also reflective of our region and nation.
- Expand offerings for women's sports to further improve equity in athletic programming.



Tactic: Broader Vacancy Advertising

• In light of recent difficulties in recruiting of a strong pool of applicants for vacant faculty positions, the University will increase the resources to expand advertising of employment vacancies to a broader academic audience.

STRATEGY IV

Grow Enrollment by Enhancing the Attractive Qualities of the University

Tactic: High Quality Online Instruction

- The University will strive to improve engagement between learners and instructors.
- Southeastern will require all full-time instructors for online courses to complete specific training in course development and instruction in the digital learning environment.
- Further invest resources into Distance Education Library Services proportional to the growth of Southeastern's suite of online educational programming.
- Implement systematic course-reviews to ensure high quality web-based course content and layout consistent with best practices and Quality Matters criteria.

Tactic: Recruit the North Texas and Arkansas Areas More Intentionally

• Southeastern is in a unique geographic position, capable of tapping into the massive population growth of the northern DFW Metroplex. By implementing and investing in the "TEXOMA'S UNIVERSITY" branding and marketing campaign, Southeastern will more heavily target grad-

uating seniors in this region.

- Invest further resources into recruiting students in the Arkansas region through membership in Ark-ACRAO (Arkansas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers).
- Opportunities shall be explored to engage regionally located high-school students with opportunities to be acquainted with Southeastern faculty in the classroom. Whether this engagement be through recruitment visits, co-teaching partnerships with local teachers, guest lectures, or other methods - connecting with the local



high school population may yield increased enrollment returns.

- Increase brand awareness in targeted advertising.
- Incrementally implement further digital features in the University's portfolio of recruitment-related software in order to more comprehensively compete with the digital recruitment tactics of other institutions (Individualized texting, etc.).

Tactic: Grow the International Student Population

• The University will be more aggressive in the intentional recruitment and retention of international students who can thrive in the on-campus environment at Southeastern.



Tactic: Connectedness for Online Students

• Southeastern will seek to increase opportunities for connectedness and a sense of belonging between online students and the brick-and-mortar University by hosting digital spaces, both in class and out of class, and being more intentional about information and events marketed to online students. The University will be more intentional about creating alternate and hybrid methods of attending events.

Tactic: Course-Sharing

• In the interest of ensuring course availability, Southeastern will explore course sharing agreements with other institutions.

Tactic: Continue to Develop Partnerships

- Southeastern should continue to pursue partnerships with community colleges, including pipeline and credit-transferability agreements to ensure a streamlined pathway to the University for transfer students.
- Southeastern should continue to build strong relationships with regionally located businesses, the Durant community and surrounding area, the Chamber of Commerce, and other entities with whom planned cooperation results in mutually beneficial outcomes.

Tactic: Micro-Credentials and Badging

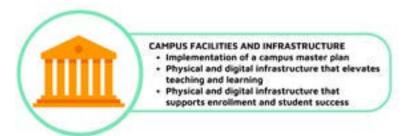
• To meet the employer demand for micro-credentials, Southeastern will grow and expand current micro-credential and badging opportunities in areas of the greatest workforce needs for the region.







CAMPUS FACILITES AND INFRASTRUCTURE



STRATEGY I

Implement the Campus Master Plan

Tactic: Master Plan Philosophy

• The Master Plan is a road map for implementing a more vibrant in-person experience at South-

eastern Oklahoma State University to include academic, non-academic, public and athletic spaces.



Tactic: Develop Priorities Based on the Master Plan

- In order to better implement the Master Plan, the University will explore which items on that plan are immediately actionable, and which items on the plan can have fundraising begin in short order.
- Review and implement energy cost-saving opportunities across campus facilities.
- Explore opportunities to enhance physical accessibility of campus facilities, especially as new construction or renovations are pursued in accordance with the master plan.

Tactic: More Creativity Spaces and General-Purpose Spaces

- Continue to improve learning and living environments within residential facilities.
- Provide an environment that supports the physical, social, and mental health of employees and students.
- Work towards ensuring that student organizations, particularly those of affinity groups, have on campus meeting spaces that are guaranteed and easily accessible to build community. Additionally, further centralization of the room reservation



process would result in greater utilization of these campus spaces.

STRATEGY II

Emphasis on Physical Accessibility

Tactic: Campuswide ADA Accessibility Audit

Southeastern will evaluate its accessible pathways, facilities, parking, signage, and other physical access elements through a comprehensive audit and remediation plan for physical accessibility.



Tactic: Expanded Technology Access

To appropriately accommodate student schedules, Southeastern will evaluate the need for expanded technology access.

STRATEGY III

Enhance Campuswide Building Access Security

Tactic: Implement Building Access Control Systems

- In order to facilitate campus wide lockdown, better secure academic and employment spaces, and to create access logs for security purposes, Southeastern will explore campuswide options for an access control system for building access for students and employees in designated buildings across the University campus and branch campus.
- Explore further methods for locking classroom doors in lockdown scenarios.



because it's a community-based school that's all about education and helping all their students. And the campus has a family environment that I'm truly thankful for."

Katrell Blakely

"I plan to teach either middle school and/or high school band. When I have a few years of teaching experience under my belt, I will pursue my master's and doctorate to further my education in Instrumental Conducting Studies. After earning those degrees and many years of teaching, I hope to to be the Director of Bands at a college."

"I would tell a new student to not be afraid to try it all and find out what they are truly passionate about. I decided to go in a different direction than I had originally planned, all because I took a class I knew nothing about and fell in love with it. You never know what will truly make your heart happy until you try it. After graduation, I plan to attend graduate school at Southeastern to complete my Master in Technology. Beyond that,

I will pursue a PhD and eventually start research of my own."

Delanie Cooper Colbert, Oklahoma





STUDENT READY UNIVERSITY



STRATEGY I

Emphasis on Digital Accessibility

Tactic: Accessibility a Priority

• As online courses continue to gain popularity and enrollment, Southeastern will make digital and web accessibility a priority - implementing faculty training and software as needed to go



beyond compliance and toward intentional inclusion. This includes exploration of supplying direct hardware and software resources for students upon enrollment.

Tactic: Expansion of Technology Support

 In acknowledgement of the University's expanded online academic offerings, Southeastern will evaluate expansion of IT support.

STRATEGY II

Promote Student Retention and Persistence Through Relationship Building and Personal Growth

Tactic: Expand Advising

Create a Concierge model of academic and student advising per the latest HLC Quality Initiative Plan.

Tactic: Mentorship

• In acknowledgement that every professional employee at the University is an educator, South-eastern will formalize a mentorship program whereby each student is designated, in addition to an academic advisor, a mentor for broader inspiration, ideas, and encouragement across their academic life at the University. This may be a staff member or a faculty member trained to offer advice on matters such as financial aid, career success, and academic encouragement for persistence and retention.



Tactic: Expand Tutoring

- Southeastern will expand tutoring and tutoring-related resources by 50% over the next ten years and seek or obtain tutor accreditation for all paid University tutors who remain in the role for more than a year.
- Help bolster student athlete retention and success through further investment in athlete tutoring programming, academic support, and other athlete retention initiatives.

Tactic: Enhance Vibrancy of Student Organizations

- Create more opportunities for development of leadership skills and roles.
- Increase student representation across campus within committees, student organizations, and provide organizational leadership with better preparedness for their roles.
- Ensure that organizational participation provides meaningful experiences connected to the institutional mission.
- Where appropriate, connect student organizations with faculty, and seek to enhance the connectedness between students and faculty through more involved organizational advisership.
- Increase opportunities for online students to be involved in campus-connected student organizations.

STRATEGY III

Seek to Enhance Services and Opportunities for Mental Health Needs

Tactic: Evaluate the Mental Health Services Landscape

- Southeastern will intentionally explore possibilities for increasing personnel in student-serving mental health counseling capacities.
- Southeastern will continue to engage with local service providers to supplement existing personnel in these roles.





