



SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

2021–2026 Tactical Plan

The Tactical Planning Task Force is pleased to present to the Southwestern Community the 2021-2026 Tactical Plan. The Tactical Plan reflects the Mission, Core Values, and most visionary expression of Southwestern University's institutional priorities: offering the highest level of a liberal arts education for our students; embracing equity, inclusion, and diversity; and envisioning a superb living and learning environment.

BACKGROUND

The Tactical Planning Task Force (TPTF) was formed in September 2020 and is Co-Chaired by President Laura Skandera Trombley and Strategic Planning Committee Chair Bob Bednar. The Task Force includes members of the Strategic Planning Committee as well as representatives from the faculty, staff, administration, students, trustees, and alumni. The members of the Task Force are listed below:

CO-CHAIRS:

Laura Skandera Trombley, President

Bob Bednar, Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC)
and Humanities Faculty Representative to SPC

MEMBERS AND ROLES:

Sherry Adrian, Social Sciences Faculty Representative to SPC (Fall 2020)

Gage Bausman, Student Government Association Student Representative to SPC (Fall 2020)

Kalli Caldwell, Student Government Association Student Representative to SPC (Spring 2021)

Craig Erwin, Vice President for Finance & Administration (ex officio)

Lois Ferrari, Fine Arts Faculty Representative to SPC

Alisa Gaunder, Dean of the Faculty (ex officio)

Kellie Henderson, Coalition for Diversity & Social Justice Student Representative

Alison Marr, Natural Sciences Representative to SPC

Kendall Richards, Associate Dean of the Faculty (ex officio; voice, no vote)

Heath Roberie, Financial Planning & Analysis Manager (ex officio; voice, no vote)

Andy Ross, Social Sciences Faculty Representative to SPC (Spring 2021)

Paul Secord, Vice President for University Relations (ex officio)

Jennifer Smull, Academic Support Staff Representative to SPC

Ronnye Vargas Stidvent, Board of Trustees Representative

Derek Timourian, Student Life Staff Representative to SPC

Natasha Williams, Director of Institutional Research & Effectiveness (ex officio; voice, no vote)

Miguel Zorrilla, Alumni Council Representative

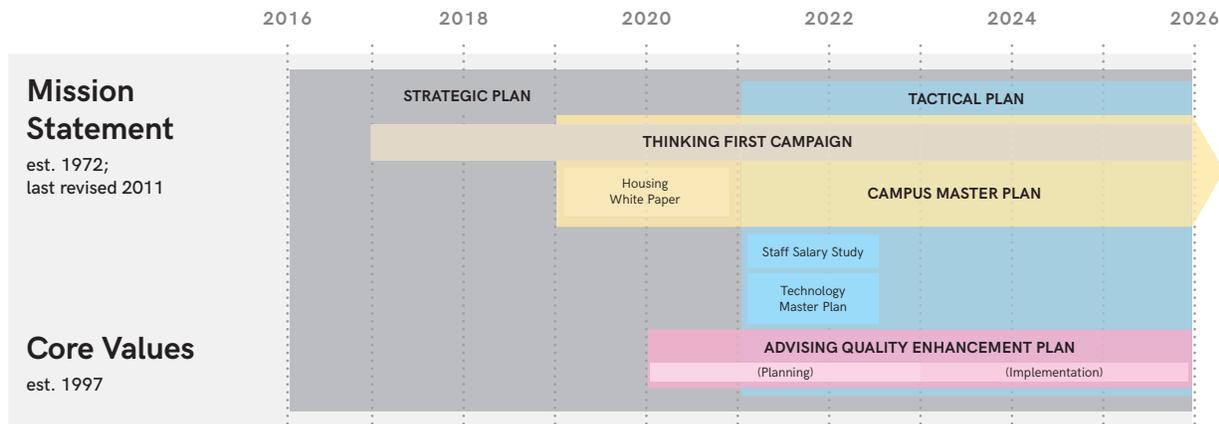
PROCESS

The Task Force has met on a weekly basis throughout the year with two additional 4-hour retreats. As part of the Task Force's process, all areas of the University were examined and decisions were made about which critical initiatives were of central importance for the health, growth, quality, and inclusiveness of Southwestern. In preparing the Tactical Plan, we received recommendations that would not require

resources, recommendations that would require minor resources, and recommendations that would require major commitments of resources. As Southwestern enters into this five-year plan, starting July 1, 2021, we will do so with a culture of transparency and fiscal responsibility, while we recognize that our success will also be driven by external economic factors. In designing the Tactical Plan, financial modeling has included projections about student body size, retention, capital project costs, and program costs. After receiving feedback about this draft of the Plan from faculty, staff, students, and trustees in March and early April, TPTF is forwarding the plan for approval to the Board of Trustees at its meeting in mid-April.

PURPOSE OF THE TACTICAL PLAN

The timing of this endeavor was deliberate, first to review our progress to date under the Strategic Plan (effective 2016) and the “Thinking First” campaign document (effective 2017), the Campus Master Plan (effective 2020), the student residential white paper (effective 2020), and additional planning documents to determine their alignment and complementarity, and second to chart our path forward as a University. The process has revealed that there is great consistency within the aforementioned documents, keeping in mind the staggered chronology of their development, showing that the tactical planning process has greatly benefitted from the University’s planning processes to date while it also builds off of them (See below).



The purpose of the Tactical Plan is to align and concretize all current institutional plans while also targeting specific initiatives that we believe are crucial to achieve over the next 5 years as we work to realize Southwestern University’s visionary potential as a distinctive liberal arts institution focused on serving our students, staff, faculty, and alumni as well as our ever-widening communities. The preceding plans will still continue to govern our actions, but the 5-year Tactical Plan identifies the goals, objectives, purposes, and priorities of Southwestern University taken from those documents as well as from the nearly 300 separate proposals and suggestions made by the campus community over the course of this year. The outcome is that the Strategic Plan, Tactical Plan, the “Thinking First” campaign document, and the Campus Master Plan will be aligned in their goals.

The priorities contained within the Tactical Plan are interrelated, central, and strategic. The Tactical Plan identifies the necessary resources for achieving these priorities in a way that takes into consideration the University’s current budgetary environment, realistic expectations of fundraising, and reasonable projections of endowment earnings. In addition to the funding priorities of the plan, including staffing priorities, we also present programmatic or policy priorities that do not require funding to initiate. The Tactical Plan will be funded through these three channels: an adherence to meeting budgeted targets to generate an annual surplus, including a regular review of the operational budget to ensure best practice and control costs; debt service for capital costs; and philanthropy. Southwestern thrives as a result of the many programs that are currently in operation, and the Task Force is in agreement that any current or future programs funded through philanthropy would be reviewed prior to applying for either additional philanthropic support or becoming part of the operational budget. A generous gift of \$500,000 will be distributed to line items in the Tactical Plan for its commencement on July 1, 2021, and the University is most appreciative that the Plan will begin with some funding already committed.

Tactical Plan 2021-2026

DIBE: Building and sustaining a culture of Diversity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Equity (DIBE) for students, faculty, staff, administration, alumni, and trustees to emphasize our commitment and identity as an institution.

Retention: Reinforcing our commitment to student success by focusing on strategically recruiting, providing access, and retaining a diverse, talented, and committed student body that values our distinctive identity, and who feel that they belong at Southwestern and will remain connected as alumni.

Program Development: Sustaining, developing, and integrating curricular and co-curricular programs central to Southwestern’s distinctive identity—especially Paideia, Mosaic, the Residential Experience, Center for Career and Professional Development, and on-campus and off-campus High Impact Experiences (HIEs)—to best serve our students while clearly demonstrating our unique liberal arts emphasis on educating the whole person.

Physical and Technological Infrastructure: Creating and maintaining an appealing and sustainable campus infrastructure that aligns with the Strategic Plan and Campus Facilities Master Plan and supports other Tactical Planning priorities around Retention, DIBE, and Program Development—especially in our recent commitment to a 3-year residency requirement.

Category 1: Funding Priorities

TACTIC	ACTION/METRIC	TARGETED PRIORITIES	ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY	PROJECTED ANNUAL COST/ONE-TIME COST	FUNDED AS % OF PROJECTED
1a. Decrease student indebtedness overall for continuing students, an offshoot of which will be narrowing the gap between tuition increases and financial aid	Remain below the current national average (\$33,700) for student debt; maintain and continue to reduce the current \$31,832 SU average for total indebtedness; increase need-based student scholarship amounts	Retention; Diversity, Inclusion, Belonging, & Equity (DIBE). SP (Strategic Plan) Objectives 1.1-1.5, 3.1, 4.3	Strategic Recruitment & Enrollment; University Relations; Finance & Administration	Minimum annual cost of \$100,000 per year in need-based scholarships	100% funded, \$400,000, philanthropy
1b. Increase funding and improve advising to ensure that all students have access to two High Impact Experiences (HIEs): Study Away/Abroad, Paid and Unpaid Internships, Faculty-Student Research, Community Engaged Learning	Analyzing existing patterns more fully and determining costs, enhance funding/access and guidance of students to HIEs, to increase from 2020-21 totals — 86% of graduating students have 1 HIE and 42% 2, to 100% of graduating students having 2 HIEs	Program Development; Retention. SP Objectives 2.1, 2.4	Academic Affairs; Student Life; University Relations	Annual Cost: Costs to be determined after review and analysis	Analysis underway. Targeted fundraising starting summer 2021
1c. Develop a new academic advising program that starts with 1st-year professional advisors and transitions to faculty/staff advisors	Six professional 1st-year advisors hired (July 2021) to provide program support	Retention; Program Development. SP Objectives 1.2, 1.3. Quality Enhancement Program (QEP)	Academic Affairs	\$2 million over five years	100% funded, \$2 million over five years, philanthropy

Category 1: Funding Priorities (continued)

TACTIC	ACTION/METRIC	TARGETED PRIORITIES	ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY	PROJECTED ANNUAL COST/ONE-TIME COST	FUNDED AS % OF PROJECTED
1d. Provide material and professional development funding for advisors in support of the Advising Quality Enhancement Program (QEP)	Develop a more proactive advising program that trains both professional advisors and faculty/staff academic advisors, including a new Student Relationship Management system	Retention. SP Objectives 1.2, 1.3, 3.1. Quality Enhancement Program (QEP)	Academic Affairs	One-time cost for Student Relationship Management Software for a five-year license: \$500,000; annual cost for programming: \$10,000	100% funded, \$510,000 over five years, philanthropy
1e. Develop Inclusive teaching certificate program	Support up to 8 faculty per year in the inclusive teaching certificate program housed in the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship (CTLS) and led by the new diversity and inclusive pedagogy specialist (see Tactic 2d)	DIBE. SP Objectives 2.5, 3.1, 4.3	Academic Affairs; University Relations	Annual Cost: \$10,000	100% funded, philanthropy
1f. Fund student and faculty research to document Southwestern's commitment to a more inclusive University history	Encourage ongoing documentation projects and develop new ones; establish a document archive as well as a web-based history; develop a Land Acknowledgement Statement; apply for foundation support for larger-scale collective memory projects	DIBE. SP Objectives 2.5, 3.1, 4.3	Academic Affairs; University Relations; Marketing & Communications	Annual cost: \$10,000 for student stipends and a one-time \$5,000 equipment cost; other costs TBD	100% funded, philanthropy
1g. Fund initiatives in the Campus Master Plan designed to create a vibrant campus experience; there is great student interest in some amenities coming on line in the near-term	Build student life amenities. Two projects underway — basketball court and sand volleyball court.	Infrastructure; Retention. SP Objectives 1.2, 1.3, 2.4, 3.1. Campus Master Plan; Housing White Paper	Student Life; University Relations; Finance & Administration	Capital costs TBD depending upon the projects selected	Initial funding, philanthropy
1h. Create a more robust student training and employment program	Analyze current wage structure and make appropriate increases to student wages through benchmarking positions with Associated Colleges of the South (ACS Consortium); review and strengthen student employment hiring and training programs	Retention; DIBE. SP Objectives 2.4, 3.1, 3.4	Student Life; Finance & Administration	Annual Cost TBD; inquiry sent to ACS; additional research needed	Arthur Vining Davis funds to be applied. Additional funding to be identified

Category 1: Funding Priorities (continued)

TACTIC	ACTION/METRIC	TARGETED PRIORITIES	ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY	PROJECTED ANNUAL COST/ONE-TIME COST	FUNDED AS % OF PROJECTED
1i. Institutionalize Mosaic	Secure more permanent funding (two more years of "soft funding" available)	Retention; Program Development. SP Objective 2.4	Student Life; University Relations	Fundraising will continue with the intention of building an endowment	100% funded, gift funds
1j. Develop a Technology Master Plan to update technological infrastructure, classroom tech, university-wide software, and department-specific software	Consultant hired (June 2021) to develop the IT Master Plan; IT Master Plan will include a review of current infrastructure and software purchases, such as advising software, and system redundancy	Infrastructure. SP Objectives 1.2, 1.3, 4.4	Senior Staff; Academic Affairs, Finance & Administration	One-Time Cost for consultant TBD; one-time and ongoing costs for additional hardware and software TBD	Consultant funded through operational budget
1k. Provide more opportunities for staff to enhance their professional skills portfolios	Establish Staff Steering continuing education budget	Program Development. SP Objective 3.1	President's Office	Annual cost: \$5,000 to begin with (expect to increase funding as program develops)	100% funded, operational budget
1l. Implement the first phase of Housing & Amenities Projects in the Campus Master Plan to support move to a 3-year residency requirement	Include sustainability values in constructing mixed-use first year housing to replace two residence halls and increase physical plant capacity	Infrastructure; Retention. SP Objectives 1.2, 1.3, 2.4, 3.1. Campus Master Plan; Housing White Paper	President's Office; University Relations; Finance & Administration	One-Time Capital Cost: \$30 million. Planning process to begin in 2021 for residence hall	Identifying funding
1m. Provide improved faculty office space and classrooms	Implement major renovation plans for buildings identified in the Campus Master Plan, particularly Mood-Bridwell Hall	Infrastructure. SP Objectives 1.2, 1.3, 2.4, 3.1	Campus Master Plan Academic Affairs; University Relations; Finance & Administration	One-Time Cost: TBD	\$4 million raised to date
1n. Enhance the Southwestern University Student Emergency Fund	Distribute a minimum of \$20,000 per year, continue annual fundraising to strengthen the Fund by 20%; current Total: \$100,000	Retention; DIBE. SP Objectives 1.2, 1.3	University Relations; Student Life; Finance & Administration	Annual Cost: \$20,000	100% funded, philanthropy
1o. Increase wages for non-exempt (hourly) staff	Start moving the lowest paid staff from \$11.00 to a \$15.00 minimum and perform a wage regression study for additional adjustments to prevent compression (exempt staff addressed in Tactic 3n)	Compensation. SP Objectives 3.1, 3.4	Finance & Administration	Plan adopted to achieve this goal within 4 years	Wage study completed. \$12.00 starting 2021

Category 2: Staffing Priorities

TACTIC	ACTION/METRIC	TARGETED PRIORITIES	ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY	PROJECTED ANNUAL COST/ ONE-TIME COST
2a. Build DIBE efforts into the structure and processes of Human Resources	Hire a Title IX coordinator who will provide ongoing educational opportunities for faculty and staff; develop additional hiring and retention policies and programs within HR	DIBE. SP Objectives 2.5, 3.1	Office of the President	Spring 2022
2b. Build DIBE efforts into the structure and processes of Student Life	Search to begin for Diversity Education Coordinator in Fall 2021	DIBE. SP Objectives 2.5, 3.1	Student Life	Spring 2022
2c. Increase support for student activities and wellness	Hiring an Assistant Director for outdoor recreation, 10-12 outdoor trips per year with travel outside of Austin-area and overnight camping; HIE Fall Break and Spring Break trips	Program Development. SP Objective 2.4	Student Life	Spring 2022
2d. Build DIBE efforts into the structure and processes of Academic Affairs	Hire a Diversity and Inclusion Pedagogy Specialist	DIBE. SP Objectives 2.5, 3.1	Academic Affairs	Spring 2022
2e. Support faculty in grant identification and application	Reinstate a Faculty Grants and Sponsored Programs Coordinator	Program Development. SP Objective 2.1	Academic Affairs; University Relations	Spring 2022

Category 3: Programmatic and Policy Priorities

TACTIC	ACTION/METRIC	TARGETED PRIORITIES	ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY	NOTES
3a. Rise in rankings and increase national recognition of institutional excellence	Monitor ranking guides for improvement; communicate the many attributes of the University on a continuous and strategic basis	Retention. SP Objective 4.5	Marketing & Communications; President	Senior staff retreat to discuss rankings in June 2021
3b. Better define Southwestern's distinctive identity as an innovative national liberal arts university anchored in the Southwest while being focused on the Paideia principle of connecting students to interdisciplinary knowledge, to each other, and to the world	Convene a group of stakeholders to clarify, define, and brand Southwestern; work with Center for Career & Professional Development (CCPD), University Relations, and Marketing & Communications to strengthen our connections to Austin as a vibrant cultural and economic location; connect to internationalizing efforts in Tactic 3d	DIBE; Program Development. SP Objective 3.1, 3.4, 4.5	Marketing & Communications; Student Life; Finance & Administration; Academic Affairs; University Relations	RFP for PR firm posted July 2021

Category 3: Programmatic and Policy Priorities (continued)

TACTIC	ACTION/METRIC	TARGETED PRIORITIES	ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY	NOTES
3c. Pursue Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) designation	Maintaining a Latinx and Hispanic student population of minimum 25%; convene a group of stakeholders tasked with developing necessary programmatic support required to achieve and sustain HSI designation	DIBE; Retention; Program Development. SP Objectives 2.5, 3.1, 4.3	Strategic Recruitment & Enrollment; Academic Affairs; Student Life; Finance & Administration	Completed 2 years with Latinx and Hispanic population at or above 25%. Applying for HSI status in next application year – 2023
3d. Further internationalize the focus of our students' experiences	Review current cost structure for study abroad and study away to increase participation and affordability; at minimum move from 28% to 35% of SU students, with increased participation by 1st generation, students of color, and male students	DIBE; Program Development. SP Objectives 2.4, 3.1	Academic Affairs; University Relations; Finance & Administration	As varying tactics to increase participation are reviewed, such as new integrated programs, bilateral exchanges, collaborations with other institutions, and/or new financial models, there may be budgetary implications requiring review
3e. Improve and strengthen our student tutoring offerings	Review and expand current tutoring programs and develop a more comprehensive approach for all student learning styles	Retention. SP Objectives 1.2, 1.3, 2.5	Academic Affairs	Depending upon review results, more funding may need to be generated
3f. Develop more competitive faculty compensation with an annual analysis of salary trend resources, including Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and American Association of University Professors (AAUP)	Maintain current biannual salary study and overall budgeted salary increases; continue to offer appropriate market rate salaries to recruit assistant professors	Compensation. SP Objectives 2.1, 3.1, 3.4	Academic Affairs; Finance & Administration	Annual projections for salary increases are being built into the budget model
3g. Maintain a strong student-to-faculty ratio by continuing to hire faculty as student enrollment and retention grow	Maintain the current 12:1 student-to-faculty ratio and make progress toward an 11:1 student-to-faculty ratio	Retention; Program Development. SP Objective 3.1	Academic Affairs	Annual projections for additional faculty lines have been built into the 2021-22 budget model
3h. Encourage faculty retention through cluster hires, particularly for faculty of color	Implement a cluster hire option in the Faculty Allocation Process	DIBE; Program Development. SP Objectives 2.5, 3.1, 4.3	Academic Affairs	
3i. Institutionalize current model of Paideia	Paideia is endowed; future funding will encourage program flexibility	Program Development. SP Objectives 2.2, 2.3	Academic Affairs	

Category 3: Programmatic and Policy Priorities (continued)

TACTIC	ACTION/METRIC	TARGETED PRIORITIES	ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY	NOTES
3j. Create more spaces of belonging on campus for student groups focused on Black, Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersexual, Asexual, and other sexual identities (LGBTQIA+), and underrepresented religious groups	Prioritize creation of these spaces in existing buildings as available and include them in the Campus Master Plan	DIBE; Program Development. SP Objectives 2.5, 3.1, 4.3 Campus Master Plan	Student Life	A planning process will begin for creating more student-use spaces in the new residence hall in 2021-2022
3k. Expand the options in food services to be more intentional and inclusive of diverse food cultures, more sustainable, higher quality, and more welcoming to all process by summer students 2022	Survey students, staff, and faculty in spring 2021; initiate Request for Proposals for food service operator fall 2021; complete food service contract	DIBE; Program Development. SP Objectives 2.5, 3.1, 4.3	Student Life	Food contract consultant hired June 2021
3l. Develop more robust professional development and anti-racist training programs for staff as well as faculty	Currently participating in the Liberal Arts Colleges Racial Equity Leadership Alliance (LACRELA); we will include staff in programming and develop stronger support for DIBE in HR hiring and training policies and procedures (see Tactic 2a)	DIBE. SP Objective 3.1	Senior Staff	Currently 100% funded for the three-year period of our membership in LACRELA; to be determined at that point whether to renew or to examine additional programming
3m. Ensure that all staffing requests and hiring decisions for the next five years focus on achieving the Tactical Plan's two most central targeted priorities: DIBE and Retention	Establish hiring policies and procedures throughout the University that prioritize DIBE and retention objectives as part of candidates' qualifications in addition to expertise and credentials	DIBE; Retention. SP Objectives 1.2, 1.3, 3.1	Senior Staff	Instituted
3n. Develop more competitive exempt staff compensation metrics	Maintain annual salary increases for exempt employees; determine benchmarks and do an internal salary study to ensure that staff compensation is competitive (hourly/non-exempt employees addressed in Tactic 1o)	Compensation. SP Objectives 3.1, 3.4	Finance & Administration	Study is underway

Category 3: Programmatic and Policy Priorities (continued)

TACTIC	ACTION/METRIC	TARGETED PRIORITIES	ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY	NOTES
3o. Ensure that campus buildings and grounds are in good repair and accessible, and for new construction consider accommodations beyond compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)	Include accessibility audit and repairs into annual maintenance budgets and practices; prioritize accessibility in Campus Master Plan for renovations and new building projects	DIBE. SP Objective 3.1	Finance & Administration	An annual cycle of ADA maintenance projects included in budget and will contract with landscape architect to create landscaping master plan in concert with community
3p. Increase alumni involvement and alumni inclusion efforts	University Relations will work with Alumni Council and local associations to better integrate alumni into the University community	DIBE; Program Development. SP Objective 3.1, 3.4	University Relations	Alumni Council and UR have been active for 2 years in engaging alumni in multiple ways — Research, Curious Conversations, mentoring, streaming events and lectures