

UWO Academic Strategic Plan

Created: February 13, 2024

Vision: *Meeting 21st century challenges by elevating human potential and creating sustainable solutions.*

Overview

The UWO Academy provides a diverse range of learners the opportunity to solve problems by working alongside faculty—in the classroom, in the field, in the laboratory, in the clinic, in the community – gaining transferable skills, creating knowledge, and solving complex issues that are critical to the future of our region, state, and world.

Placing students at the center of everything we do will fundamentally transform how we deliver higher education. To accomplish this, the UWO Academy is built on **four fundamental principles**: building an academy around student-centered career pathways, advancing student engagement and success, embodying the ideals of a research-enhanced university, and integrating cutting-edge technology into teaching and learning.

Restructuring the academic enterprise will ingrain these principles deep within the DNA of the institution. The new structure of the academy embodies these characteristics:

1. **Learner-Centered, Career-Focused:** Appeal to prospective students and families, offering broad pathways for students to explore and develop career pathways while learning valuable, transferable skills.
2. **Distinctive/Innovative:** Stand out in a hyper-competitive landscape.
3. **Flexible:** Optimize our ability to adapt to the educational needs of the students and communities we serve -- programmatically, instructionally, and administratively.
4. **Inclusive:** Celebrate the diversity of our learners, faculty, and staff.
5. **Sustainable:** Adapt to political changes, cultural trends, and shifting economic realities, and maintain financial viability.
6. **Interdisciplinary:** Improve collaboration on research, teaching, and hybrid program creation to meet nuanced student needs, diverse employer demands, and facilitate the work of solving the complex problems of the 21st century.

Principle 1: Building an academy around student-centered career pathways.

- Aligning UWO programs with nationally recognized career clusters
 - Interdisciplinary schools designed around career pathways will help students and parents understand connections between programs of study, transferrable skills, and career opportunities.
- Preserving disciplinary integrity within an interdisciplinary framework.
 - Disciplinary strengths, identities, and relationships are maintained while encouraging interdisciplinarity within career pathways.
- Reducing administrative overhead costs to facilitate savings and incentivize curricular and administrative efficiencies

Principle 2: Advance student engagement and success.

- Refocus on first-year student academic success through innovative teaching and learning for the UWO student portfolio.
 - Build a strong dedicated group of leaders/instructors to guide and teach first-year students.
- Simplify curricular array to maximize flexibility for students.
 - Facilitate course clean-up and provide collaborative course building/scheduling across campuses, to reduce registration and graduation barriers.
- Integrate Academic Affairs into data-driven technology to enhance student success.
 - Increase awareness of student support referrals, minimize duplication, and ultimately improve retention through proactive strategies.

Principle 3: Embody the ideals of a research-enhanced university.

- Research-enhanced is defined at UWO as:
 - Faculty are leading the scholarship of discovery and invention, integration, engagement, and teaching and learning.
- Recognize faculty and student research through formal acknowledgment, scholarship, and professional development.
 - Adopt an electronic faculty and student activity profile that records research and creative activity outputs.
- Student research is an essential component of learning at UWO and includes:
 - Disciplinary research across the academy; creative expression in the arts; capstone, thesis, or dissertation projects; student-faculty collaborative research; and community engagement projects.

Principle 4: Integrate cutting-edge technology into teaching and learning.

- Define the best technology and support for learning environments that will best serve the common learner & persona types at UWO.
 - Further integrate academic planning with facilities planning to ensure sustainable long-term approaches to building and maintaining the learning environments necessary to realize our vision.
 - Recharter the Faculty Senate's Information and Learning Technologies Advisory Council (ILTAC) to evaluate the current state of technology, assess best practices, make recommendations for technology in learning environments, and resource recommendations.

These principles will allow the UWO academy to match its academic offerings with the needs of its learners, embolden research and creative activity with students, position itself for sustainable success in the future, and gain efficiencies in the short term.