

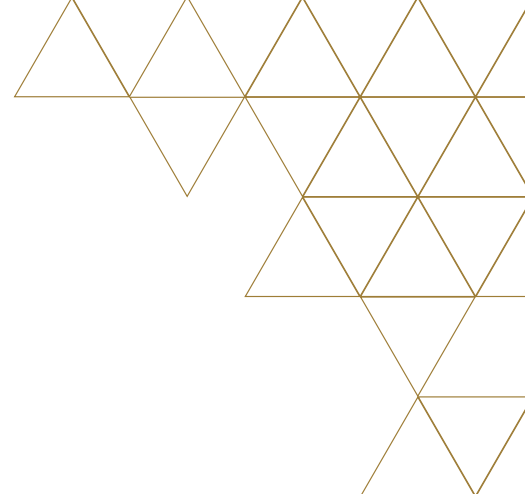
Framing Our Future

Affirming Our Values, Vision and Aspirations
for Wake Forest University's Third Century

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK SEPTEMBER 2023



“Framing Our Future” is a living document. Societal shifts, the changing landscape of higher education and new thinking from faculty, staff and students may inspire updates over time. With its emphasis on the future, the Framework will be a valuable tool to align our efforts with our shared vision as we approach the institution’s 2034 bicentennial and prepare for Wake Forest’s third century.



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Introduction: Framing Our Future

Wake Forest's bicentennial is within sight. For more than 189 years, this university has adapted to sweeping changes in our world and evolved with purpose to be one of the great institutions of higher education in the country.

Wake Forest is well-positioned to address the complex issues facing higher education, including the financial uncertainty caused by global economic instability; questions about future enrollment trends caused by shifting demographics and the changing expectations of degree-seeking students and their families; evolving pressures on college athletics caused by a new legislative and competitive landscape; and physical space needs caused by aging facilities and infrastructure. While these tensions are not new to higher education, sustaining the University's current success will require a strategic approach to leveraging recent investments and partnerships. We are at the beginning of an exciting journey for Wake Forest.

Framing our Future is our collective vision, formed through conversations with more than 1,000 faculty, staff, students, alumni, parents and friends from summer 2022 through summer 2023.

In undertaking this unprecedented visioning exercise by the full Wake Forest community, the university affirmed its values and set its aspirations for its third century.

With *Pro Humanitate* as the inspiration, a series of thematic goals emerged into a strategic framework. The strategic framework provides structure to make decisions regarding where to invest to preserve distinctive value and inspire creativity. The goal of this work is to support Wake Forest's mission, enhance its value, underscore the institution's purpose and enable decisive responses to the changing needs of students and society. This process generated a clear collective vision that honors our deeply held values and elevates our ambitions to position Wake Forest to be a catalyst for good in society well into our third century and beyond.

Framing Our Future is a living document. The totality of work captured in these pages is best understood with complementary context and content on a dedicated website, framework.wfu.edu.

Who We Are and Who We Will Become

Wake Forest University is committed to being a community of students, faculty, staff and alumni from diverse backgrounds, lived experiences and perspectives. We seek to create and sustain an equitable, inclusive environment where all can live, learn, belong and thrive across our institution and beyond.

Our motto, Pro Humanitate, calls upon the entire University community to engage in the fundamental questions about what it means to be human. It invites us to use our ideas, knowledge, talents and compassion on behalf of humanity in all its difference and diversity — in short, to be catalysts for good.

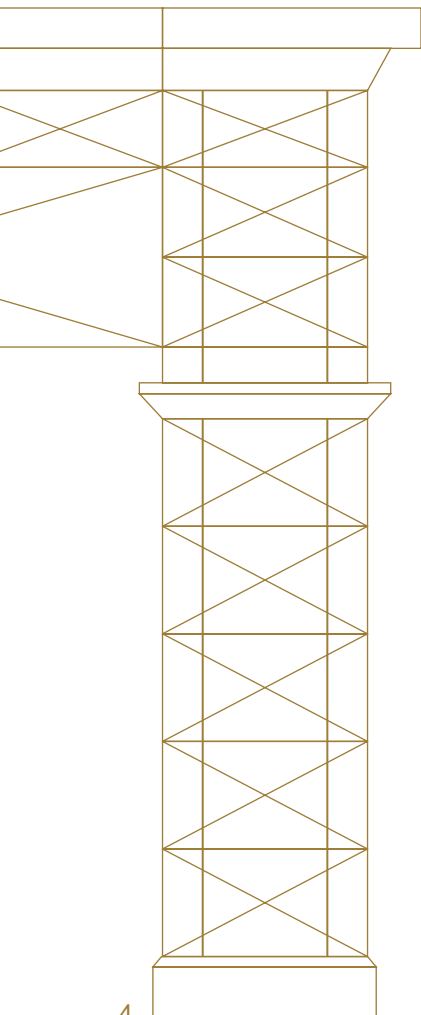
Wake Forest's identity, who we are, is defined by strong commitments to:

- Educate the whole person
- Sustain a strong liberal arts curriculum
- Serve our undergraduate, graduate and professional school students to ensure their personal and professional success
- Generate new knowledge that benefits humanity through research, scholarship and creative expression
- Recognize the roles of teacher and scholar as interdependent, each contributing to excellence in teaching, learning and the generation of new knowledge
- Sustain an environment that values the critical role of student mentorship by faculty and staff
- Compete at the highest levels of college athletics

- Continue the work needed to provide greater access and opportunity to success through equitable learning, living and working environments
- Emphasize the development of leadership, character and integrity
- Teach and model the importance of democratic process, civil discourse and dialogue across differences
- Embody *Pro Humanitate*, and call Wake Foresters as individuals and Wake Forest University as a community to take action consistent with this belief.

The University will become a catalyst for good in society by extending those commitments into our third century and becoming a recognized national model for:

- Graduating leaders with integrity and courage, across disciplines and professions, who embrace evidence-based debate, open dialogue and critical thinking;
- Innovation in curricular, co-curricular, experiential learning, and personal and professional development;
- Excellence in defined scholarship and research areas across our academic programs and partnerships that address pressing problems facing society;
- Acting on our commitment to ensuring inclusive excellence as a powerful catalyst for learning and a community strength; and
- Entrepreneurial partnerships that advance Wake Forest's mission.



Shared Vision, Unique Value Proposition and Thematic Goals

Our shared vision of Wake Forest as a catalyst for good in society builds on a deep-seated, shared belief that our University community is distinct in embodying its motto. *Pro Humanitate* illuminates our purpose, animates our values and calls our community to seek a meaningful role in the world. *Pro Humanitate* is central to our future. Our unique value proposition provides the compelling “why” of Wake Forest:

Wake Foresters will embody Pro Humanitate at home and in the world.

This value proposition guided the articulation of **three thematic goals** that affirm Wake Forest’s unique place within the landscape of higher education and focus our future investment and exploration.

- Wake Forest will be a lifelong learning community that calls all to develop their full potential to contribute in a diverse and complex world.
- Wake Forest will foster a community of inquiry through research, scholarship and creative work that transcends boundaries to address the challenges facing humanity and our world.
- Wake Forest will build meaningful, mutual partnerships to honor our commitment to the well-being of our local, regional and global communities.

Each of the thematic goals provides inspiration for who we will become, expressed as strategic aims, to be applied to all parts of the University and to grow over time as new ideas and initiatives are identified.

THEMATIC GOAL 1

Community of Learning

Strong, equitable learning communities nurture undergraduate, graduate and professional student growth. We center the importance of the whole student by taking into account the many ways and the varying pace with which individuals develop over the course of their education — both inside and outside of the classroom.

We will be a community of lifelong learners that calls all to develop their full potential to contribute in a diverse and complex world.

STRATEGIC AIMS

AIM 1.1

Attract, create and promote a diverse and inclusive learning community that provides all students with equitable access and opportunity for success and belonging.

Initial Action Steps

- Expand our financial aid resources so that becoming part of the Wake Forest learning community is financially accessible for all admitted students.
- Continue to fully adopt Swarbrick's Eight Dimensions of Wellness model, known to Wake Foresters as Thrive, as a framework for institutionalizing our emphasis on educating the whole student and serving as a lens through which we contemplate future actions as we frame our future.
- Establish new undergraduate orientation programs for first-year and transfer students that use a developmental framework that intentionally connects students with the web of resources available to support their journey and enable them to thrive.
- Activate a robust residential model that promotes dialogue across differences, increases faculty-staff-student interactions and expands learning to enhance the academic and social integration of first-year students into college life through the Residential Commons initiative.

- Update our residential model for second- through fourth-year students to reflect our students' needs relative to academic success, belonging, wellbeing and postgraduation success.
- Create graduate and professional student programming and support systems that bridge programmatic boundaries and foster affinity, belonging, integrity and success.
- Support transformational learning by ensuring that excellent teaching, which in and of itself is a catalyst for good, is supported, rewarded and equitably distributed.
- Provide professional development for all faculty and staff on inclusive pedagogy, including methods that facilitate conversations across differences and nurture open discourse, design activities and assessments that address disparities in learning, and integrate universal design for learning.
- Prepare all our graduates to embrace continuous learning as the embodiment of *Pro Humanitate* and the pursuit of human flourishing. Wake Forest will support continuous learning through various modes, some of them formalized, some of them not, to address the complex problems of the present and future, and generate lifelong learning opportunities through the School for Professional Studies and other schools to support alumni in their continued personal and professional development.

AIM 1.2

Magnify Wake Forest's model for transformational teaching by fortifying its foundation in mentorship and experiential learning and infusing new inclusive pedagogies that build the knowledge, skills and mindset needed for personal and professional success in a rapidly evolving society.

Initial Action Steps

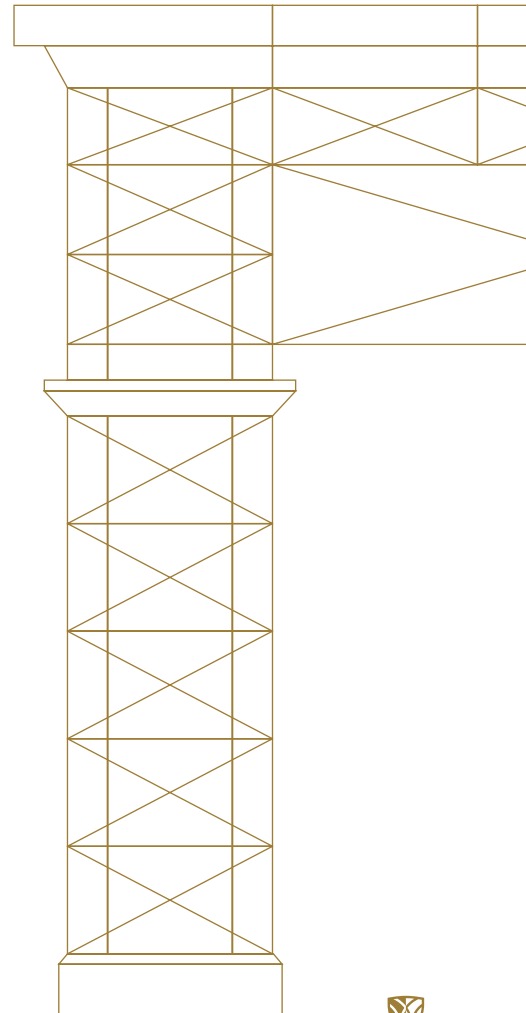
- Refine and expand a distinctly Wake Forest approach by centering experiential learning upon our core *Pro Humanitate* values and leveraging our strengths in research, scholarship and creative work, career readiness, community engagement and study away/abroad, with the creation of an immersive, experiential learning center that teaches how substantive inquiry can address multiple societal challenges.
- Develop and incentivize substantive experiential-based curricular and cocurricular offerings that engage students and educators across multiple contexts — courses, programs, departments, schools, universities and countries.
- Inventory and assess the impact of existing partnerships, both internal and external, and identify and develop new partnerships that will enable us to better shape and support our signature learning communities.
- Document where and how data and digital literacy are currently integrated into our curricula, identify gaps between actual and needed, and develop approaches to address those gaps.

AIM 1.3

Provide multiple pathways through which Wake Forest students can develop the knowledge, skills and values that enable them to critically examine, reflect on and embody *Pro Humanitate*; engage in dialogue across differences; and practice a bold new model for educating and developing leaders of character, integrity and courage.

Initial Action Steps

- Create additional pathways and programming, curricular and cocurricular, for all students to build their capacity to lead with integrity.
- Coordinate curricular and cocurricular experiences for all students to promote the development of critical thinking, cultural humility and courage.
- Provide additional opportunities for developmentally informed learning experiences in leadership, community engagement and civil discourse for all students.
- Develop meaningful student-based opportunities for informed dialogue around the most compelling issues of the day that leverage the expertise and experience of our community of educators and build on existing successful models, including the historical commitment to our national championship debate program, the deliberative dialogue workshops, the Face to Face series and Call to Conversation.



THEMATIC GOAL 2

Community of Inquiry

The culture within great universities — those that are steeped in independence of thought and academic freedom — provides a community in which lines of inquiry can be pursued unfettered. Universities are the primary engines for generating the knowledge needed to tackle the complex problems that vex society.

We will foster a community of inquiry through research, scholarship and creative work that transcends boundaries to address the challenges facing humanity and our world.

STRATEGIC AIMS

AIM 2.1

Facilitate an inclusive community of inquiry at Wake Forest that is grounded in generating new knowledge through research, scholarship and creative work, providing enhanced opportunities and contexts for experiential learning, and spurring dialogue and discourse for faculty, staff, students, alumni and the larger community in service to humanity.

Initial Action Steps

- Articulate and integrate a well-defined understanding of the teacher-scholar ideal that mutually reinforces the role of teaching and scholarship within our communities of learning and inquiry across all the schools.
- Leverage the creation of a center to promote access to and excellence in experiential learning (see Aim 1.2), and in doing so, strengthen opportunities for student engagement in research, scholarship and creative work that foster critical inquiry, generate opportunities for faculty-student and peer mentorship, and support students as they apply their learning to societal challenges.



AIM 2.2

Strengthen existing and build new signature areas of excellence in research, scholarship and creative work that cross academic and institutional boundaries to address issues of importance to humanity with broad societal impact, positioning Wake Forest as a thought leader in important national and international dialogues.

Initial Action Steps

- Strengthen key technical and administrative support services for research excellence, including the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs and Corporate and Foundation Relations, to ensure we are highly competitive for extramural funding opportunities.
- Initiate cluster hires, joint appointments and endowed professorships to recruit top teacher-scholars in current and developing areas of University excellence.
- Articulate a specific rubric and process for determining whether nascent areas of research, scholarship and creative work hold promise to become areas of interdisciplinary and institutional distinction for Wake Forest.

For example: African American Religion and Thought is an important developing area of research excellence inclusive of multiple programs within our College of Arts and Science (our new African American studies interdisciplinary program, religious studies, communication, sociology, political science, English, history, women, gender and sexuality studies, anthropology, philosophy, and environment and sustainability, and others), expertise within our School of Divinity and expertise within our School of Law. The recent receipt of external funding to study and advance environmental justice exemplifies the potential for this to be an area of distinction for Wake Forest.

- Catalyze and disseminate research, scholarship and creative work in established or emergent areas of interdisciplinary and/or University distinction that crosses barriers and empowers new collaborations of importance to humanity. Articulate a specific rubric and process for defining areas of distinction. Current examples include:

Health, Medicine and Humanity

Wake Forest is uniquely situated to support health, medicine and humanity. It is a collaborative, intellectual and community-based space for addressing ethical, social and policy issues of importance for biotechnology, health care, biomedical research, public health and health communication. Key areas of excellence at Wake Forest include the Bioethics Center; the Humanities Institute; the health and exercise science, psychology, neuroscience, sociology, counseling, biostatistics, epidemiology and public health sciences departments and divisions; the bioethics, humanity and medicine minor, and multiple programs, including the COMPASS Initiative and medical-legal partnerships like the Veterans Legal Clinic.

Neuroscience and Society

Wake Forest has considerable expertise across the institution in the interconnectedness of brain health and the workings of the mind, including teacher-scholars in our law school, divinity school and medical school (including the Maya Angelou Center for Health); theatre and dance, biology and psychology programs in the College of Arts and Sciences and the Graduate School; our cross-school Bioethics program and our neuroscience clinical and basic science departments in health sciences, where neurological, neuropsychiatric, neurodegenerative and behavioral research, neuro-ethics and advanced tools such as super-resolution imaging, computational modeling and machine learning are helping transform Wake Forest into a national neuroscience hub.

Environment and Sustainability

Faculty in the College and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences programs in environment and sustainability, biology, physics, statistics, engineering, chemistry, politics and international affairs, history, religious studies and others; the Center for Functional Materials (CFM); and faculty in the Schools of Divinity, Law, Business and Medicine have collective expertise in specific areas of impact. Our world-renowned Center for Energy, Environment and Sustainability (CEES) effects change by taking knowledge and technology from the lab to society, linking basic research and the tools — enterprise, policy, education, marketing, the arts — that turns ideas into action.

Leadership, Character and Integrity

Wake Forest has developed significant research excellence in the analysis and promotion of character and ethical behavior through multiple programs including the internationally renowned Leadership and Character Program, the Allegacy Center for Leadership and Character in the School of Business, vocational formation research in the School of Divinity and the award-winning research of a cluster of faculty in the philosophy and psychology departments on The Honesty Project, and in the work of the Schools of Law and Medicine.

Emerging and Future Technologies

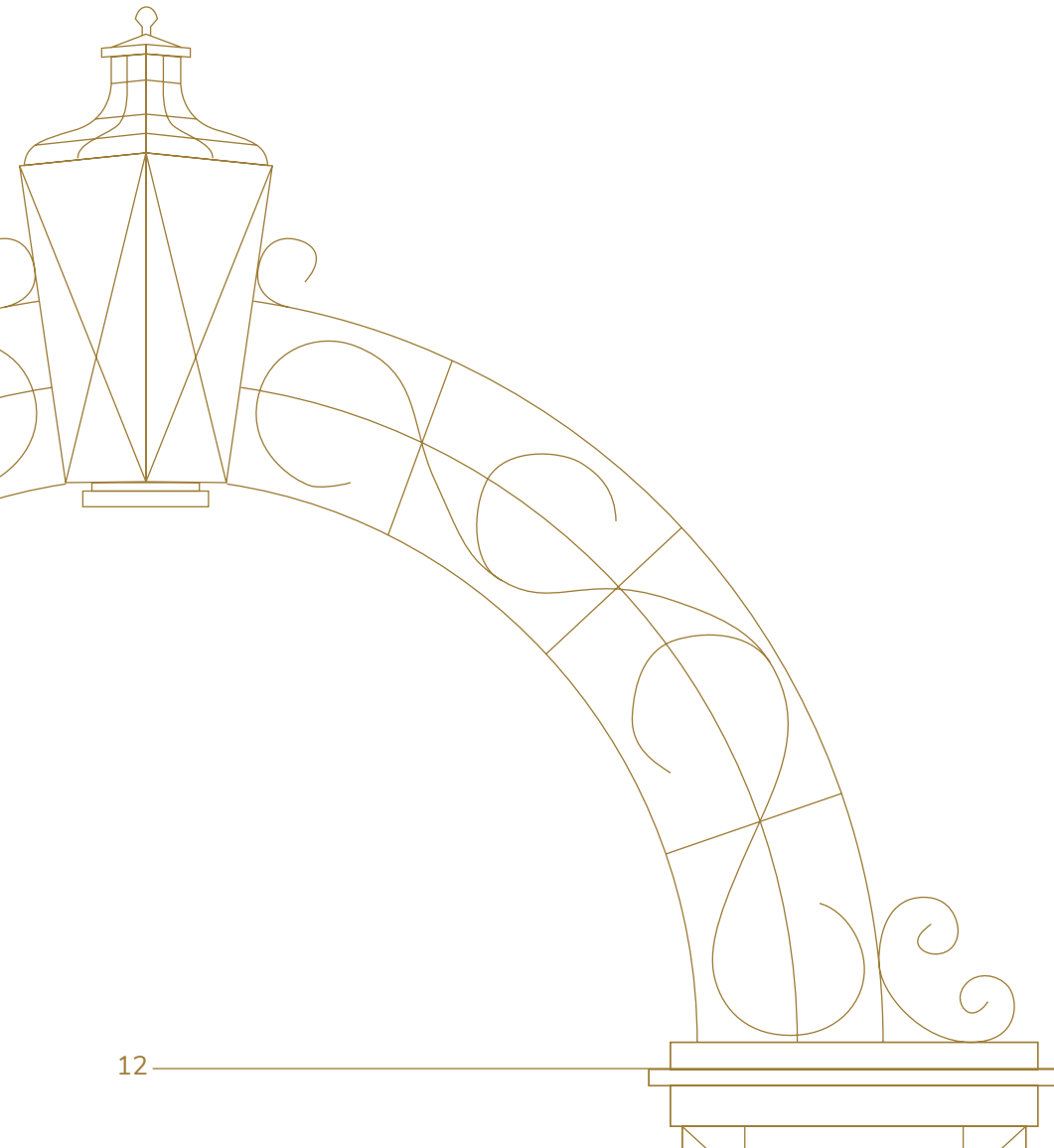
Emerging technologies have yet to be fully realized, but they have the capacity to transform or disrupt established practices and ways of doing things, raising new questions about how we live, how we learn, how we work and even what it means to be human. This manifests in our academic programs in engineering and business and data analytics; our expertise in artificial intelligence, patent practice and blockchain research; and our Center for Nanotechnology and Molecular Materials, Computer Science Network Security Projects, Center for Functional Materials and Center for Analytics.

AIM 2.3

Amplify Wake Forest's scholarly excellence by strategically leveraging internal resources and external partnerships to connect, explain and communicate cutting-edge research, scholarship and creative work beyond our campus boundaries.

Initial Action Steps

- Use our emergent excellence in key areas of inquiry to recruit new students and teacher-scholars, and reach broader audiences, all of whom can help us apply the relevant new knowledge we have created to address problems facing society.
- Facilitate new strategic partnerships based on our enhanced portfolio of research excellence that further enable us to contribute to critical national and international dialogue, policymaking and major funded projects.
- Leverage research partnerships with Advocate and Atrium Health to meet the nation's most pressing public health needs using our shared expertise.
- Attract, hire and retain teacher-scholars in our areas of scholarly excellence whose work is recognized as catalyzing good for humanity as demonstrated by the top recognitions and awards in their fields.





THEMATIC GOAL 3

Community of Partnerships

Our local communities geographically define our University; this is where our employees live and where our economic, cultural and human capital can be most directly felt. But the local is also global, and great universities must also directly engage their expertise and resources more broadly to nurture an equitable and educated society.

We will build meaningful, mutual partnerships to honor our commitment to the wellbeing of local, regional and global communities.

STRATEGIC AIMS

AIM 3.1

Enact a shared approach to all partnerships that foregrounds Wake Forest's unique strengths in teaching and research, scholarship and creative work as we more fully honor our commitment to the wellbeing of our local, regional and global communities.

Initial Action Steps

- As informed by the emerging work related to Goals 1 and 2, map our current community-based activities onto:
 - Our core strengths in teaching and research, scholarship and creative work; and
 - The most pressing problems facing our local and regional communities.
- Determine areas for prioritization by identifying areas of intersection between our core strengths and the needs of our communities (see Aims 1.2, 1.3 and 2.1).
- Determine and implement a comprehensive approach for more effectively coordinating with our external partners with whom we share a common commitment to the wellbeing of our communities.

AIM 3.2

Align our infrastructure for supporting community engagement with best practices for building and sustaining meaningful, mutual partnerships within the areas of emphasis identified through Aim 3.1.

Initial Action Steps

- Implement a sustainable approach to securing, allocating, and understanding the impact of resources that support the well-being of our communities.
- Assess our capabilities and capacities relative to best practices in community-engaged research, scholarship and creative work to identify processes and principles through which we can become more effective partners within our communities.

AIM 3.3

Reinforce Wake Forest's role as a leading collaborator in Winston-Salem, the Piedmont Triad region, Charlotte and the state of North Carolina by becoming a stronger partner in supporting and promoting the economic development of our communities.

Initial Action Steps

- Map the existing ways in which Wake Forest contributes to the economic development of the region, including partnerships, memberships and other sources of support (see Aim 3.1).
- As informed by the emerging work related to Goals 1 and 2, determine the most strategic ways we can support the economic development of the region based on:
 - Wake Forest's unique areas of distinction; and
 - The ways in which we can work with other local higher education institutions and non-profits to promote the economic development of our region.





Assessment and Evaluation

Continual assessment and evaluation will ensure we make transparent how we are implementing the framework and whether our actions result in the intended impacts. As applicable, assessment plans for each action we take will include the following three categories of indicators:

Input indicators provide evidence that the resources — capabilities and capacities — necessary for successful program implementation are being applied.

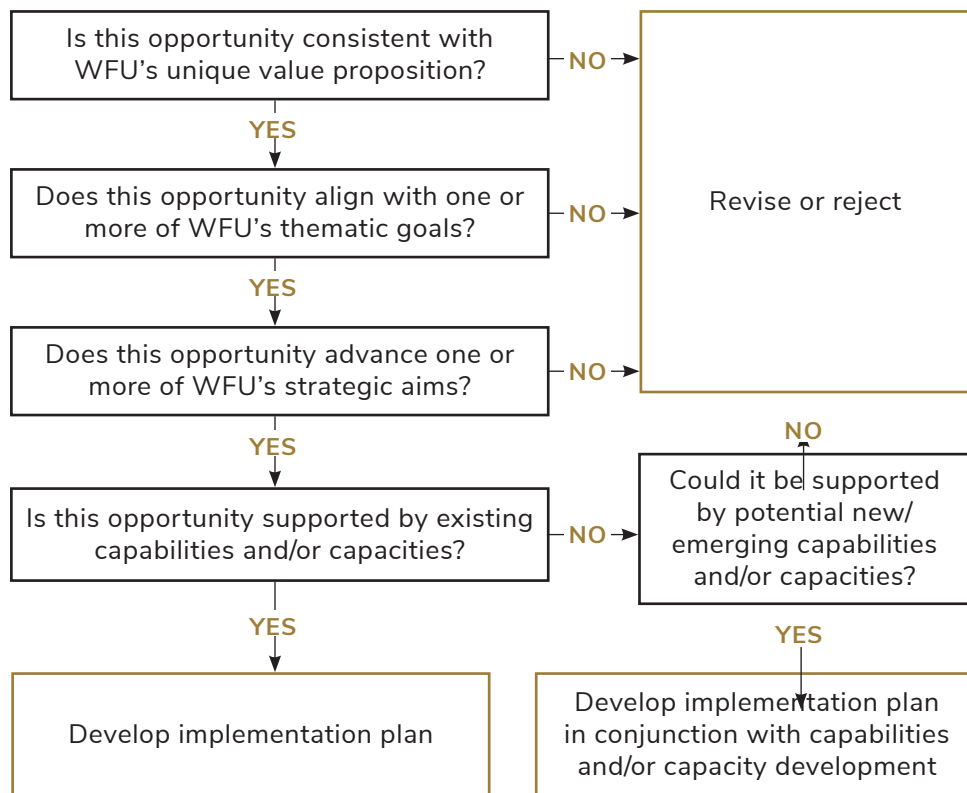
Process indicators measure activities and outputs generated in the course of program implementation. These indicators provide evidence that the right things are being enacted and in the right way as consistent with the rationale underlying the chosen action.

Outcome indicators measure the short, intermediate and long-term effects of implementation. These indicators provide evidence of change over time. It is typically difficult to attribute change in complex situations to any one initiative, but examining multiple outcomes and their pattern of change can strengthen confidence in results.

A repository of current and historical data maintained by the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) will provide a foundation for this work. This repository includes data that speak to multiple aspects of our learning environment, the student experience, the experience and activities of faculty and staff, and postgraduation outcomes. For instance, OIR maintains a longitudinal student data set that includes all undergraduate students since 2010 and extensive data on their courses, activities, utilization of academic support resources and outcomes. In addition, OIR coordinates the completion of several large surveys each year. Examples include campus climate surveys that provide information about belonging across diverse groups, nationally normed surveys that provide information about students' engagement and outcomes (inside and outside of the classroom) at key points during the undergraduate experience (beginning and end of first year, end of senior year) and nationally normed surveys on faculty experience and belonging.

A Decision-Making Tool

Our shared vision, unique value proposition, thematic goals and strategic aims will become ingrained in the University's conversations and leadership mindset. While not currently proposed as a formal process, the strategic framework lends itself to the following decision matrix:



In parallel with the strategic framing process, we have been assessing the University's capabilities and capacities.

Realizing the University's shared vision requires clarity about areas of strength, the resources we are ready to deploy and the areas in which we need to build capacity.

Decision-making will be facilitated by existing reports, studies and sources of institutional data, and will benefit from studies commissioned for this purpose. This ongoing work will help us align resources with strategic initiatives and contemplate the inevitable questions that arise when strategically starting new, refining existing or phasing out initiatives.

Next Steps

Through the strategic framework process, the Wake Forest community affirmed who it is and articulated aspirations for what it will become; identified the right things to do in areas of current, emerging and aspirational distinction; strengthened the culture of collaboration across institutional boundaries; and created a pathway for schools, units and programs to align and form partnerships for future initiatives that support the University in achieving its goals.

Now, the timing and sequencing of the next steps on the course to Wake Forest's third century include:

SHARING THE DOCUMENT

After sharing the strategic framework with faculty, staff and students at the beginning of the semester, Wake Forest will engage boards and councils, volunteer leaders, alumni, parents and families to support framing efforts that will take place within the College, Schools and administrative units.

SCHOOL-LEVEL FRAMEWORKS

In the coming months, deans and administrative leaders will lead their schools and units in setting priorities and sketching blueprints that align their goals and objectives with the principles in the strategic framework. We anticipate sharing these College, School and administrative frameworks with the Board of Trustees by the end of the academic year.

STRATEGIC AIMS — ACTION STEP EXECUTION

Leaders of specific action steps will develop a timeline and a sequenced plan for execution of their specific step with the support of the Provost Office. Depending on the action step, they may be integrated into school-level frameworks.

DETERMINING ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

In order to uphold the guiding principle of accountability, another step will be determining the assessment strategies that will help evaluate the progress made toward the thematic goals. This assessment process will be supported by the Office of Institutional Research and others.

Conclusion: A Living Document

Wake Forest University has a remarkable record of being a great university, providing a transformational educational experience to future leaders. The shared vision described in this strategic framework lays a path for where the University aspires to go and identifies areas of distinctive excellence, both today and in the future. These areas of distinctive excellence are rooted in our purpose, history and commitments. They point us to an aspirational future state in which our impact and reputation are enhanced as a great university serving as a **catalyst for good** and where we, as an academic community, have an even greater impact on some of the most compelling issues of the day.

Together, we are building toward Wake Forest's bicentennial in 2034 and building for a third century of excellence. Framing Our Future is more than a collection of ideas about our present and future. It is a living document that will evolve as these ideas are tested, debated, refined and implemented. It is a tool for aligning critical decisions with our shared vision, unique value proposition Pro Humanitate, thematic goals and strategic aims.

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