We Are
LAND-GRANT
UNCOMMON PREEMINENCE FOR THE COMMON GOOD
THE NEED FOR A STRATEGY

As a complex, multi-campus R-1 research university with colleges and schools across the full range of academic inquiry, a student population of more than 33,000, a faculty and staff of nearly 6,000 and a physical presence in all 77 counties in the state and influence around the world, the need for an integrated set of choices to guide and inform decision-making across the enterprise is critical to maximizing OSU’s impact on society. What follows is a statement of Oklahoma State University’s fundamental commitments, collective aspirations, strategic priorities and high-level imperatives for achieving Land-Grant preeminence and successful stewardship of the public trust. Accompanying and undergirding the broad strategy statement will be a series of tactical decisions that will operationalize the strategic priorities and bring them to life within each of the University’s colleges, schools, academic units, divisions and campuses. The strategy provides the framework in which individual components of the OSU system will align to drive success and impact communities.

DEFINING LAND-GRANT PREEMINENCE

The preeminent Land-Grant university is the institution that most successfully carries out the unique Land-Grant mission for the place it serves.

For OSU, that place is Oklahoma.

More effectively than any other state’s Land-Grant institution, OSU aims to meet Oklahoma’s workforce needs by generating sufficient numbers of qualified graduates with the individual attributes and in-demand skill sets our economy needs; to link its research to the critical sectors of the state’s economy and the practical improvement of key indicators like health outcomes, educational attainment and quality of life; to make good communities great through the power of extension; and to create servant-leaders who will act as engaged citizens in our rural towns and major cities. While our reach will be global, we will measure our success by how well we serve our state relative to our Land-Grant mission and counterpart institutions.

We know we belong to the land. From their founding in the nineteenth century, Land-Grant universities have carried a distinctly American charge captured in the words of the Morrill Act of 1862:

“to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life.”

The Land-Grant universities stand for a compelling set of values distinct from other higher education institutions. They instill individual leadership in pursuit of the common good. They nurture career competence as a means of cultivating communities. They unapologetically stand as economic development engines for the people they serve, addressing the imminent needs of a diverse society. Now, more than ever, the United States needs graduates equipped with the kind of practical knowledge and skills that Land-Grants universities bestow. The world also requires the practical innovations Land-Grants generate. Rural communities and urban enclaves demand the servant leadership Land-Grants provide. The Land-Grants are timeless and are needed now more than ever before.

Firmly rooted in this vibrant tradition — and fiercely intent on extending its impact and influence to meet this critical moment — Oklahoma State University intends to become the nation’s preeminent Land-Grant university. We are Land-Grant.
To expand and value all fields of scholarly development, to engage students in the process of discovery and to align the University’s efforts with the State’s needs, OSU will focus resources at the intersection of the University’s existing strengths and society’s emerging needs - enumerating, focusing and concentrating funding specifically on the following four interdisciplinary “Priority Areas”:

1. Innovating to Nourish the World
2. Leading in Aerospace Innovation and Application
3. Enhancing Human and Animal Health (OneHealth)
4. Powering a Growing World Population Sustainably and Responsibly

Indicative of society’s Grand Challenges, the four Priority Areas are best viewed as interdisciplinary intersections of institutional capacity and societal need – not as particular academic areas or divisions. As such, they will involve faculty, students and research professionals from across all the University’s schools, colleges and academic units, driving professional preparedness to meet workforce demands of each area, advancing new knowledge with research specific to each sector and creating economic opportunity through close coordination with industry across each sphere.

Ultimately, advances created by these areas will serve to enhance the quality of life, economic prospects and health outcomes for Oklahomans — with implications for world-wide application.

While the vibrant diversity of the OSU community will continue to engender and embrace scholarship and teaching in other arenas, the four Priority Areas will serve as the guide for prioritizing resources in pursuit of Land-Grant preeminence.

Driving all four Priority Areas to empower the economy, OSU will magnify its focus on workforce excellence – equipping the next generation for the jobs of tomorrow by creating agile, creative thinkers and adaptable, resilient team members. In order to prepare students for careers that might not currently exist and to position the University for maximum impact on society beyond the horizon, OSU will pursue advancement in the understanding and application of the future of work, entrepreneurship and workforce innovation. These dynamics will serve to unify the four Priority Areas and bring them to practical fruition for local communities and their economies.

Undergirding the four interdisciplinary areas is the vital necessity of STEM-prepared students — both as they enter OSU as students and as they leave as graduates. As such, Oklahoma State University will strengthen its commitment to aiding Oklahoma’s K-12 STEM capacity through large-scale coordinated investments in the communities it serves.
Access

The modern Land-Grant university harnesses a wind that blew open the doors of higher education in the last century — driving accessibility and distributing opportunity based on ability and effort rather than affluence or forthright. Since the start of the 20th Century, higher education has proven a key to economic progress for generations of Americans. A college degree can be a path out of poverty and into prosperity, particularly for individuals born into low-income families. Broad access to higher education is a central tenet in promoting the social mobility that remains a distinctive characteristic of our national identity. However, decades of diminishing public funding and costs of operation across the landscape of higher education mean that access is out of reach for an increasing number of prospective students and their families.

In response, Oklahoma State University aims not only to honor the Land-Grant commitment to access but to redouble its efforts to extend access as broadly as practicable.

In order to expand access, and in accordance with its Land-Grant mission, OSU will:

1. Enroll a minimum of 5,000 new first-year students by the fall of 2026 at the Stillwater campus

Objective 1: Recruit an increasing number of college-ready undergraduate students. Given its broad understanding of access — and as a means of extending the breadth of its service to the state and nation — Oklahoma State University intends to strategically increase enrollment across its system by fully resourcing its enrollment management function. With the state’s production of degree-holding citizens a stark 25% behind the national average, the dearth of college-prepared graduates threatens Oklahoma’s current workforce vitality and jeopardizes future economic prospects. OSU intends to meet this critical State need by increasing its overall student enrollment and leveraging all four of its undergraduate degree-granting campuses — Stillwater, Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and Okmulgee — and the Center for Health Sciences, growing enrollment, particularly in Oklahoma’s high-demand professions, as appropriate at each location. As a common, recognizable metric, OSU will use the Stillwater enrollment number as its measure of progress while pursuing growth across all its campus locations.

Objective 2: Increase scholarship support to new students. To increase enrollment from every rural corner of our 77 counties to the urban corridors of the State’s major cities and beyond, OSU will establish its broadest-reaching, most comprehensive initiative to date for providing flexible, timely financial support in the form of scholarships to help incoming first-year and transfer students to matriculate at the University. Constituted in a newly-created, University-wide initiative, support will span every school and will touch the entire Oklahoma State University system, meeting needs irrespective of college affiliation or major.

Objective 3: Create a university “Front Door.” To provide a central location for welcoming incoming students and preparing them for lives as active and contributing alumni, OSU will create a state-of-the-art, technologically-enabled facility to serve as a launching point for a Cowboy future and to house essential functions related to recruitment and retention.

Objective 4: Leverage best practices from successful on-campus retention initiatives — including those currently in use within living-learning communities, across the Greek system and with student-athletes — we will closely coordinate retention efforts and align student support through a seamlessly integrated web of services, intelligently leveraging critical data from housing, financial aid and academic affairs to attend to the vital contributors to student success.

Student Success

The broad consensus of research reveals a U.S. population at a generational low in its confidence in public institutions. From federal government entities and political structures to higher education institutions, public trust across 14 key categories has ebbed to critical levels. By increasing access to all college-ready students within its mission commitment — and by ensuring that its students benefit from an educational experience that enables them to enter the workforce both academically prepared and financially enabled — Oklahoma State University intends to prove its value to the society it is called to serve.

Objective 1: Increase retention-directed scholarships. Similar to the recruitment-directed scholarship initiative, this program will garner an unprecedented level of fungible scholarship dollars to address retention challenges induced by financial hardship.

Objective 2: Address student debt with specific, measurable targets. Together, the recruitment and retention scholarship programs will aim to lower the average debt of students who graduate with OSU debt to $3,000 per year and increase its percentage of students graduating OSU student debt-free to 60% beginning fall of 2026.

Objective 3: Increase advising capacity by 20%, limiting non-advisory duties of advisors to the maximum degree possible. Student success hinges not only on financial capability — addressed strategically through the availability of scholarship dollars to aid in persistence — but also on academic preparedness. Recognizing the critical nature of the professionals who mentor our students toward degree completion, OSU commits to providing robust and broadly-accessible advising and academic support. Additionally, we will innovate to create appropriate incentives for students to fully avail themselves of our advisory resources. By investing in our advisors and underclassmen-directed programs, the Oklahoma State University system commits to making targeted investments aimed at strengthening student success across all its campuses.

Objective 4: Enrich the student experience. Leveraging best practices from successful on-campus retention initiatives — including those currently in use within living-learning communities, across the Greek system and with student-athletes — we will closely coordinate retention efforts and align student support through a seamlessly integrated web of services, intelligently leveraging critical data from housing, financial aid and academic affairs to attend to the vital contributors to student success.

The Impact of Strategic Access and Student Success


1 For instance, a student born into the bottom 20 percent of the income distribution (or the lowest quintile) has a 45 percent chance of remaining there as an adult if he or she does not have a college degree. In contrast, individuals born into the bottom 20 percent of the income distribution (or the lowest quintile) has a 45 percent chance of remaining there as an adult if he or she does not have a college degree. In contrast, individuals born into the lowest quintile who do obtain a college degree have only a 16 percent chance of remaining there later in life. Brookings Institution, June 21, 2013.

2 Between 1980 and 2020, the average cost for tuition, fees, room and board for an undergraduate student increased 169%. Georgetown University Center for Education and the Workforce.
Cowboy Culture

Through soaring triumph and heart-breaking tragedy, the Cowboy family has been knit together by a set of ideals and standards that are timelessly durable yet imminently adaptable: simple enough to express the ethos of the storied institution, yet subtle enough to accommodate the complexities of the 21st century. We call it Cowboy Culture, and it distinguishes and drives everything we do.

Over the course of a year-long conversation featuring hundreds of on- and off-campus engagements and more than 3,500 virtual inputs, the Cowboy family has expressed the fundamental elements of its unique culture. At its best, Cowboy Culture inspires servant-leaders who humbly give of themselves to impact communities, improve society and steward the land and its people. It embodies the tough, practical sensibility of the Land-Grant vision that solves problems instead of merely identifying them. Recognizing that excelling in athletic competition plays an essential role in campus life and creating a world-wide community of Cowboys – driving vital participation ranging from student applications to donor giving – as well as developing a competitive spirit and individual character within its student-athletes, Oklahoma State University will compete at the highest levels of intercollegiate athletics.

Objective 1: Consistently vie for championships and finish in the Top 30 of the Directors Cup of competitive men’s and women’s Division I athletics. One high-profile expression of this sustained commitment to competitive excellence is the Cowboys’ position in the top echelon of Division 1 intercollegiate athletics, placing Oklahoma State among the top four institutions in the country in total collegiate national championships.

Objective 2: Consistently rank among the Top 30 public universities for the awarding of nationally- and internationally-competitive scholarships. OSU has a rich history of success and recognition in scholar development, positioning its student-scholars among the most notable in the land for awards including the Goldwater, Truman, Marshall, Fulbright, Udall, Rhodes and others. OSU will pursue competitive scholarships with vigor and will invest in high-level coordination that avails its students of these prestigious and enriching opportunities. While the aspiration is expressed in competitive terms, the real benefits of committing to increasing levels of preparation for our highest-achieving students is a worthy and valuable end in and of itself, and the processes that prepare them as competitive candidates will prepare them more generally for success and contribution, irrespective of their selection status.

IMPERATIVE 3

Compete with integrity and excellence

We end the day knowing we gave it everything we had. Cowboys carry a work ethic of tenacious integrity.

We dream only as big as the sky. Cowboys are creative innovators with boundless imagination.

We know challenges come with pain, but pain will not win. Cowboys seize and respond to opportunities, no matter the obstacles.

We have a passion to do what’s right, even when it’s hard. Cowboys help others and embrace a commitment to ethical excellence.

We stand for what matters, even if we stand alone. Cowboys understand that responsibility and leadership can sometimes be lonely.

We finish what we start. Cowboys stop when the task is done – not when the sun goes down.

Being a Cowboy isn’t in our clothes, it’s in our character. Cowboys conduct themselves with devotion and sincerity – ever Loyal and True.

Beyond merely describing its ideals, Oklahoma State University will leverage its unique Cowboy Culture to specifically develop its students, to interact with its stakeholders and to impact society.
The competencies are ordered with career readiness in mind – developed through conversation and dialogue with industry partners – advantaging our students in their search for jobs and graduate programs. The adaptability of these competencies will position our students for lasting success in their personal, public and professional lives. Ultimately, all OSU students will have a better understanding of how their degree helps them advance into a career, and the state, nation and world will understand what a degree from Oklahoma State University means.

In short, we want an OSU graduate to enter the workplace with common sense that can be applied for the common good with uncommon commitment.

THE IDEAL GRADUATE

Emanating from the character commitments that constitute Cowboy Culture is a set of personal attributes: the “competencies” we aspire to in the ideal Oklahoma State graduate. In addition to the excellence delivered through degree attainment, we envision that our students will achieve success through certain specific capabilities developed through their learning experience, allowing them to impact their communities as servant-leaders. Our graduates will exhibit an understanding of their role in positively impacting the lives of others and will graduate with knowledge, skills, values, and abilities that enrich their lives. OSU intends to elevate the cultivation of such competencies – many of which are currently encouraged and enabled through particular colleges, schools and programs – to a University- and system-level priority.

Objective 1: Create a unique student competency portfolio.
To drive development of the four competencies into the educational process for all OSU students, irrespective of which college or school they experience, OSU will provide the platform for a student portfolio for every graduate: an official, cloud-based, multimedia product that will be conferred at graduation and that can accompany a student’s resume or CV as they commence their career.

Self-directed and self-reported – but following a clear, technologically-enabled rubric – completion of the portfolio will indicate each student’s successful engagement with a series of University-sanctioned activities and experiences arrayed to develop the Ideal Graduate competencies. OSU views this tool as sufficiently important to the standardization of the student experience— and to the prospects it carries to help students as they enter their careers— that it will require it as a condition to apply for graduation.

The four competencies we seek in our graduates will help them deal with real-world challenges and apply their technical training within a context of the “why” behind their discipline. They encompass learning from within the classroom and through co-curricular programs and experiences, including (but not limited to):

• internships within their fields of study;
• substantive volunteerism;
• undergraduate research experience; and
• opportunities that “stretch” the student, including exposure to high-quality visual and performing arts and study abroad experiences.

Through a broad-based series of on- and off-campus workshops – and with the guiding hand of a strategy Working Group focused specifically on the topic – the four competencies were further defined as:

1. Professional preparedness
   • Works effectively as a member of a team
   • Solves problems through critical thinking
   • Communicates effectively in writing and verbally
   • Gets things done through a diligent work ethic

2. Engaged citizenship
   • Welcomes and includes individuals of all backgrounds, cultures and creeds
   • Respects and embraces the value of diversity in community
   • Exercises service to the community
   • Maintains respectful citizen qualities in the digital sphere

3. Ethical leadership
   • Makes decisions with integrity
   • Exercises empathy
   • Embraces accountability
   • Demonstrates moral courage

4. Personal responsibility
   • Exhibits tenacity, adaptability and persistence
   • Demonstrates financial literacy
   • Carries a commitment to continuous learning
   • Handles ambiguity with dexterity and creativity

The competencies are ordered with career readiness in mind – developed through conversation and dialogue with industry partners – advantaging our students in their search for jobs and graduate programs. The adaptability of these competencies will position our students for lasting success in their personal, public and professional lives. Ultimately, all OSU students will have a better understanding of how their degrees help them advance into a career, and the state, nation and world will understand what a degree from Oklahoma State University means. In short, we want an OSU graduate to enter the workplace with common sense that can be applied for the common good with uncommon commitment.
Teaching

Undergraduate and graduate instruction – the heart of Oklahoma State University’s mission – will continue to adapt. Just as it innovates in support of its four Priority Areas, OSU will incentivize its academic units to creatively adapt in their approaches to pedagogy – engaging learners across new media, encouraging experimentation and innovation in instructional modes and supporting faculty and graduate students in support of instructional excellence. Such innovation will necessarily differ from college to college and from discipline to discipline; however, the University intends to broadly facilitate creativity that can unlock the imaginative power of its faculty – the vital soul of the University.

In support of the strategic direction, OSU will:

**IMPERATIVE 5**

### Objective 1:
Refine General Education.
Undergraduate students at Oklahoma State University will experience a reimagined General Education curriculum that emphasizes competencies of great citizens and professionals. The General Education will be oriented around a set of “Grand Challenges,” forming the basis of a coherent educational path that commences freshman year and carries throughout the conclusion of the General Education process. In so doing, OSU students will naturally form cross-disciplinary cohorts that strengthens not only intellectual development but social engagement, as well. Potential hallmarks of the reimagined General Education curriculum include an introductory Freshman Seminar and a closely-coordinated, interdisciplinary “Cowboy Compass” to guide students through to completion.

The previously-identified competencies of the ideal General form a second key element of the Oklahoma State University teaching enterprise. While General Education will be conveyed through the classroom and lab and will be reflected in the transcript, competencies will also be developed through curricular activities and captured in the Student Portfolio. Taken together, both elements will cohere to make teaching at OSU a powerful force within the Land-Grant mission.

### Objective 2:
Create new undergraduate and graduate academic programming aimed at workforce and economic development.
In addition to the critical need for increasing numbers of undergraduate degree-holders, the decade from 2010-2020 alone added 2.6 million jobs that require an advanced degree. In order to meet the demand for both, by fall 2025, Oklahoma State University will create:

- Eight (8) new online program offerings;
- Eight (8) new Bachelor of Technology degrees (including in Advanced Technology and extending through the campuses at OSU-Tulsa, OSU-OKC and OSU-Okmulgee);
- Three (3) new Bachelor of Science degrees;
- Eight (8) new non-degree certificate programs in mission-critical areas of the economy; and
- Focused “4+” (e.g., 4-1 and 4-4 certificate) dual degree pathways across all colleges.

As the State’s Land-Grant University for more than a century, Oklahoma State University carries an unparalleled brand equity and an unrivaled degree of trust from Oklahomans. To further extend the University’s reach and to realize its commitment to meeting workforce demands, we will develop a more extensive, robust suite of online, evening, hybrid and accelerated (e.g., eight-week) offerings. The need for continuing education for working professionals, parents, and career transitions is vital to the progress of our society’s economic development, workforce capital, and leadership in organizations and communities throughout our state and the country.

Technologically-driven industry is growing across Oklahoma in areas including aerospace, autonomous vehicles and health care, and with it the demand for tech-capable workers. In addition to growing its existing suite of STEM-directed majors and degree programs, OSU commits to developing new degree programs aimed at strengthening Oklahoma’s technology workforce, including Polytechnic degrees (Bachelor of Technology) and alternative credentials, and leveraging its campuses in Tulsa, Okmulgee and Oklahoma City as vectors into deep industry relationships.

**IMPERATIVE 6**

### Elevate OSU among the ranks of R1 universities and leverage this top-tier status to advance research that impacts society

**Objective 1:** Attract and retain high-talent innovators who can work across disciplines beyond their own. Life is transdisciplinary. Accordingly, we will create a university system that supports and integrates transdisciplinary and/or convergent research, including in the faculty reappointment, promotion and tenure process. This will allow the exchange of knowledge, approaches, tools and technologies from diverse fields to stimulate innovation and discovery in our research.

**Objective 2:** Leverage Institutes to drive transdisciplinary discovery. In order to provide a mechanism for truly transdisciplinary research and application in these key areas, Oklahoma State University will aim to create and grow a series of targeted Institutes to complement its traditional academic units. Interdisciplinary in nature, integrated with industry and agile in their ability to seek and apply innovative funding, the Institutes will bring together existing faculty and non-faculty researchers – as well as undergraduates and graduate students – to work alongside industry experts for direct impact.

**Objective 3:** Fulfill the Land-Grant mission by broadening the reach of research. To further embed the new knowledge it generates in the lives of the communities it serves and to ensure its research impacts society, OSU will aim for two broad objectives:

1. To make our research available to the public:
2. To share our research through Extension

By creating a culture of accessibility, our research will be available to the public through an online medium, ensuring that it is formatted and appropriate for public use. Sharing our research by funding dissemination and extension activities with communities around the state will profoundly impact our population by allowing us to not only share research findings but to establish a critical feedback mechanism to ensure our research agenda meets contemporary needs.

Finally, Oklahoma State University recognizes our faculty and students as the intellectual capital that allows our institution to conduct groundbreaking research. It is therefore vital to our mission to incorporate students as much research as possible, giving them hands-on experience, bringing their perspectives to bear on the research and allowing them to understand research methods while contributing to projects larger than themselves. To ensure we gain and maintain the best and brightest minds, OSU commits to the cultivation of a system that cares for its intellectual capital.

**IMPERATIVE 7**

**Elevate and amplify Extension**

**Objective 1:** Leverage OSU’s historic strength and powerful heritage in agriculture to enable the addition of other vital capabilities for rural Oklahoma – including economic development, workforce excellence and healthcare – across the extension platform. Oklahoma State University will bring together its various extension efforts into a thoughtful, well-coordinated and system-wide apparatus that leverages all five campuses – and its presence in all 77 of Oklahoma’s counties – to position it within the institution for maximum impact on society. The University will appoint a champion to shepherd the OSU Extension effort and position it appropriately within the institution for influence and impact.
A TRUE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM FOR OKLAHOMA

To meet the high demands of its unique calling, Oklahoma State University commits to presenting the State with an effective and efficient University system – a multi-campus expression of the Land-Grant mission that is nimble, responsive and deeply embedded in the community and the economy. Through digital transformation and using the power of its campus network in Stillwater, Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Okmulgee, and the Center for Health Sciences, Oklahoma State University will touch every corner of the state and steward limited resources to world-class effect.

IMPERATIVE 8
Create an effective and efficient OSU system

Objective 1: Maximize and align the use of technology across campuses. To drive coherence and coordination of data and systems across locations, OSU will create a Technology Leveraging Council composed of internal and external stakeholders and authorized to make meaningful decisions in pursuit of effectiveness and efficiency.

Objective 2: Drive a Start Orange/Finish Orange ethos with seamless support across campuses. Irrespective of which campus a student engages, OSU will assure that programming and support make it logical and accessible for them to complete their ultimate educational aims within the OSU system.

Objective 3: Coordinate career preparation and placement across system campuses. To assure graduating Cowboys are positioned for success and impact as they enter their careers, OSU commits to building on the success of Hire OSU Grads – extending those resources to all campuses and integrating with industry-specific employer-partners in each location.

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY’S TIME IS NOW

Oklahoma needs its Land-Grant university – today more than ever before. And OSU is poised to lead. With the benefit of historically strong leadership and the arrival of new vision on campus, Oklahoma State University will leverage its unique Cowboy Culture in the cultivation of Ideal Graduates who impact the state, influence the nation and transform the world, extending expertise and new knowledge to communities across Oklahoma and reigniting the flame of citizen service. This is what Oklahoma’s Land-Grant will do. The time for Oklahoma State University is now.