



## 2024-2025 Institutional Effectiveness Plan

### *December 2024 Executive Summary*

Utica University's Institutional Effectiveness Plan 2024-2025 supports the institution's mission and the President's vision to create a sustainable institution. Achieving this vision requires comprehensive structural changes in three key areas:

- Academic profile and planning (APP)
- Strategic enrollment and marketing (SEM)
- Institutional financial structure (IFS)

The 2024-2025 goals address the structural changes needed to ensure a viable and thriving University that serves the educational needs of the Mohawk Valley and Central New York.

#### **2024-2025 Operational Goals**

1. Develop a student success-focused approach to service in all operations. (APP & SEM)
2. Develop a strategic academic plan focused on educational offerings and academic footprint. (APP, SEM, IFS)
3. Develop a strategic enrollment and marketing plan to support the academic plan. (APP, SEM, IFS)
4. Achieve a sustainable financial model that supports institutional growth. (IFS)

#### **Goal 1: Develop a student success-focused approach to service in all operations.**

Objective: Ensure all divisions and departments rewrite their mission statements to reflect their commitment to student success as defined by the institution's adopted definition of student success (2019).

Progress:

- *100% of non-academic departments submitted revised mission statements for review by either the Institutional Effectiveness Committee or the Co-Curricular Assessment Committee. Updated mission statements will be included on departmental web pages by February 2025. Academic departments will be asked to revise their mission statements during the 2025-2026 assessment cycle.*

Objective: Develop an action plan to address the Retention Committee's recommendations.

Progress:

- *A draft of an advisement training program was completed and will be presented to the faculty and staff in spring 2025.*
- *An [EAB Navigate Predictive Support Model](#) was developed.*
- *University policies were discussed with the President's Cabinet on September 30, 2024, and the President instructed Cabinet members to review policies and procedures relevant to their areas of responsibility and update accordingly. The web pages dedicated to University policies have been updated.*
- *The Vice President of Enrollment Management developed an enrollment strategy that was shared with the Board of Trustees in September 2024.*

Objective: Improve students' access to current and accurate information and resources.

Progress:

- *All policies and procedures in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs were updated to ensure current and accurate information regarding student support services, academic policies and processes, financial aid and finance policies, admissions requirements, and tuition and fees. School deans requested that program directors/chairs review all course descriptions and degree requirements and update them accordingly. A final review of the catalog will occur in January 2025, prior to publishing the catalog. Updates will again be made in preparation of the 2025-2026 catalog.*
- *A template for program handbooks was developed and shared with faculty in nursing, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. Faculty chairs will submit their handbook information in the new template to the Dean in March of 2025. The content will then move forward to legal review.*
- *Changes were made to the Academic Appeals Portal to improve the process, and the online Change of Major form is close to completion.*
- *The High Honors and Deans List process has been automated and modernized to allow students to showcase their achievements digitally through a LinkedIn badge or downloadable certificate.*

Objective: Develop an action plan to address documented inequities impacting student success for undergraduate and graduate students at traditional, additional locations and distance campuses.

Progress:

- *An [action plan](#) was developed and will be shared with a sub-committee of the Provost's Retention Committee, the DEIB-ST team, and the Strategic Advisory Committee for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging.*

**Goal 2: Develop a strategic academic plan focused on educational offerings and academic footprint.**

Objective: Assess the viability of the additional locations in St. Petersburg, FL, Latham, NY, and Liverpool, NY.

Progress:

- *The University announced on October 21, 2024, that it will close the St. Petersburg lab location. Work-related to this closing—teach-out plan, communication plan, substantive change application—is currently ongoing.*
- *The University identified ways to reduce the space needed to teach-out the programs offered in St. Petersburg. A plan to reallocate the remaining staff to the original campus floor plan has been prepared.*
- *The contents of the Miramar campus have been evaluated and the University has three alternatives to choose from to remove and or reallocate the contents of the space when it is subleased. A similar plan will be developed for the contents of the St. Petersburg campus when the teach-out process nears its end.*
- *A financial review of the locations in Latham, New York, and Liverpool, New York, has been completed based on the Fall 2024 enrollments. The analyses will be updated after the Spring 2025 census date.*

Objective: Assess the performance of third-party providers to determine if their services meet our students' needs and if the institution is achieving an adequate return on its investment.

Progress:

- *Contracts with Third-Party Providers and large vendors are currently under review.*
- *Recent discussions with RisePoint (formerly Wiley Educational Services) resulted in establishing enrollment metrics by which the provider will be held accountable. Further, the portfolio in that partnership is now focused on three specific programs (down from over a dozen) and includes Social Work, Cybersecurity, and the Family Nurse Practitioner program.*
- *Specific services were eliminated from the Collegis provider.*

Objective: Identify opportunities to partner with other institutions that will improve the student experience and/or the institution's financial health.

Progress:

- *Provost Nesbitt is leading this initiative. Discussions with other regional universities are beginning to yield potential pathways for new institutional models that may positively and significantly impact the delivery of higher education throughout the Mohawk Valley.*

Objective: Evaluate the compatibility and currency of academic offerings with regional market demands.

Progress:

- *The Vice President for Enrollment Management is identifying specific areas of interest for college-age students in New York State and the mid-Atlantic region, as well as analyzing data to understand the reasons for declining enrollments, particularly in high-demand disciplines.*
- *The Vice President for Enrollment Management is working closely with the University's School Deans to identify where synergies exist between programs, including around the broader fields of sustainability, business analytics, health delivery and management, and the STEM disciplines broadly defined.*
- *Advancement interviewed Data Append companies to gather information about graduates and selected LiveAlumni. Anecdotal evidence about where graduates are employed, job titles, and approximate salaries will be available late January 2025.*

**Goal 3: Develop a strategic enrollment and marketing plan to support the academic plan.**

Objective: Evaluate the effectiveness of internal marketing processes.

Progress:

- *A comprehensive review of website content for academic and administrative departments is currently being conducted and should be completed by the end of the fall 2024 term.*
- *Marketing & Communication is currently working with external hosting partner Pantheon; the migration of the current utica.edu to an externally hosted platform is targeted for September 2025.*
- *Collegis provided a report upon completion of its Website Refresh Assessment. The report focused on user experience and brand, search engine optimization, website governance, wayfinding and usability, conversion rate optimization, inbound content, accessibility and technical performance. Proposed strategies addressed optimizing student acquisition and the prospective student journey.*
- *Marketing and Communications and Admissions are implementing changes to the website journey map specific to prospective students and the inquiry/application process.*
- *The Web Advisory Group identified seven objectives for the next redesign of the University's website to include major technical upgrades and user interface improvements.*

Objective: Evaluate the effectiveness and return on investment of the institution's third-party marketing partners and external Marketing processes.

Progress:

- *The Statement of Work with Collegis has been rewritten with changes implemented in January 2025.*

- *The Orbis partnership provides a healthy return on investment given the inclusiveness of the support provided: marketing, recruitment, student success, facilities, equipment, and teaching costs. Costs to the University are primarily administrative and operational support for the partnership and nursing operations. Most recently the net tuition revenue on an annual basis is on average \$1M for the University.*
- *The marketing efforts led by Collegis were closely monitored from the start of the partnership. Modifications were made in December of 2023 and ended completely in July 2024 due to the proposed cost per lead for the coming year. The associated recruitment efforts will end following the Spring 2025 start, and although the retention efforts were more than successful, they, too, will be brought in-house beginning in the Spring of 2025 to streamline the student experience.*

Objective: Analyze the data to identify enrollment opportunities and recruitment strategies.

Progress:

- *The Vice President for Enrollment Management is drafting an evidence-based, detailed enrollment management plan that includes targets and goals by location, points of entry, international students, and student-athletes.*
- *The University recently introduced the Pioneer Passport Program, which assures academically qualified, first-time-in-college New York State residents with an Adjusted Gross Income of \$65,000 or less free tuition and fees to attend Utica University.*

**Goal 4: Achieve a sustainable financial model that supports institutional growth.**

Objective: Evaluate the return on investment of athletic programs.

Progress:

- *A cost analysis that includes operating expenses for each athletic program, average spending per student-athlete, net tuition revenue per student-athlete, cost of facilities and physical space, and expenses related to support for student-athletes and athletics was completed.*
- *Members of the Athletics Leadership Group and the Student-Athlete Advisory Council developed a strategic plan for athletics that addresses revenue generation, effective expense management, and size and number of athletic programs. The first draft of the plan has been shared with all full-time athletic staff and part-time head coaches.*

Objective: Implement best practices for daily financial management and annual departmental budget allocation.

Progress:

- *Procedures and policies related to the following were revised in August/September 2024: purchasing and accounts payable, credit card, and travel. The Comptroller and Vice President will meet with the team in January to resolve the remaining questions on the revisions.*

- *Financial Affairs and Student Financial Services are revising policies and procedures related to student accounts, focusing on providing timely and accurate invoices to students, expediting the student collections process, monitoring receivable balances, reconciling the accounts receivable subsidiary ledger to the general ledger, and ensuring compliance with the DOE's Heightened Cash Monitoring, which the University was placed on in October 2024.*
- *Financial Affairs has made progress in maximizing the functionality of the Transact system (for credit cards/ACH/eChecks) by requiring a pay type for all payment plans. They have identified enhanced functionality for various transactions, such as requiring a payment type to be entered when setting up a payment plan. Requiring a payment type for payment plans for domestic students was launched in December 2024. This should expedite our collection efforts.*
- *The Financial Affairs team is working with the Independent Consultant on the report to ensure compliance with the Debt Service Covenant. Therefore, work on the FY2025 Reforecast and FY2026 - FY2028 Proforma is well underway. The team will determine in January the best way to roll out the budget process.*
  - *The Enrollment Model was re-forecasted in mid-September based on the fall census data. New student enrollment projections were reviewed, and revisions were incorporated in the Enrollment Model, to support the Reforecast and Proforma noted above. Targets will be finalized after the Spring 2025 Enrollment Freeze.*
  - *Operating and Payroll Expenditure targets were preliminarily set and incorporated in the Reforecast and Proforma noted above.*

Objective: Maximize the functionality of key information technology systems and develop a plan to identify and eliminate redundant or niche systems.

Progress:

- *Enrollment and Advancement have been consolidated into a single platform (Slate), and it has been identified that student success can also be incorporated. A test environment has been established, and development will begin. It has also been identified that scholarship awards and tracking can be incorporated into this platform, further consolidating technology systems.*
- *A package tracking system was developed that replaced an outsourced solution that aligns with other campus ticket systems and forms.*
- *The development of a Departmental Ticket System and Forms is in progress.*
- *An applicant tracking system for Human Resources has been identified to consolidate Faculty, Staff, and Students from two platforms to one. Implementation will begin in the spring semester.*

Objective: Revise capital expense policy and budget process to include approval by the Board of Trustees and outline ROI.

Progress:

- *Financial Affairs is revising the Capital Expenditure policies and procedures incorporating revisions from the current ROI Policy and proposed Signature Authorization Policy.*