



# Winona State 2035



Long-Range Planning Committee

Winona State University

Final – October 22, 2025

## Acknowledgements

We have a responsibility to honor the history of this place. We recognize and acknowledge that Winona State University is situated on the ancestral lands of the Dakota people. We acknowledge and honor the Dakota Nations and the sacred land of all indigenous peoples.

We gratefully acknowledge the members of the Winona State University Long-Range Planning Committee, whose time and dedication to this university is reflected on every page of this plan.



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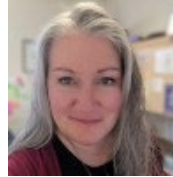
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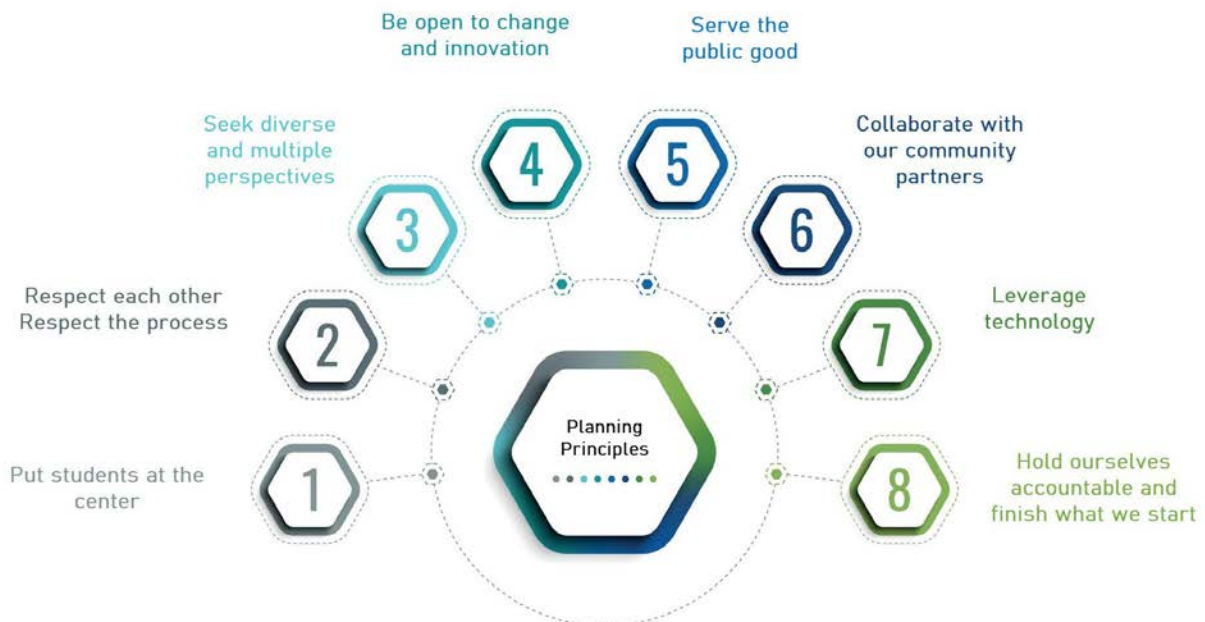
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## Winona State 2035 – Brighter Together

For over 160 years, the foundation of Winona State’s success as a comprehensive regional public university has been our dedication to our mission and values, our commitment to enhancing the intellectual, social, cultural, and economic vitality of the people and communities we serve, and our inventiveness and resilience as we plan together to meet learners’ changing needs.

**Winona State 2035** is a 10-year university strategic plan that builds on our strengths, resolves key issues, opens new opportunities for innovation, and sets three clear pillars for supporting the work ahead. It rests on shared planning principles that will guide us as we work together over the next decade.



## Our Mission, Values, and Vision

Winona State 2035 reaffirms our commitment to our university mission, values, and vision.

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*Our mission is to enhance the intellectual, social, cultural, and economic vitality of the people and communities we serve. We offer undergraduate programs based on the traditions and values of the arts and sciences and an array of graduate and professional programs that are especially responsive to the needs of the Upper Midwest. We prepare our graduates to serve generously, lead responsibly, and respond imaginatively and creatively to the challenges of their work, their lives and their communities. **We are a community of learners improving our world.***

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Our values align with our mission and are infused into our curriculum, services, and experiences. Winona State values **intellectual growth and development, student**



### Intellectual Growth and Development

We value being a community of learners who promote purposeful engagement, intellectual inquiry and creative innovation across our university.



### Student Success

We enhance the student experience while evolving to meet the needs of future students by providing comprehensive support programs and services so that students can successfully meet their goals.



### Inclusive Excellence

We ensure universal access and build a strong sense of community and belonging.



### Resources and Relationships

We serve as trusted stewards of our physical surroundings, of our financial and human resources, and of our internal and external community relationships.

**success, inclusive excellence**, and the careful stewardship of **resources and relationships**.

Our vision flows from our mission and values, clearly defining our aspirations for the next decade.

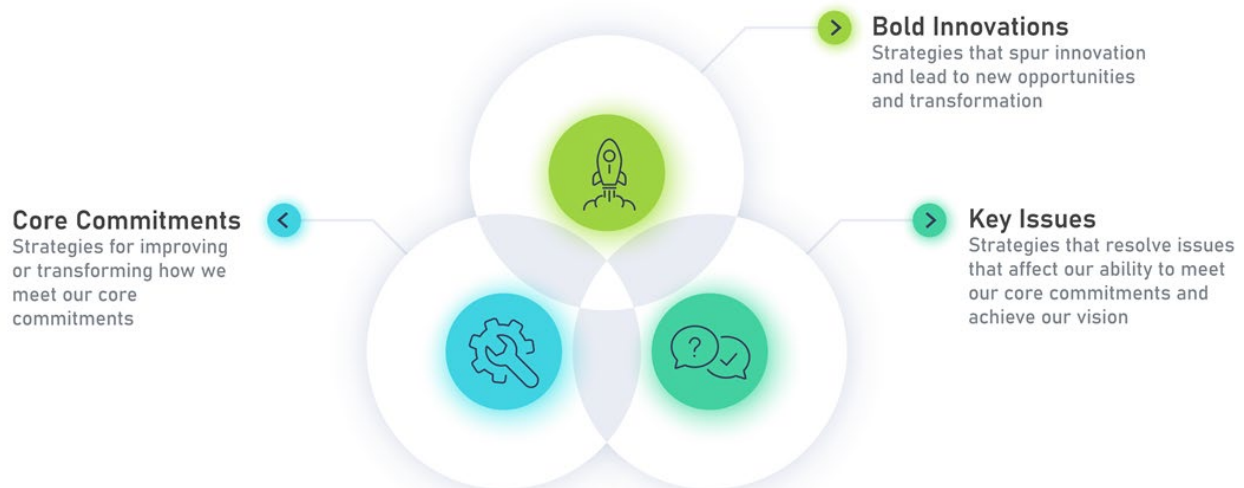
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*Winona State University strives to be Minnesota’s preeminent student-centered academic community. As a Community of Learners, we support student growth and development by promoting purposeful student engagement, intellectual inquiry, creative innovation, and responsible stewardship of knowledge. The university aspires to be a leader in academic excellence, equity, and community engagement.*

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We have already made great strides toward achieving our vision and will settle for nothing less than becoming Minnesota’s preeminent student-centered academic community. Winona State 2035 is our roadmap to this destination.

## Planning on Four Levels



Strategic planning is, “a deliberative, disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it” (Bryson and George, 2024). Winona State has always planned deliberately, striving to honor our past, understand our present, and anticipate our future.

Winona State 2035 guides our work on four levels. First, it focuses on improving, enhancing, and transforming our ability to meet our **core commitments**. These are things

we must do based on our mission and values, and the obligations required by federal and state agencies, accrediting bodies, collective bargaining agreements, and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system. Second, Winona State 2035 focuses on resolving **key issues** that affect our ability to meet our core commitments and be innovative. Third, true to our longstanding tradition of leadership within the Minnesota State system and beyond, Winona State 2035 supports **bold innovations** with great transformative potential. Finally, Winona State 2035 advances three new thematic pillars of engagement: **The Warrior Way, The Warrior Edge, and The Warrior Shield**, to further inspire us and distinguish this great university in the decade ahead.

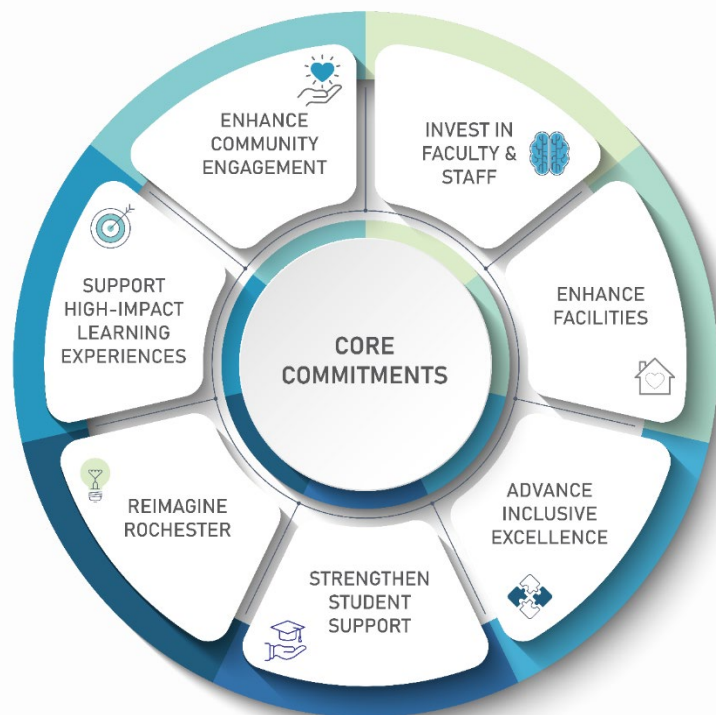
## Strengthening Our Core Commitments

Winona State 2035 guides the work of the campus community to meet our core commitments and embody our mission and values.

Our students recognize that personal contact with caring, expert faculty and staff makes Winona State distinctive. To continue that tradition, we must respond to our changing internal and external environment. Changes affecting university teaching, support services, and operations have accelerated, including the emergence of new technologies, an increase in students' need for accommodation, and the demand for more flexible learning options. Working in this new environment

requires continuous support, learning, and development. Winona State 2035 will **invest in faculty and staff** at all levels of their careers by supporting initiatives that provide the resources they need to learn, grow, and succeed.

Winona State is committed to providing comfortable learning environments for our residential students, who expect modern classrooms and residence halls, accessible



recreational spaces, varied dining options, wellness resources, athletic facilities, and convenient parking. Sustainability and environmental consciousness are important to our students and align with our mission, values, and commitment to be trusted stewards of our physical surroundings. Winona State 2035 will **enhance facilities** through initiatives focused on quality-of-life and sustainability.

Inclusive excellence is one of our four university values. We aspire to be a leader in equity and our students appreciate our safe, inclusive learning spaces. Winona State 2035 will **advance inclusive excellence** by investing in initiatives that enhance campus diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Winona State is committed to providing all students with the support they need to be successful. The quality, variety, and accessibility of our student services makes us distinctive. Winona State 2035 will invest in initiatives that **strengthen student support**.

Our core commitments apply equally to both our Winona and Rochester campuses. Winona State 2035 will invest in initiatives that **reimagine Rochester** to leverage our position in this diverse and growing metropolitan community.

Winona State is committed to providing a valuable, comprehensive education. Evidence shows that [high-impact instructional practices](#) such as capstone projects, student research, group work, common intellectual experiences, studio-based learning, public exhibitions, design showcases, and global learning provide significant educational benefits, strengthening reading, writing, and critical thinking, as well as developing enduring skills in emerging areas. Winona State 2035 will **support high-impact learning experiences** through initiatives that help us apply them in and out of the classroom. This includes strengthening our support for student research and creative achievement, through ongoing and new investments.

Community means something special at Winona State and our commitment to community runs deep. We are a community of learners improving our world and we are valued partners in our local, regional, and state communities. Winona State 2035 will invest in initiatives that **enhance community engagement** by strengthening our campus community, engaging with our community partners, and serving the public good.

## Resolving Our Key Issues

In addition to strategies that strengthen the rich traditions and core commitments that are the bedrock of a Winona State education, the world is changing, and we must focus our resources on resolving key strategic issues that affect our ability to achieve our vision. Rather than problems, these are opportunities to innovate and lead. Winona State has

always addressed pressing issues in creative ways. Together, we will update our **Strategic Issues Agenda** over the next decade as we resolve issues and remain responsive to our changing world. As a starting point, Winona State 2035 recognizes the following top four strategic issues facing the university:



1. **How do we achieve financial sustainability?** Financial sustainability refers to a university’s ability to meet its financial obligations and maintain its long-term viability through resilience in the face of changing conditions.



2. **How do we meet changing learner needs?** Changes in the needs of learners, the workforce, and society will require us to change our practices across the entire university.



3. **How do we transform our planning and decision-making processes?** We need to be more agile, communicate more effectively, and leverage data and technology to support decision-making.



4. **How do faculty and staff develop future-ready skills?** We need to stay sharp, grow in the face of rapid change and greater competition for our time, and leverage our community to learn together.

Strategies for resolving these four issues fall into five themes. The **Key Issues Strategy Map** includes five strategies, one in each theme, that Winona State 2035 will implement to resolve each key issue.

	Teaching and Learning	Student Success	Community Engagement	Effectiveness and Climate	Enrollment
Achieve Financial Sustainability	Support new innovative academic programs and research	Increase persistence and retention	Add new funding partnerships and programs	Optimize resource allocation and efficiency	Strengthen recruitment strategies and branding
Meet Changing Learner Needs	Support innovative teaching and research practices	Provide greater learning flexibility	Improve alignment of learning and workforce needs	Enhance student support services and resources	Diversify enrollment
Transform Planning and Decision-Making	Facilitate data-informed decision-making	Use learning analytics to improve student success	Enhance shared governance and feedback loops	Improve communication and transparency	Leverage predictive analytics for enrollment planning
Enhance Employee Learning and Development	Expand faculty development programming	Increase awareness of student success data and research	Expand learning communities	Enhance staff learning and development	Explore new recruitment methods

- **Teaching and Learning.** Strategies that focus on instructional transformation and innovation, including how to best support the changing needs of learners and the innovative work of faculty.

- **Student Success.** Strategies that focus on helping students succeed, based on both traditional measures such as persistence, retention, and graduation rate, and their development of life and professional skills through classroom, research, and co-curricular experiences, including student employment.
- **Community Engagement.** Strategies that focus on connecting Winona State students, services, and planning with the Winona area community and beyond. They define community engagement as an important differentiator for Winona State that extends beyond the cities of Winona and Rochester to include the region, state, nation, and world.
- **Effectiveness and Climate.** Strategies that focus on leveraging improvements in institutional effectiveness and maintaining a positive campus climate, including improving specific services, establishing new ones, and supporting employee professional learning and development.
- **Enrollment.** Strategies that focus primarily on recruitment and enrollment, marketing and management, including brand management, communication, and diversifying enrollment.

To help us achieve financial sustainability, Winona State 2035 will invest in initiatives that **support new, innovative academic programs** of high value to students; **increase the persistence and retention** of our enrolled students; **add new funding partnerships and programs** to open revenue streams; **optimize resource allocation and efficiency** through structural improvements; and **strengthen recruitment strategies and branding** to better connect with new student populations.

To help us meet changing learner needs, Winona State 2035 will invest in initiatives designed to **support innovative teaching practices** that engage students in personalized and impactful ways and **provide greater learning flexibility** to better serve all learners, including online learners and those needing accommodation. To adapt to societal and professional changes, we will continue to **improve the alignment between learning and workforce needs** and **enhance student support services and resources** for all learners. We will **diversify enrollment** by opening opportunities for new student populations.

To help us transform our planning and decision-making processes, Winona State 2035 will invest in initiatives that find new ways to **facilitate data-informed decision-making** and **use learning analytics to improve student success**. We will **enhance shared governance and feedback loops** and **improve communication and transparency** to transform how we work together. We will better **leverage predictive analytics for enrollment planning** to make our enrollment marketing and management practices more proactive.

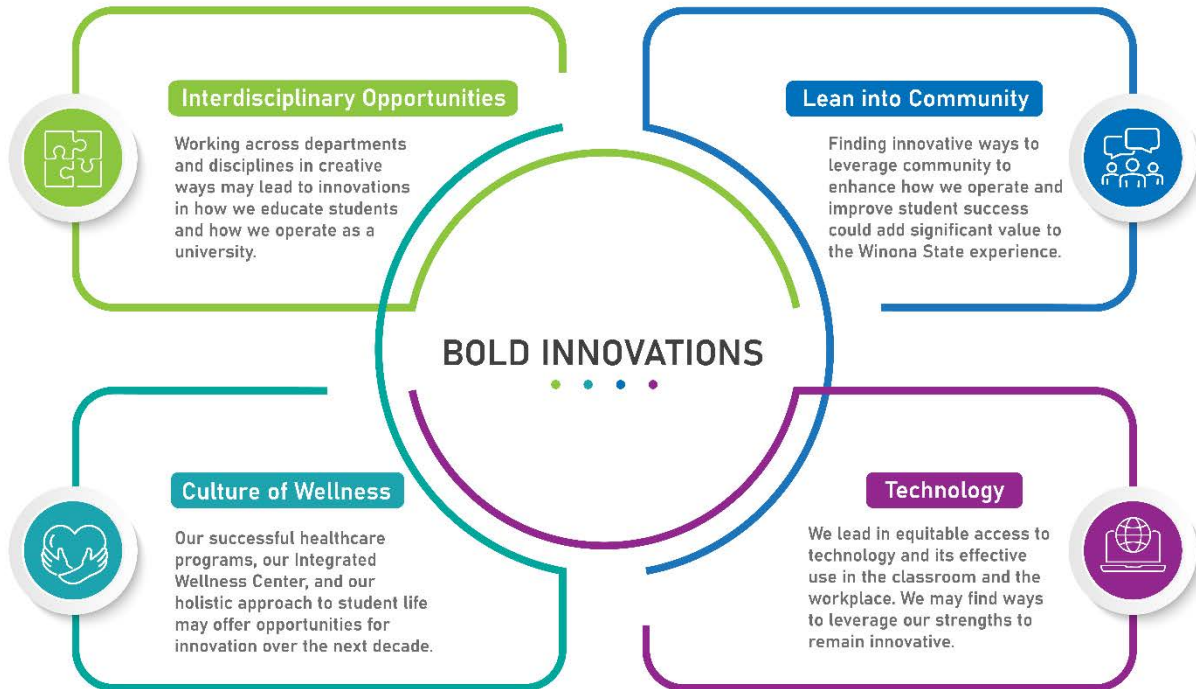
To help us enhance employee professional learning and development, Winona State 2035 will invest in initiatives that **expand faculty development programming** to provide better coverage of changes and emerging trends, including digital fluency, visual literacy, and human-centered design. Throughout the entire university, we will **increase awareness of student success data and research** and **expand learning communities** as an important channel for professional growth. We will **enhance staff learning and development** and **explore new recruitment methods** for improving enrollment marketing and management.

## Boldly Innovating

Universities have always been the seat of discovery and innovation, and Winona State has been a change leader in the Minnesota State system in the areas of teaching and learning, community engagement, student life and development, technology, assessment and data-informed decision-making, and business process management for decades. Being innovative involves taking risks and sometimes failing forward. These high-risk, high-reward moonshots can also pay huge dividends, lead to positive transformation, and add significant value. Winona State 2035 will focus on the following strategies that will spur innovation:

- **Leverage innovative interdisciplinary opportunities.** Working across departments and disciplines in creative ways may lead to innovations in how we educate students and how we operate as a university. Winona State is already seeing benefits from interdisciplinary engagement in our Individualized Studies Program, interprofessional education in Nursing, and collaboration across service centers in our Warrior Hub. With our Center for Interdisciplinary Collaboration, Engagement, and Learning (CICEL) on the horizon and our strategy to reimagine Rochester, we may find unique opportunities to use design thinking as a bridge between disciplines over the next decade.
- **Lean into community.** Our supportive community has always been something that distinguishes Winona State. Finding innovative ways to leverage the power of community to enhance how we operate and improve student success could add significant value to the Winona State experience.
- **Enhance our culture of wellness.** Winona State's successful healthcare programs, our Integrated Wellness Complex, and our holistic approach to student life and development are distinctive and may present rich opportunities for continued innovation over the next decade.

- **Take our application of technology to the next level.** Our eWarrior Digital Life and Learning Program was innovative when launched in 1997 and we continue to lead the Minnesota State system in equitable access to technology and its effective use in the classroom and the workplace. The next decade promises great technological change and Winona State may find ways to leverage our strengths to remain innovative.



## Pillars and Initiatives

Hundreds of suggestions for specific improvements, enhancements, initiatives, projects, and activities were contributed by the campus community during stakeholder discussions. Some university-level initiatives - such as Equity 2030; planning for our new residence hall and the Center for Interdisciplinary Collaboration, Engagement, and Learning; and new enrollment projects - are already underway.

Proposed initiatives were grouped into three thematic pillars: The Warrior Way, The Warrior Edge, and the Warrior Shield.

1. **The Warrior Way.** Winona State will be Minnesota's learning campus for community, belonging, and personalized support, all rooted in acts of kindness and purposeful connection. We will be known nationally as the Warrior State of Kind, a campus where kindness, respect, and community are not just values, but a way of life.
2. **The Warrior Edge.** Winona State will give our students the edge they need to succeed in a rapidly changing world: an innovative, comprehensive, future-ready education, the ability to think critically, create, and evolve, and a strong professional network to support their career development.

3. **The Warrior Shield.** Winona State will be a good steward of our physical surroundings and our financial and human resources, providing our campus community with data-enabled, reliable, effective, and sustainable environments needed to excel academically, socially, and professionally.

While our internal, strategic decision-making about investments in initiatives and projects will be based on whether the investment helps us meet a core commitment, resolve a key strategic issue, and/or leads to valuable innovation, our Winona State 2035 pillars will be an effective way to convey our strategic priorities in a format that resonates with the campus, our prospective students and their families, our community partners, and others in the broader community.



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## WARRIOR JOURNEY

Transform our first- and second-year experiences to engage and support students as they step in, show up, stand out, soar forward, and share back



## MENTOR NETWORK

Establish new ways for students to connect with mentors to support their academic success, professional development, and sense of belonging



## CAMPUS COMPASS

With retention at the center, transform students' experience through proactive advising, better use of technology, and more accessible data.



## THRIVE ONLINE

Provide personalized services and a sense of belonging for our online students and our residential students who need additional flexibility



*Where kindness becomes community*



## WARRIOR EDGE

INNOVATE • EVOLVE • LEARN

Winona State will give our students the edge they need to succeed in a rapidly changing world: an innovative, comprehensive, future-ready education, the ability to think critically, create, and evolve, and a strong professional network to support their learning and career development.



## ENDURING LITERACIES

In addition to reading, writing, and critical thinking, help build enduring skills related to information, media, and digital literacy, including the effective and responsible use of AI



## EMPOWER YOU

Create innovative professional learning and development programs for Winona State employees that are personalized and career-focused



## COMMUNITY NAVIGATOR

Build systems and services to help students and employees connect with community-based learning and service opportunities in Winona and Rochester



## WARRIOR SCHOLARS

Enhance scholarship, research, creative problem-solving, and performance by expanding writing across the curriculum, our University Scholars Program, and the integration of high-impact practices across all academic disciplines



*Where curiosity becomes capacity*



## WARRIOR SHIELD

RESILIENT • SUSTAINABLE • RESPONSIVE

Winona State will be a good steward of our physical surroundings and our financial and human resources, providing our campus community with data-enabled, reliable, effective, and sustainable environments needed to excel academically, socially, and professionally.



## WARRIOR PLACES

Invest in Winona and Rochester campus renewal and facilities projects, including CICEL, a new residence hall, athletic facilities, and quality-of-life improvements



## DATA HUBS

Create data hubs and dashboards that provide continuous access to data for useful insights and data-informed decisions



## HEALTHCARE COLLECTIVE

Build a hub for all healthcare departments, services, and resources, reflecting the importance we place on the physical and mental wellness of our community

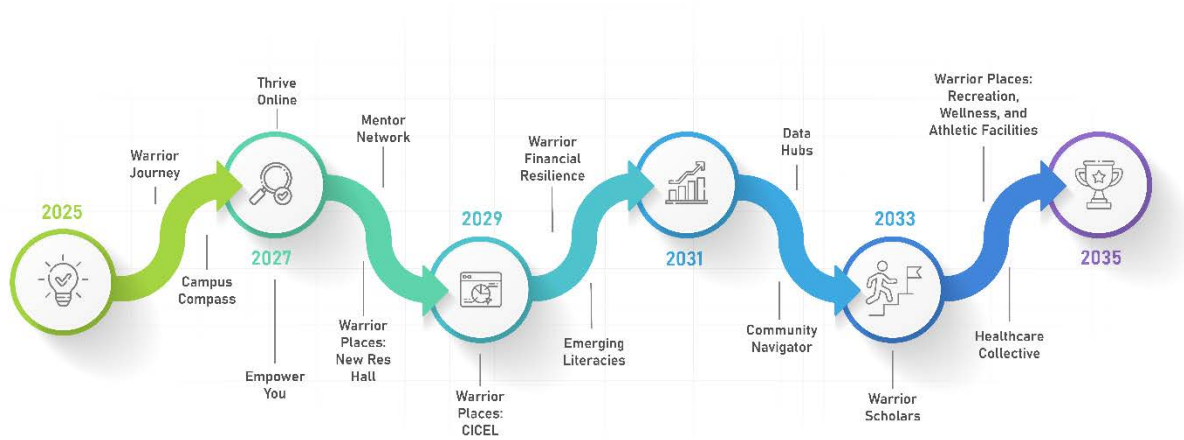


*Where planning becomes action*

## WARRIOR FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

Enhance operational efficiency and cost management, diversify revenue streams, engage in strategic enrollment management, optimize financial aid, support financial transparency and stakeholder engagement





## Implementation, Alignment, and Accountability

Winona State 2035 will be implemented through continuous review, deliberation, and revision by our campus community; alignment with unit-level strategic plans; and using balanced assessment that keeps the plan on track. All Winona State 2035 strategies will be assigned to a member of Cabinet who will be held accountable for the work. Initiatives will be staggered across the years to maximize our capacity, with initiatives focused on our core commitments and our key strategic issues starting first.

Winona State 2035 is a roadmap that guides university units, programs, and departments as they engage in strategic planning and establish strategic priorities. Their unit-specific, incremental (e.g., three-year) strategic plans will align with our university plan. This includes our Academic, Facilities, Technology, Library, Athletics, Affirmative Action, Student Enrollment Management, Student Life and Development, Inclusive Excellence, and WSU-Rochester plans. These plans, and corresponding annual reports, are [shared on our university website](#).

At Winona State, faculty are responsible for the curriculum. Corresponding curricular strategies and initiatives are detailed in the **Academic Strategic Plan**. Winona State 2035 supports this academic planning by consulting with faculty to ensure that the university strategic plan accommodates their academic priorities and by identifying broad university-level strategies designed to benefit faculty and instruction across all colleges and disciplines.

## Brighter Together

Our ultimate measure of success is achieving our shared university vision. Guided by our three pillars, Winona State 2035 provides a set of strategies designed to accomplish

that goal by investing in our core commitments, resolving the issues that challenge us, and exploring bold, innovative ideas with great transformative potential.

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Winona State 2035 establishes a planning framework that is deliberative and rooted in our collaborative culture. It represents thousands of ideas from hundreds of people who care about the university: students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners. It's a dynamic plan that we will review and adjust together through a designated and proactive process as conditions change. We already face new and persistent challenges. Enrollment shifts, the impact of generative artificial intelligence, climate change, and changing student needs are just a few of the curves on the road ahead. We take this road not with a deficit mindset but focused on hope, growth, and renewal. There will be bumps along the way, but even greater opportunities to excel and lead. Working together, we will all shine



brighter. Planning together, we will light the way toward a brighter future and become Minnesota's preeminent student-centered academic community.