

The Plan for Pitt: Launching Fall 2021

The Forces Shaping Higher Education—and Pitt—Today

Since our university's founding in 1787, Pitt has emerged as a global leader in academics, research and scholarship aimed at addressing society's most complex and urgent challenges.

Over the last five years—and under the auspices of our prior strategic plan—we continued growing Pitt's reputation and record of success. These improvements have included:

- Realizing the largest restructuring of financial aid in the University's history to help make a Pitt education more affordable and accessible.
- Launching several seminal "firsts" for Pitt, including establishing the University's first-ever Capital Master Plan; School of Computing and Information; Office for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; and Office of Sustainability.
- Securing a record \$900 million in annual research expenditures and maintaining our top 10 ranking in terms of annual funds received from the National Institutes of Health.
- Shaping how medical teams throughout the world provide cutting-edge medical care, including COVID-19 care.
- Collaborating on a number of efforts—such as the creation of N91 and InnovatePGH—aimed at driving economic opportunity and growth in Western Pennsylvania.
- Expanding our capacity for innovation, including increasing the number of invention disclosures and number of startups emerging from Pitt technologies.
- Enacting a place-based model for community partnership via the opening of our stand-alone Community Engagement Centers.

Our new strategic plan, outlined in the ensuing pages, builds on Pitt's prior successes while also reacting to one of the most disruptive and volatile times that our university community—and the broader field of higher education— has ever seen. Accordingly, this plan prioritizes change and recognizes the unique internal and external factors that are shaping both our institution and the world around us. To name a few:

- **Our pool of potential college students is shrinking.** Long-standing demographic trends in the United States will soon exert a powerful influence on the world of higher education. This system is approaching a demographic cliff— estimated to occur in 2026—when the number of 18-year-olds nationwide will begin to decline, courtesy of a birthrate drop due to the Great Recession.
- **Our student population is changing.** The nation's student population is growing more diverse in terms of race, ethnicity and sexual orientation. In fact, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, America will soon have no clear racial or ethnic majority.

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- **The higher education landscape is changing.** Universities around the world are increasing in number and quality. These institutions are successfully competing for foreign-born students while sometimes out-competing U.S.-based institutions for these same students.
- **The cost of college is (still) changing.** The cost of higher education has risen dramatically in recent decades while public investment in institutions like Pitt has decreased. This disparity has persisted amid a widening wealth gap between the nation's richest and poorest citizens. Such conditions can cause families to question the value of higher education—especially a four-year undergraduate degree.
- **What college looks like is changing.** Technology continues to shape the higher education landscape, expanding what teaching, collaboration and research look like, where and when these activities can take place, and how students learn.
- **The role of an advanced degree is changing.** The knowledge economy and demand for higher specialization in some sectors of the labor market have placed a premium on certain graduate and professional degrees. In these fields, an advanced degree or formal training can be the rule—not the exception.
- **And finally: COVID-19 has changed everything.** The pandemic, which dominated daily life in 2020 and 2021, forced the world of higher education to evolve—suddenly—in unprecedented ways. At Pitt, the crisis impacted everything from how we connected with each other to what our budget looked like to which research projects we prioritized.

As we begin implementing this new plan, we must be clear about how we want to change but also how the world is still changing around us. We will need to be agile—assessing our progress and evolving accordingly—while also being innovative, resourceful and intentional. And we must view the space between where we are now and where we want to go next as an exciting opportunity to enhance our legacy; advance our mission; and strengthen Pitt's people, programs and purpose for years to come.

Our Mission To leverage knowledge— through teaching, research and community service—for society's gain.

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What Guides Us: The University’s Mission Focuses Our Success In Three Areas

<p>OUR PEOPLE <i>Who We Are</i></p> <p>We are a diverse community of scholars, learners, partners and leaders dedicated to a common cause: the pursuit of knowledge.</p>	<p>OUR PROGRAMS <i>What We Do</i></p> <p>Our initiatives and operations fuel opportunities of the highest quality in three key areas: academic excellence, research and scholarship, and community service.</p>	<p>OUR PURPOSE <i>The Difference We Make</i></p> <p>We improve lives and communities—at every scale—by creating knowledge and leveraging our expertise to tackle some of society’s greatest and most pressing challenges.</p>
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Prioritizing Change

The Plan for Pitt identifies how and where we want to improve. It calls for:

- Adding institutional strengths and reputational drivers in the areas of academics, research and scholarship, and community service.
- Enhancing the University’s capacity to help improve lives, systems and communities.
- Nurturing opportunities for Pitt community members to grow individually and to collectively create, use and share knowledge.

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Our People

The important work of empowering our students, faculty and staff to realize their full potential is always evolving—and always worth it.

The Aim

The Plan for Pitt gives students, faculty and staff the opportunities and environment needed to thrive. The plan prioritizes inclusion— building channels for connection and collaboration within a community that is vibrant in voice, identity and experience. It also advocates for autonomy, recognizing the importance of pursuits and perspectives that break barriers. By encouraging smart risks, meaningful growth and supportive structures, the plan enables our people to do what they do best: drive Pitt’s programs, purpose and success.

How are we enabling students, faculty and staff to succeed?

The Action

1. Create an inclusive and equitable campus environment—one that welcomes, values and embraces the diverse perspectives of every member of our community.
 - Recruit, develop, retain and promote a diverse body of students, faculty and staff.
 - Create a culture and welcoming community that promotes belonging, enables full participation and encourages individual exploration.
 - Add opportunities for students, faculty and staff to connect with their peers in meaningful ways.
 - Bolster mentorship and sponsorship opportunities for all, particularly historically underrepresented groups.
 - Review and revise institutional policies to augment equitable practices and eradicate inequitable ones.
 - Regularly evaluate diversity, equity and inclusion efforts to inform policy and practice.
2. Protect academic freedom; institutional independence; and the associated rights, responsibilities and privileges.
 - Foster an environment in which all campus community members’ contributions are sought out and valued in the pursuit of knowledge.
 - Facilitate the sharing and exploration of intellectual differences and protect and preserve the pursuit of truth and its dissemination.
 - Ensure a respectful classroom environment that enables students to engage with new ideas and concepts and expand the bounds of their understanding.
 - Help students critically evaluate information and develop informed opinions about complex topics.

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- Encourage faculty members to pursue areas of research, scholarship and creative expression that are of personal and professional interest; follow their work to its logical conclusion; and contribute their insights to the broader profession.
3. Enrich the student experience with transformative opportunities to learn, grow and thrive.
 - Enhance and expand academic and social support systems that prioritize the well-being of students and reduce barriers to and stigma around accessing these resources.
 - Revise programming and curricula, where applicable, to better support student creativity, connection and wellness.
 - Prioritize engagement that facilitates connections with new people and ideas.
 - Ensure the student living experience is safe, affordable, and meets student needs.
 4. Enhance the employee experience through robust talent development as well as transformative opportunities to collaborate, engage and advance.
 - Accelerate efforts to offer competitive compensation and benefits to both new and current faculty and staff and emphasize talent retention.
 - Enable faculty and staff to grow within their career paths and recognize the full range of professional contributions as part of career advancement.
 - Expand and incentivize talent development and mentoring for faculty and staff.
 - Promote policies and programming that prioritize employee health, well-being and sense of belonging.
 5. Update our physical and operational environment to encourage risk-taking, exploration and collaboration.
 - Enhance physical spaces and opportunities to draw people together and foster productive discussions.
 - Invest in technologies that drive connection, information sharing and discovery.
 - Promote rigorous data collection and use.
 - Grow and align resources to support strategic priorities.
 - Strengthen governance policies and processes and enterprise risk management.
 - Leverage continuous improvement practices to make operations more effective, efficient and agile.

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Our Programs

The very best programs grow in ways that connect students, faculty and staff with the knowledge, experiences and networks needed to drive transformative change.

The Aim

The Plan for Pitt builds on our historic strengths in individual research, scholarship, and creative endeavors. It calls for expanding our bench of experts—across schools, sectors and subjects—to tackle society-sized problems. And it compels us to pursue transformative teaching, learning and research experiences—in the classroom and beyond—while raising bars and reimagining involvement across the graduate and nontraditional education landscape. Such changes will grow our strengths while expanding Pitt’s reach and relevance in communities and networks across the globe.

How are we achieving excellence in our academic and research programs?

The Action

1. Enhance graduate and professional offerings in terms of their reputation, relevance and impact.
 - Incentivize and support innovation, risk-taking and interdisciplinary approaches.
 - Amplify strong programs, improve offerings that would benefit from reinvigoration, and identify opportunities for new or innovative offerings.
 - Enhance learning experiences and career development opportunities for doctoral, graduate and professional students.
 - Grow the number of faculty and students nominated for national and international awards and celebrate those who win.
 - Implement a comprehensive communications and marketing strategy for graduate and professional offerings.

2. Create more preeminent teaching, learning, scholarship and research experiences.
 - Prioritize student skill development in areas such as critical thinking, communication, leadership, data analysis, intercultural and global competency, and collaboration.
 - Enhance academic support systems to support personalized learning paths.
 - Optimize access for all members of the campus community to participate fully in the exchange of knowledge.
 - Facilitate opportunities for students at all levels to engage in research, scholarship and creative endeavors.

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- Expand the number and type of global and interdisciplinary learning opportunities within and beyond the classroom.
 - Promote and recognize excellence in teaching and curricular innovation.
 - Optimize technology to enhance curriculum and classroom experience.
3. Increase our participation and presence in multidisciplinary, solution-sized research projects.
- Enhance policies and support structures that advance research innovation and promote complex and interdisciplinary team research.
 - Grow partnerships with the private, philanthropic, civic and non-profit sectors—locally and globally—and aid scholars in navigating these new partnerships.
 - Recognize and value contributions to team discoveries as equal to individual findings.
 - Improve data-driven research infrastructure and digital solutions.
 - Create and share knowledge that can underpin breakthrough solutions.
 - Make local to global connections in research and create and expand global research collaborations and networks.
4. Broaden our academic opportunities to include more nontraditional students and settings.
- Identify and deliver educational offerings that reach new student populations.
 - Utilize tools and delivery methods that enhance the excellence and accessibility of educational offerings.
 - Assess existing programs and offerings in the context of external drivers and market demands to identify opportunities for innovation and new offerings.
 - Increase investments in future learners by refining K-12 recruitment efforts.
5. Expand opportunities for civic and global engagement.
- Cultivate the skills and knowledge to be effective, responsive collaborators with external partners.
 - Encourage and expand community-engaged scholarly and creative work and strengthen coordination and connection between engagement initiatives.
 - Develop and sustain relationships with strategic community and international partners.
 - Prioritize impactful and meaningful global engagement.

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Our Purpose

Pitt is a powerful force for good, and our effort to improve lives—near and far—never ends.

The Aim

The Plan for Pitt defines the success of our people and programs by their impact—including their role in enhancing scholarship, partnerships and society. It advocates for expanding academic access, equipping all students to graduate on time and ready to excel, and supporting the ongoing success of our alumni. The plan also positions Pitt to actively partner with communities—around our campuses and across the world—to level life’s playing field, expand opportunities and improve outcomes and lives.

How are we changing lives for the better?

The Action

1. Extend networks and supports to help students graduate on time, secure meaningful employment and realize early career success.
 - Improve key student success outcomes and achieve equity in those outcomes for all student groups.
 - Ensure that students and advisers have the tools and information necessary to chart an efficient path to degree completion.
 - Limit the maximum amount of unmet financial need for each student.
 - Help graduates eliminate student debt earlier in their careers.
 - Increase early professional success by providing students with enhanced career services, mentoring, coaching and networking opportunities.
2. Enhance the professional trajectories and personal success of our alumni.
 - Provide alumni with enhanced career services, networking avenues and mentorship opportunities to increase career advancement prospects.
 - Offer alumni lifelong learning and engagement opportunities.
 - Track graduates’ long-term success and improve outcomes over time.
 - Expand alumni affinity networks that reflect and are inclusive of Pitt’s diverse communities.
 - Develop and implement strategies to support the financial security of our alumni.

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3. Fuel economic development throughout the region and economic growth throughout the commonwealth.
 - Use our position as an anchor institution to benefit local communities.
 - Leverage our expertise, capabilities and research to create sustainable economic development locally and regionally.
 - Embrace innovation in ways that attract investments and equitable opportunities to the neighborhoods and regions around our campuses.
 - Create places and spaces that support the innovation lifecycle, build employment and housing opportunities, foster connections, promote sustainability and ensure a high quality of life.
 - Expand the pathways to enable traditionally underserved residents to participate in success.
 - Foster innovation and regional opportunity by connecting local partnerships to global partnerships.

4. Collaborate with communities— near and far—to improve outcomes and opportunities for their residents.
 - Ensure communities are at the center of place-based engagements and partnering with us in building equity and opportunities.
 - Translate our research into concrete solutions.
 - Leverage global partnerships to solve common and complex challenges.
 - Include the public sector, industry, and social sector in our collaborative efforts.
 - Strengthen partnerships across all five campuses to leverage the best practices, capacities and strengths of each campus to the benefit of our local communities