Progress towards Goals: Report on the Strategic Plan 2008-2013

Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President
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A Message from the Provost

By any measure, the years between 2008 and 2013 were some of the most challenging in the nearly 124-year history of Washington State University. The Great Recession resulted in a reduction of more than half of the institution’s state funding, as well as double-digit tuition increases for students. As an institution, we made hard choices and discontinued entire academic programs. Hundreds of positions were eliminated.

Despite those hardships, Washington State University continued methodically to make progress toward its strategic goals.

Student enrollment grew by more than 20 percent during the life of the last Strategic Plan, reaching a record high freshman class of over 4,200 in 2013. The student body grew in diversity as well as size during the same time frame: in fall of 2013, a full third of the freshman class came from ethnically diverse backgrounds, up from just 12 percent in 2008.

Thanks to the innovation and enterprising spirit of our faculty, the number and size of competitive research grants soared between 2008 and 2013. Scientists in the College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences and the College of Engineering and Architecture successfully competed for the largest single grant in the history of the institution—$40 million from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to explore the use of woody biomass as the basis of a new biofuel economy in our state.

We also launched a $1 billion capital campaign and are well on our way to successfully completing the campaign before its July 2015 closure. That is attributable to the confidence and support WSU enjoys from the members of the Cougar Nation in Washington and around the globe.

Even with all of ups and downs of those years, the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan provided a clear road map as well as a platform on which to build a new Strategic Plan. The following report highlights some of our successes and challenges in meeting the goals of the Strategic Plan.

Dr. Daniel J. Bernardo
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Washington State University
Goal 1: Innovation, discovery, and creativity

WSU is committed to promoting the development of information, discovery, and creativity. To this end, the University works to attract and retain diverse, high-quality faculty and staff, promoting programs of discovery and creativity, investing in and promoting identified emerging areas of preeminence, and supporting interdisciplinary programs.

Goal 1a: Attracting and retaining a diverse faculty and staff of the highest academic stature

Washington State University has succeeded throughout its history in attracting and retaining the very best and brightest to its faculty ranks. That tradition continued between 2008 and 2013.

Despite the institution’s budget difficulties and the loss of over 50 percent of its state budget allocation, WSU’s faculty size grew 8 percent between 2008 and 2013. This increase was largely fueled by an expansion in clinical titles, many of which were funded through the large increases in extramural funding that occurred during the period. Tenure and tenure-track faculty decreased 4 percent during the period. Staff numbers decreased by 1 percent overall during this period, with more positions supported by grant and private sources of funds.

Fortunately, this difficult period coincided with a $4 million National Science Foundation award to WSU that focused on increasing the percentage of women faculty hired, retained, and promoted in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics disciplines. Policies and practices developed as a result of this initiative have enhanced recruitment, retention, and advancement for all faculty.

The University maintained the percentage of faculty who are members of national academies and four WSU faculty were added to the ranks of the national academies during the five-year period. WSU faculty continued to excel in winning national awards, including from the American Council of Learned Societies Fellows, National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship program, National Institutes of Health R37 merit grants, National Science Foundation career awards, and multiple Fulbright awards.

Faculty productivity also was a point of pride during the Strategic Plan reporting period, with the number of publications authored...
by our faculty growing every year. According to Thompson Reuters, average research productivity (as measured by publications per faculty FTE) increased 48 percent from 2008 to 2013.

An area of focus throughout the five-year period was the development of policies aimed at providing an improved workplace for university faculty and staff. WSU has numerous faculty-friendly policies and resources to support our retention and diversity goals, including family care and professional leave policies, dual-career partner accommodations, the Employee Assistance Program, telework agreements, and flexible scheduling options. During the 2008-2013 planning period, several new policies were introduced and established, including one enabling modified duties and another regarding switches to part-time work.
Goal 1b:
Promoting broad and robust programs of discovery and creativity

Washington State University took concrete steps during the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan timeframe to foster broad and robust programs of creativity and discovery.

Total research and development expenditures increased over 20 percent (from $283 million to $341 million) during the period. As reported in the most recent NSF Higher Education Research and Development Survey (FY 12), WSU ranks 68th among all U.S. universities in research expenditures. WSU is ranked 11th in the nation in research and development expenditures in the agricultural sciences and 12th in the social sciences. The College of Nursing, for example, increased its annual grant and contract revenue more than 600 percent, to over $6 million by 2011. In addition, the Carnegie Foundation ranks WSU as a “very high research activity” university.

Leveraging limited state and federal dollars with private dollars, the University enhanced the infrastructure supporting research and creative activity with the construction of leading-edge facilities.

In 2013, WSU received its largest private donations to date—$25 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and $26 million from Microsoft co-founder Paul G. Allen—to support programs and fund construction of WSU’s School for Global Animal Health housed in the Paul G. Allen Center for Global Animal Health. This 62,000-square-foot building incorporates open learning spaces to encourage interaction among students, faculty, and staff, as well as Biosafety Level 2 and Level 3 research labs.

In 2010, WSU designated its Spokane campus as its Health Sciences Campus. This designation followed the movement of the entire College of Pharmacy to Spokane from its previous headquarters in Pullman and the movement of the College of Nursing to WSU Spokane in 2008. In 2013, a new college, the College of Medical Sciences, was established and headquartered on the Spokane campus.

WSU’s continued commitment to the health sciences was reflected in the construction of additional facilities to advance health science research and education. In 2013, a new 125,000-square-foot Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Sciences Building was constructed at WSU Spokane. It features an anatomy lab designed for students from medicine, pharmacy, nursing, and other health sciences disciplines to learn gross anatomy along with other teaching laboratories designed to accommodate a wide range of teaching approaches.

Private dollars also provided dramatic enhancement to research programming. For example, in 2008, WSU’s School of Chemical Engineering and Bioengineering received a $17.5 million gift from Gene and Linda Voiland. With this gift, the school has funded distinguished professorships and supported research on new bioenergy technologies.

Similarly, the Washington State tree fruit industry invested $32 million in relevant research programs in the College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences. These funds have been used to establish endowed chairs, WSU extension activities related to tree fruit production, and research orchards at WSU research and extension centers in Prosser and Wenatchee.

In 2013, the Federal Aviation Administration awarded its Center of Excellence for Alternative Jet Fuels and the Environment to Washington State University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. This center includes an additional 14 university partners and more than 50 industry and national laboratory partners throughout the United States. The designation means up to $40 million in new funding over the next 10 years.

The strength and reach of WSU’s research programs was illustrated by the Institute of Shock Physics’ leadership role in developing the Dynamic Compression Sector at the Advanced Photon Source.
at Argonne National Laboratory near Chicago. The Dynamic Compression Sector is an exciting and visionary scientific undertaking that focuses on time-resolved X-ray diffraction and imaging measurements in materials subjected to dynamic compression. With the exception of the University of Chicago, which administers the facility, WSU is the only university with a designated facility at the Advanced Photon Source.

Equipment and technology are also key components of promoting robust research programs. Between 2008 and 2013, the University was able to invest in a variety of advanced technology to support research endeavors throughout the institutions. For example, a high-throughput crystallization and collection device benefits research in a wide-ranging number of projects, including investigations of the mechanics of reproductive physiology DNA damage and repair, defense against bioterrorism, causes and prevention of major worldwide diseases, plant defense systems, production of food and renewable energy, and reduction of environmental pollution.

To further support WSU scholars, the Office of Research introduced three new initiatives to increase research competitiveness, including the New Faculty Seed Grant to provide matching funds with the goal of improving researchers’ eligibility for large grants, the Proposal Management Unit to help coordinate large interdisciplinary proposals, and additional staffing, funded by the Office of the Provost, to support and ensure research compliance with state and federal mandates.
Goal 1c: Increasing sponsored research expenditures in identified and emerging areas of preeminence

Growing 10 percent per year in sponsored research expenditures was an admittedly aggressive target in the 2008–2013 Strategic Plan, particularly given the period's difficult economic environment. Nevertheless, WSU faculty members dramatically exceeded the target, growing research expenditures by 74 percent during the five-year period. Competitive federal research and development expenditures increased nearly 30 percent, from $76 million to $98 million.

External grants grew in both number and scope. The largest awards included a $40 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute for Food and Agriculture to establish the Northwest Advanced Renewables Alliance, more than $25 million in USDA specialty crop funding for 66 unique projects, $9 million from the National Institutes of Health for nursing research for involvement in a national study regarding children’s health, and numerous awards from federal sponsors for research in the Institute for Shock Physics totaling $41 million for 36 unique projects over the five-year period.

WSU’s top federal sponsors during this reporting period were the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Energy, and U.S. Department of Education.
Goal 1d:
Supporting interdisciplinary programs that foster integrative and collaborative scholarship

Understanding the power of interdisciplinary work both academically and in the pursuit of external funding, the University reorganized in several areas to create research programs that bring together faculty expertise from a variety of disciplines to address emerging issues. Using the metric of research projects that include principal investigators from more than one department, WSU steadily increased its performance between 2008 and 2013, increasing from 127 to 215 annual awards.

One tool contributing to that success was creation of new schools and research centers to pull together faculty expertise from a wide range of disciplines.

For example, the School of the Environment is an interdisciplinary program developed and opened during the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan period that draws on faculty members from environmental science, geology, and natural resource sciences, and is focused on conservation biology, and landscape and restoration ecology. The complementary Center for Environmental Research, Education, and Outreach (CEREO) encompasses fields as diverse as English, crop and soil sciences, education, and engineering. CEREO earned a $1.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 2012 to conduct collaborative water modeling in the Columbia Basin.

The Murrow Center for Media and Health Promotion Research, established in 2010, earned a $2.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 2012 to test media literacy education as a catalyst for better family nutrition, bringing together faculty in communication, nutrition, human development, and WSU Extension.

The new Learning and Performance Research Center in the College of Education, which has secured $6.3 million in projects during its first five years, has supported a five-year project funded by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development focused on improving teaching and learning, involving 34 countries and more than 100,000 middle school administrators and teachers.

Additionally, three interdisciplinary projects—the IGERT Program in Evolutionary Modeling, the Integrative Training in Health-Assistive Smart Environments, and CEREO's Nitrogen Systems: Policy-Oriented Integrated Research and Education—received $6 million from the National Science Foundation in new and continuing funding. Those projects involved anthropologists, biologists, engineers, environmental scientists, political scientists, and psychologists.

WSU also increased the number of its interdisciplinary, inter-institutional research programs. The $40 million NARA project, for example, which focuses on developing economical ways to turn woody biomass such as logging residue into affordable aviation jet fuel, involves 55 principal investigators leading a team of over 250 researchers at 16 institutions. Besides representatives from a variety of engineering disciplines, the project includes faculty members in economics, forest science, climate science, education, sociology, chemistry and biochemistry, plant genetics, extension, communications, and marketing. Similarly, the Federal Aviation Administration Center of Excellence for Alternative Jet Fuels and the Environment includes 15 university partners, multiple academic disciplines, and more than 50 industry partners throughout the United States.
Goal 2: A transformative student experience

Washington State University is committed to providing students at all levels and within all disciplines with a transformative educational experience. Our goal is to assist each student in the realization of their individual intellectual strengths, in order to assure their personal and professional success and encourage them to demonstrate leadership in seeking reasoned, science-based solutions to the many challenges occurring within our vital industries, scientific disciplines, and increasingly global society.

To that end, WSU seeks to constantly review and restructure the University’s academic programs and offerings to ensure their continued relevance over time and augment our students’ educational experiences with hands-on participation in academic training and research, service learning opportunities, mentorship experiences, and participation and leadership in a wide range of student organizations and activities.

Goal 2a: Develop and support outstanding graduate programs

WSU’s graduate programs provide a catalyst for the development of a transformative educational experience for students at all levels of the institution. Our reputation as a university conducting high-quality research and scholarship at the graduate level creates a dynamic in which WSU gains additional private and public research partnerships to drive continuing improvements in the quality and quantity of original research and scholarship. This, in turn, allows for additional expansion of our graduate programs and research, further increasing graduate enrollment, and creating more opportunities for our undergraduates to gain meaningful hands-on research experience.

The years 2008 through 2013 marked a period of renewed commitment to graduate education. The Strategic Plan included aggressive goals concerning advancement of graduate education and followed up on many of the recommendations of the Graduate Education Commission Report issued in 2006.

Over the duration of the Strategic Plan period, WSU placed renewed emphasis on doctoral program growth and achieved a dramatic increase in the number of doctoral degrees awarded by the University. The total number of Ph.D.s and Ed.D.s awarded by WSU increased 42 percent, from 189 in 2008 to 268 in 2013.

Our commitment to the continued development and support of outstanding graduate programs during the past five years is
reflected in the introduction of several new graduate programs. New programs include a master of arts degree and doctor of philosophy degree in prevention science, a professional science master’s degree in electrical power engineering, a professional science master’s degree in molecular biosciences, a master of science degree and doctor of philosophy degree in nutrition and exercise physiology, a combined doctor of pharmacy and master’s of business administration track, and a master of science degree in coordinated program in dietetics, nutrition, and exercise physiology.

Professional degrees have become a growing component of the University’s graduate education portfolio. Enrollment in graduate professional degrees more than doubled during the duration of the Strategic Plan, and was led by the development and advancement of WSU’s Online Master’s in Business Administration and Executive MBA programs. In 2013, WSU’s Online MBA was ranked first in the nation according to U.S. News & World Report’s Best Online Graduate Business Programs rankings.
Goal 2b: Ensure infrastructure that supports excellence and adapts to advances in knowledge and technology

WSU’s continued ability to achieve excellence in education, research, and scholarship relies on the development and maintenance of an infrastructure capable of supporting such excellence and allowing the University to adapt to continual advances in knowledge and technology.

In addition to the aforementioned Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Sciences Building on our Spokane campus, WSU continued to make advancements on its research and education complex on the Pullman campus. In 2009, the Biotechnology/Life Sciences Building opened its doors. This 128,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility contains research laboratories, core laboratories, common support space, conference rooms, and office space for faculty and postdoctoral students in support of the University’s Biotechnology Strategic Initiative as well as the administrative offices for the School of Molecular Biosciences. The Veterinary Medical Research Science Building was completed in 2012 and provides properly equipped and environmentally controlled, state-of-the-art biomedical research and support space for health science teaching and research programs.

Additional research and education facilities were completed on WSU’s urban campuses. At WSU Tri-Cities, the Bioproducts, Sciences, and Engineering Laboratory (BSEL) was completed in 2008. This $24 million, 57,000-square-foot research and teaching laboratory features the Biorefinery and the Combinatorial Catalysis Research Lab, plus a variety of laboratories and classrooms. BSEL houses scientists from both WSU and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory working synergistically to develop and deploy sustainable biomass-based technologies. WSU Vancouver’s Engineering and Computer Science Building is the new home to the School of Engineering and Computer Science on that campus. The $43.5 million, four-story, 56,000-square-foot building opened for classes in spring 2012.

A transformative student experience includes a quality residential life experience. WSU built two new dormitories on the Pullman campus—Northside Residence Hall and Olympia Avenue Residence Hall—the first new dormitories built in over two decades.

In addition to the new facilities constructed from 2008 to 2013 to support all aspects of the academic enterprise, the University also invested in technological and pedagogical advances specifically to enhance instruction.

On the technology front, the percentage of desktop ports hardwired for gigabit per second or more grew significantly during the reporting period from below 40 percent to more than 60 percent. In addition, information technology investments made to aid instructional efforts during the 2008-2013 period included at least $1 million in classroom technology such as wireless and network infrastructure, enabling 90 percent of the 125 general classrooms on the Pullman campus to be equipped with new teaching technologies such as digital projection, lecture capture, web and video conferencing, multiple presentation format input support, resident computers, and document cameras. WSU also developed a new configuration for a high-performance computing cluster for faster information processing, partnered with Microsoft to launch a new comprehensive email service for WSU students, and installed a new videoconferencing bridge that currently supports more than four times the number of videoconferences supported by comparable peer institutions.
Goal 2c: Provide high-impact learning to engage students

In support of this goal, WSU launched a number of initiatives to provide students with “beyond the book” learning experiences to complement what they learn in the classroom.

Undergraduate research opportunities grew dramatically during the reporting period. In 2012, WSU introduced a new university-wide event, Showcase for Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (SURCA), to the annual Showcase Symposium for faculty and graduate students. SURCA features faculty-mentored research and scholarship projects, as well as the creative activities of undergraduates from all majors, years, and campuses. To reinforce participation in undergraduate research, the University introduced several new fellowships and cash awards for undergraduate research, including the James A. Weir Undergraduate Research Fellowship, two Fuentes-Kirk Awards for Excellence in Undergraduate Education, and the Scott and Linda Carson Undergraduate Research Excellence Award.

Two new centers were developed to provide students a rich academic experience. The Carson College of Business Center for Student Success provides business students assistance in preparing for successful careers through academic advising, job placement assistance, career advising, international experiences, and internships. The College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences created the Center for Transformational Learning and Leadership in the fall of 2012 to provide experiential learning and leadership opportunities to help students develop discipline-based career skills, effective interpersonal communication skills, and opportunities to apply their learning in professional work.

In addition, the WSU Center for Civic Engagement expanded in size and scope from 2008 to 2013 to provide students at all levels the opportunity to participate in group projects, course projects, internships, and long-term placements with organizations and communities throughout the state, all of which are geared to allow students to directly apply their coursework and skill sets to the day-to-day issues they encounter at their particular placement.

Focusing on the global nature of many majors, the University also successfully promoted study abroad opportunities. The percentage of seniors who studied abroad grew by nearly 50 percent during the reporting period.

WSU introduced the Common Reading Program during the reporting period. The program uses a different book each academic year to introduce students—especially first-year students—to the value of research, the power of ideas, and the various but related ways in which different disciplines approach problems.

During this period, several programs earned particular recognition for proving high-quality education. For example, WSU was named one of the best places to study jazz by both DownBeat and Jazziz magazines (2011); the School of Hospitality Business Management was recognized as 9th in the world by the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research (2011); The Edward R. Murrow College of Communication was named one of the top 25 journalism schools in the United States (NewsPro magazine, 2012); the Organic Farming Research Foundation ranked WSU among the top six programs in organic agriculture (2012); the College of Nursing graduated more licensed nurses than any other school in the state (2012); and the online psychology and criminal justice programs were both ranked in the top three in the nation by TheBestSchools.org (2013).
Goal 2d: Foster core competencies in our learners

Washington State University completed a major overhaul of its general education requirements between 2008 and 2013 in an effort to broaden and refine the curriculum common to all undergraduate degrees offered by the institution. The University Common Requirements, or UCORE, were implemented for students applying to WSU in fall 2012 and to those entering the University in fall 2013 and beyond.

UCORE has its foundation in a set of seven learning goals and outcomes regarding:

- Critical and creative thinking
- Quantitative reasoning
- Scientific literacy
- Information literacy
- Communication
- Diversity
- Depth, breadth, and integration of learning

The UCORE are the center of the undergraduate curriculum and provide a degree of balance between the specialized focus of a student’s academic major and the broader traditional objectives of higher education.

To reinforce the importance of UCORE, the University established a new way to honor university instructors who have taught at least one UCORE course each year for three years. The inaugural Richard G. Law Excellence Award for Undergraduate Teaching was first bestowed in April 2013.

During the period of the Strategic Plan, WSU conducted its Year Three accreditation self-study in conjunction with its seven-year accreditation cycle and was reaffirmed by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities in 2013. WSU has been continuously accredited by its regional higher education authority since 1918. The accreditation report focused on our resources, capacity, and educational assessment practices, with specific emphasis on the latter. NWCCU commended WSU on the “noticeable transformation of the culture of assessment since 2011.”

The commendation by NWCCU for ongoing assessment activities is a reflection of a large investment by faculty, staff, and administration in developing a comprehensive assessment system over the past five years. Assessment is the practice of identifying student learning outcomes, observing and measuring the extent to which outcomes are achieved, and using that information to maintain or improve student learning. In 2013, 89 percent of academic programs used assessment of student learning outcomes to make changes in their curriculum and program management.
Goal 2e:
Significantly improve retention and graduation

WSU’s student enrollment grew to record levels, from 25,352 in fall 2008 to a record high of 27,642 in fall 2013. On the Pullman campus, freshman class size increased significantly in fall 2011, and averaged more than 4,000 students from 2011 through 2014. These increases occurred despite double-digit tuition increases over much of the reporting period.

In 2007, with support from the state legislature, WSU Tri-Cities and WSU Vancouver received authority to expand to four-year campuses. During the period of the Strategic Plan these urban campuses began admitting freshman students, marking an important event in the development and expansion of the WSU system. WSU Tri-Cities and WSU Vancouver enrollments have not only increased overall, but also have become more distributed across lower-division, upper-division, and graduate and professional students.

During the period of the Strategic Plan, the University experienced a slight decrease in first-year-student retention, from a high of 84 percent to a low of 80 percent. In response to that drop, coupled with a slight drop in the six-year graduation rate, the University took several key steps to increase student retention and graduation.

A first step was to develop and refine a number of programs, some privately funded, to assist first-generation and underrepresented students. These programs, ranging from First Scholars to Smart Start, provide students with peer mentoring, faculty mentorship, financial support, and other tools to help them make the sometimes-difficult transition to college. WSU also increased program offerings to provide life management and professional development tools such as well-being workshops on stress management and resume building.

The College of Engineering and Architecture undertook two major initiatives to increase student retention. In 2008, the college developed a mentoring program to increase retention of female students in engineering, with the result that program participants have been retained at a higher rate than those who didn’t participate.

In addition, the College of Engineering and Architecture successfully competed for a five-year National Science Foundation grant to develop the academic redshirt program to help recruit and provide preparatory classes for low-income high school students going into college engineering programs.

To further support undergraduate achievement in basic areas of competency, the College of Arts and Sciences launched a Mathematics Learning Center in 2013, and privately funded teaching and learning grants from Samuel H. and Patricia Smith fostered innovative undergraduate teaching strategies, such as a software tutoring module, development of research opportunities along with online, real-time research databases linked to instruction, and extended use of desktop learning modules in chemical engineering.

The retention and graduation rates of transfer students with a two-year degree increased during the reporting period. The three-year graduation rate for that cohort reached a high of 73 percent in 2012.
During the span of the 2008–2013 Strategic Plan, the University succeeded in expanding and refining its outreach and engagement enterprises across the institution.

On the academic front, WSU created the Global Campus in 2012 to bring focus and attention to its online degree programs. Global Campus is designed to help the University engage with the world of educational innovations, bring the best of it back to WSU, and bring the best of WSU to the world. Beyond the technological advances and online courses, Global Campus also works to replicate some of the amenities of a residential campus experience for its students, such as student government, internships, and service-learning opportunities. Recently, WSU was rated in the top 20 universities in the nation for its online programs, and online undergraduate enrollments have increased from 2,837 in 2008 to 2,956 in 2013; graduate and professional enrollments have increased from 256 in 2008 to 600 in 2013.

WSU also strengthened links among academics and outreach with the establishment of the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication in 2008, which was expanded in 2009 to house Northwest Public Radio and Northwest Public Television. Similarly, the College of Nursing developed academic practice partnerships and shared faculty appointments with major hospital systems in Washington while also implementing federally funded training programs to support minority and first-generation pre-nursing students in the Tri-Cities and Yakima.

In addition to expanding its urban campuses in Spokane, the Tri-Cities, and Vancouver, WSU also expanded its engagement across the State of Washington by offering engineering degree programs in Bremerton and Everett, Washington. In 2013, WSU was granted authority by the Washington Legislature to assume leadership and expand the University Center in Everett. In addition, the College of Pharmacy established a Yakima-based doctor of pharmacy program on the campus of Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences for students interested in providing pharmaceutical care to underserved populations and to enable place-bound students from central Washington to pursue the degree.

Service learning—a critical component of student engagement—participation increased significantly, with the number of all students’ hours of community engagement rising from 29,845 hours in the 2007-2008 academic year to 72,377 hours in 2012-2013.

In research, WSU scientists broadened their engagement efforts statewide, nationally, and internationally. The College of Nursing, for example, implemented a project in 2010 funded by the National Institutes of Health specifically focused on Native American health.

A $32 million investment by the state of Washington’s tree fruit industry expanded its partnership with WSU scientists and extension educators, particularly in the central part of the state. Nationally, the WSU-led Northwest Advanced Renewables Alliance and the FAA Center of Excellence for Alternative Jet Fuels and the Environment include scientists from throughout the Pacific Northwest and beyond.

International engagement also grew between 2008 and 2013, particularly in the Paul G. Allen School for Global Animal Health (established in 2012). Faculty members in the school have partners working in Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, and Malawi on issues of zoonotic diseases such as rabies and West Nile virus. The Office of International Research and Agriculture Development—housed in the College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences—continued its long involvement in Africa and expanded its efforts to include three new projects to increase agricultural productivity in Afghanistan and Pakistan.
Engaging with private business and industry to translate new knowledge into applications in the real world is a cornerstone of WSU’s mission as a land-grant research institution. To streamline that process, the former Office of Intellectual Property Administration and the WSU Research Foundation were eliminated and a new Office of Commercialization was created. The new, streamlined operational model allows for all commercialization activities at WSU, from initial invention disclosure to patenting, from marketing of intellectual property to licensing and commercialization deals, to be handled by a single entity.

During the life of the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan, WSU researchers increased invention disclosures by 16 percent, increased patent findings by 32 percent, and doubled the number of issued patents. In addition, the number of start-up businesses emanating from WSU research each year have increased three-fold over the past six years.

The University leveraged business and industry relationships—as well as those with alumni and other friends—to launch the institution’s first capital campaign in more than a decade. Begun July 1, 2006, The Campaign for Washington State University: Because the World Needs Big Ideas is a $1 billion comprehensive capital campaign—the largest in WSU history—that is raising support for the University’s top priorities as a state-wide system, improving access to higher education for the citizens of the state, sustaining excellence in education, research, and outreach, and helping to secure WSU’s place as a leading land-grant university. Throughout this campaign, supporters are building relationships with WSU and forming partnerships that strengthen the University’s aspirations and priorities.

As of June 30, 2014, The Campaign for WSU totaled $921.6 million and remains on track to surpass $1 billion in 2015. Average annual giving increased from $74 million in 2006-2008 to $130 million in 2011-2013. Since the campaign began, more than 190,000 individual donors have made nearly 720,000 gifts, grants, or other commitments in support of WSU’s students, faculty, research, and outreach, and to leverage the University’s impact across the state and around the world.

The WSU Foundation’s endowment market value as of June 30, 2014, was $405 million, its highest mark ever. The investment return for FY2014 to date is 15.70 percent, and the three-year investment return to date is 8.4 percent.
Managing a succession of budget reductions imposed by the State of Washington was the greatest administrative challenge for WSU during the period from 2008 to 2013. While the addition of programs and activities are important measures of success, the means by which an organization addresses adversity and, in particular, fiscal calamity, can also serve as an important barometer of success.

WSU addressed its fiscal challenges with transparency and made difficult decisions in response to the state’s 52 percent reduction in state allocations. WSU completed the Academic Affairs Program Prioritization process in 2008, leading to six degrees or program options being phased out; eight degrees consolidated or reduced; seven academic units consolidated, reduced, or phased out; three academic program areas eliminated; and 1,080 courses removed from the catalog. In addition, nine learning centers operated by WSU Extension around the state were closed. Significant administrative reorganization also occurred, resulting in a reduction of the number of vice presidential units from nine to six and combining several administrative units to attain economies of scale and cost reductions.

Washington State University made dramatic strides in diversifying the makeup of its student body between 2008 and 2013 with a recruitment strategy focused on underrepresented populations in the state and a variety of support programs aimed at helping ethnic minorities and first-generation students succeed in college.

During the span of the Strategic Plan, undergraduate minority students grew from just 15 percent of the overall undergraduate enrollment in 2008 to more than 27 percent in 2013, with the biggest growth coming in Hispanic/Latino student numbers. In fall 2013, minority students comprised over one third of the freshman class. Graduate student diversity numbers grew 42 percent during the same timeframe.

The University also developed a variety of programs to support a more diverse student body. For example, the Alhadeff Future Teachers of Color program in the College of Education facilitates
an increase in the number of K-12 teachers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

During the Strategic Plan period, WSU became one of the first affiliates of First Scholars, which is privately funded by the Suder Foundation and provides first-generation students with training in academic skills needed to succeed. Smart Start is a similar program designed to improve retention of underrepresented students and is modeled after the College Assistance Migrant Program. The Team Mentoring Program includes four academic colleges as well as the office of Student Affairs to help retain students in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) disciplines. The program trains and deploys a team of student and faculty mentors and program coordinators to work directly with students.

To foster a more diverse faculty and staff, the University implemented much of the Faculty Diversity Strategic Plan, developed by the Office of Equity and Diversity and endorsed by the Office of the Provost. That plan outlines policies, procedures, and programs to improve recruitment, retention, and advancement of a diverse faculty.

In an effort to improve the quality of the workplace, WSU Human Resources began implementing a regular employee satisfaction survey. Despite a challenging period resulting from large reductions in state funding, about 7 out of 10 respondents indicated they were always or frequently satisfied at work.