

## Longwood University

### 2016 SIX-YEAR PLAN

#### Part II (Narrative)

Part II (Narrative) of the Six-Year Plan contains the following sections. Please be as concise as possible with responses.

**A. Institutional Mission – Please provide a statement of institutional mission and indicate if there are plans to change the mission over the six-year period. Any changes to institutional mission must be formally submitted to SCHEV for review and approval.**

Longwood University is an institution of higher learning dedicated to the development of citizen leaders who are prepared to make positive contributions to the common good of society. Building upon its strong foundation in the liberal arts and sciences, the University provides an environment in which exceptional teaching fosters student learning, scholarship, and achievement. As the only four-year public institution in south central Virginia, Longwood University serves as a catalyst for regional prosperity and advancement.

*Approved by the Longwood Board of Visitors, July 1997.*

A new strategic plan was approved by Longwood's Board of Visitors in September, 2014. Among its key principles and priorities: transforming lives, improving retention and graduation, a cutting-edge curriculum, regional prosperity and improved organization, structure, and governance.

**B. Strategies – Describe in more detail strategies proposed in the spreadsheet. Identify each strategy with the title used in the spreadsheet.**

**1) Improved Retention and Graduation Rates**

Objective: 2 – Optimize Student Success for Work and Life (especially 2.2 “provide effective academic and student services focused on persistence and completion” and 2.3 “increase on-time completion of certificates and degrees”).

(carried over from previous six-year plan). Upon assuming office in the summer of 2013, President Reveley identified his top strategic priority as a systematic, cutting-edge effort to raise the University's retention and graduation rates to the top of its peer group, and to become a model for the Commonwealth and beyond. This is also a top priority of the university strategic plan. While Longwood's completion rates are currently strong for peer institutions, too many students begin a path toward a degree and fail to complete. The goal is to ensure that every student who enrolls in Longwood has an opportunity to complete a degree, thus enjoying – and contributing to the Commonwealth – the substantial economic and citizenship benefits that a completed degree carries. Retention is also critical to the financial strength of the institution.

Longwood has been engaged in a data-driven process to identify the most promising practices in improving graduation and retention rates, particularly for low-income students and those pursuing degrees in STEM-H fields.

That process has identified ensuring adequate student support staff as critical and cost-effective mechanisms to keep students on path to graduation, and we believe boosting support in these areas would help more students finish. Under the Enhanced Student Success program (continued from 2014-2020 Plan) Longwood will look to increase and better train support staff such as tutors and counselors to work with identified at-risk students to overcome obstacles and ensure they have the study skills, academic support and confidence to move toward degree completion.

Other targeted areas for investment in retention:

- **Software and other technological tools to develop a stronger “big data” understanding of factors in student success and risk.** These tools can provide “early warning radar” that identifies students who are struggling in courses, or falling off-track on their degree path, in time to intervene successfully.
- **Summer bridge program for at-risk students.** Such programs, which have provided extremely valuable and cost-efficient at other institutions, would help incoming students with lower levels of preparation improve their success rates in their first college courses – a key determinant of overall graduation success.
- **Mental health counseling and partnerships with parents to help students through their transition to college.** We believe such investments will be extremely cost-effective, particularly when focused on the first weeks of college, when students are at most danger of growing discouraged and dropping out.

*Note: TJ21 Objective D requires “new programs or initiatives including quality improvements”*

## 2) **Strengthening the Commonwealth and Region**

Longwood is the only four-year public university serving roughly 7,500 square miles of Southside, Virginia, and a key priority identified in our 2014-18 Strategic Plan is to serve our community and region. The following initiatives would contribute directly to that goal:

Objectives 1 and 4

- **Early Childhood Education.** Longwood is working to design and implement a comprehensive early childhood services program – an area of extraordinary need across our region. Components of the initiative will include an academic program to prepare new graduates, as well as regional professionals working in the field, training and certification in early childhood development. The initiative builds upon a strong body of research demonstrating the return on investment and value of early childhood development training, as well as the wide disparities in access to well-designed and implemented early childhood programs that exist between low-income and high-income communities across the Commonwealth.

(especially objective 1.1 “Expand outreach to PK-12 and traditionally underserved populations”).

- **New and Expanded Health Profession Degrees** (Continued from 2014-2020 Plan). We will work to continue to expand capacity in our traditional nursing and new RN-to-BSN program, for which demand severely outstrips supply, and potentially expand capacity to offer nursing degree tracks at offsite locations such as Martinsville.

(especially objectives 4.1 “Build a competitive, future-ready workforce for all regions and E.6 “Increased degree production in the areas of STEM-H.)

- **Additional faculty, particularly in popular majors with strong workforce demand, and to expand Cyber-Security Initiative.** Longwood is seeing exceptional demand in programs such as nursing, exercise science, therapeutic recreation, graphic design and programs related to Longwood’s cutting-edge Cyber-Security Initiative (In 2012 Longwood re-allocated funds to establish a secure cyber-security lab, and has been designated a National Center of Digital Forensics Academic Excellence by the Defense Cyber Crime Center – the first institution in Virginia, and just the third nationally, to receive that designation.) Longwood faculty overall currently carry an exceptionally heavy teaching load – four classes per semester on average. This initiative carries over from the 2014-2016 biennium and would provide additional faculty positions in heavily enrolled programs, and replace lecturers, some of whom do not have their terminal degrees, thus causing accreditation review and forcing us to turn away well-qualified students from these programs. New faculty positions will provide the necessary increase in course offerings to meet current and future student course demands necessary for students to complete their degrees on schedule.

(especially objectives E.6 “Increased degree production in the areas of STEM-H” and 2.3 “Increase on-time completion of certificates and degrees”)

- **Expanded outreach across Southside.** In recent years, Longwood’s satellite program in Martinsville has expanded from four students to nearly 50 in fall 2015, in programs in elementary education and social work, and Emporia has grown from none to 16. The Martinsville program works in close collaboration with Patrick Henry Community College, and the Emporia program in partnership with Southside Virginia Community College, with the two institutions working out of the same offices and classrooms. Longwood would be interested in expanding offerings at SVHEC in South Boston and connections into the local community college system there but believes a full-time onsite director would be essential to the success of any program.

(especially objective 4.1 “Build a competitive, future-ready workforce for all regions”)

*Note: TJ21 Objective C requires “Plans for the development of an instructional resource sharing program with other institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth.”*

### 3) **A new general education curriculum: a foundation of learning for every graduate**

Objectives 2 and 3 (Especially 3.2 “Cultivate innovations that enrich quality, promote collaboration and improve efficiency.”)

(appeared in previous six-year plan as “Review and Revise General Education Requirements). Longwood has been engaged in a systematic review of its general education curriculum – the courses required of every Longwood graduate to ensure he or she is prepared for citizen-leadership and the workforce. Faculty have been working to identify key learning goals, and align those goals with the learning goals of SCHEV, the mission of the institution, and the needs of the Commonwealth. They are also working to develop a system of assessment to ensure those goals are met.

The general education review is critical to the mission and broader strategic goals of the university. What has become increasingly clear since the previous plan is the extent to which the design and implementation will facilitate faster and more successful degree completion, by ensuring the courses students need to graduate are more readily available, and more efficient academic operations than the current general education program. It will more strongly align student learning with the needs of the Commonwealth and the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century workforce.

The curriculum is being finalized and will be rolled out over the course of the following two academic years. It will require funding to design and develop courses, and build a team of faculty and staff to ensure student success.

*Note: TJ 21 Objective D requires “New programs or initiatives including quality improvements.”*

#### **4) Undergraduate Research**

Objective: 2 (especially 2.1 “Strengthen curricular options to ensure that graduates are prepared with the competencies necessary for employment and civic engagement”).

(appeared in previous plan under “Implement the Quality Enhancement Plan”). This initiative would support implementation of the Quality Enhancement Plan (continued from 2012-2018 Plan): The QEP, required by our accreditors, is a five-year plan to improve our preparation of students for civic life and the workforce. The focus of Longwood’s QEP is developing undergraduate research opportunities, which a wide body of research shows improve the essential skills both for the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce and society at large -- critical thinking, information literacy, and written and oral communication. Studies also show undergraduate research experiences improve student engagement and retention. The QEP also, of course, advances research projects by faculty on important issues for the region, Commonwealth and nation – particularly STEM-H fields such as cybersecurity and environmental science -- and provides critical preparation for the growing number of Longwood students who continue their education in graduate school.

Finally, summer research opportunities facilitate greater year-round use of facilities by students. They also provide financial support to students that helps them stay on course to graduate and lessens loan debt after graduation. In 2013, Longwood launched a new summer STEM research program – PRISM (“Perspectives on Research in Science and Mathematics”). This initiative is highly successful but currently is available to only a small number of students.

*(Note: TJ21 Objective B requires “Plans for optimal year-round use of institution’s facilities and instructional resources to improve student completions and cost efficiencies”)*

## **5) Faculty equity, retention and promotion pool**

Objective 3 (Especially 3.3 “Foster faculty excellence, scholarship and diversity”)

A 2012 Compensation report commissioned by the Longwood Board of Visitors found Longwood faculty and staff significantly lagged peer institutions across the Commonwealth and nation, particularly factoring in the exceptionally heavy teaching load Longwood faculty carry (among the very highest of any four-year university in the state, according to JLARC). Longwood has internally funded merit-based increases to the salary pool in recent years. In 2015-16, faculty and staff received the 2% increase for state employees, and performance-based salary increases are expected to be implemented in FY17. However, average compensation remains below the competitive targets set in the compensation reports. Attracting and retaining the most able faculty to our rural campus is an absolutely essential component of our full range of strategic goals.

### **C. Financial Aid – TJ21 requires “plans for providing financial aid to help mitigate the impact of tuition and fee increases on low-income and middle-income students and their families, including the projected mix of grants and loans.”**

In March, Longwood’s Board of Visitors announced the university would hold tuition and fee increases below 3 percent for the third consecutive year. This is the smallest three-year increase at any Virginia public university since 1999-2001.

Meanwhile, Longwood continues to work to make more institutional student aid available as well. A new strategic plan for the Longwood University Foundation is narrowing its focus to concentrate almost entirely on raising and distributing private dollars as scholarships for Longwood students. The Longwood University Foundation contributed nearly \$1.6 million to student financial aid in the 2015-16 academic year, up 5 percent from a year ago and up 34 percent compared to five years ago.

Longwood noted in the previous six-year plan that the University had recently changed the way it awards financial aid, to increase aid awards to the neediest students and extending grant eligibility to middle-income students. We have followed up on the initiative with a related one to streamline and distribute more effectively and fairly the allocation of institutional aid to students. Previously, students were divided into a relatively small number of bands of need. Students in the same band would receive identical awards even though they could in some cases have non-trivial differences in need. Longwood is moving to an “algorithmic” model that determines aid awards based on the precise demonstrated need of an individual student, not the range into which they fall. This will have the effect of channeling aid dollars more efficiently to the neediest students.

About 71 percent of Longwood students receive some form of financial aid to offset their educational costs. About 25 percent of Longwood undergraduates receive Pell Grants – the federal aid program for college students from the very lowest-income families.

*Note: TJ21 Objective A requires “Plans for providing financial aid to help mitigate the impact of tuition and fee increases on low-income and middle-income students and their families.”*

**D. Evaluation of Previous Six-Year Plan – Summarize progress made in strategies identified in 2015-16 Six Year Plan. Note how additional General Fund support, savings and reallocations were used to further the strategies.**

This year’s plan continues to focus on the five strategic priorities that were outlined last year: 1) Improve Retention and Graduation Rates; 2) Strengthen the Commonwealth and Region; 2) New General Education Curriculum; 4) Undergraduate Research Initiative; and 5) Faculty and Staff Equity, Retention and Promotion Pool.

An update on some items from the previous six-year plan:

- Improve Retention and Graduation Rates. Longwood recently purchased and implemented software in Student Success and the Registrar’s Office to develop a stronger “big data” understanding of factors affecting student success and risk.
- Improve Retention and Graduation Rates. A member of the faculty has been promoted to the position of Associate Provost for Academic Innovation and Development. He will work with Academic Affairs to use the data generated through these software packages to analyze relationships between student success and indicators pertaining to preparation for college, as reflected in AP scores and dual enrollment credits.
- Improve Retention and Graduation Rates. Longwood was recently awarded a \$650,000 National Science Foundation S-STEM grant that will provide support for at-risk students who are drawn from underrepresented minorities and lower-income families. Part of the grant provides a summer bridge program for these students, and Academic Affairs is providing support for the faculty who will be mentoring these students.
- Strengthen the Commonwealth and Region – Early Childhood Education. Longwood’s Early Childhood Initiative (ECI) commenced its work this year with the start of free one-day programs to build up skills and expertise of community childcare providers. These programs will continue as one of three pillars of the initiative. The second pillar is the development of new degree and certificate programs in early childhood education, and curriculum development is underway. Lastly, ECI intends during the upcoming academic year to begin operating a childcare facility on campus that will serve as a community resource as well as a research lab student learning space for those in in the new early childhood academic programs.
- Strengthen the Commonwealth and Region. Longwood is continuing to work toward expanding capacity in the RN-to-BSN program, including possibly expanding to an offsite location.

- Strengthen the Commonwealth and Region. Longwood recently hired a new tenure-track faculty member with strong credentials in cyber security.
- Strengthen the Commonwealth and Region. Longwood has added a new director for the Social Work program in Martinsville.
- Strengthen the Commonwealth and Region. The Center for Financial Responsibility is engaged in teaching high school students about the importance of managing their personal finances and how to avoid financial crises as they move into adulthood.
- New General Education Curriculum. Longwood faculty are into the final stages of development of a new general education curriculum, designed to prepare students for work and citizenship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. After finalization and approval expected in fall 2016 and a period of pilot courses and transition, rollout of the new curriculum is expected in fall 2018.
- **Undergraduate Research.** Expanding opportunities for undergraduate research is the focus of Longwood Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), and remains a top academic priority. Among new and expanding opportunities are the inclusion of 190 students during spring 2016 in 17 courses across multiple disciplines with enhanced research components. The Office of Student Research is also working successfully to expand summer research opportunities for students, including through the development of pilot programs. Research will also serve as a central plank of the new general education curriculum.

**E. Capital Outlay – Note any capital outlay projects that might be proposed over the Six-Year Plan period that could have a significant impact on strategies, funding, or student charges. Do not provide a complete list of capital projects, only those projects that would be a top priority and impact E&G and NGF costs.**

The capital projects listed below were top priorities for Longwood in 2015-16 and impact E&G and NGF costs. We are in the process of developing an updated Six Year Capital Plan.

**1. Construct Student Success Center**

O&M for 2017: \$306,564

Blended Objective: 2

Funding for furniture, fixtures and equipment for the Student Success Center was included in Chapter 759/769, the 2016 bond bill.

The overall project constructs a 25,000 gross square foot facility which will provide a central location for academic support, career advising, and other vital services focused on improving student retention and graduation rates. The coordinated and co-located services will assist and enable students as they move through academic transition points by providing support during the

key freshman year, enhancing academic and leadership skills, and providing academic and career advising services.

2. **Construct New Academic Building**

O&M for FY20: \$561,000

Objectives 2 and 3

The New Academic Building is a pool project that has been approved through construction (Chapter 759/769). This project constructs a 42,000 gross square foot academic building that will provide approximately 75% of the additional academic space required for Longwood's anticipated future enrollment in one cost-effective project. The New Academic Building will contain classrooms, collaborative learning space, student research and inquiry space, a library outpost, the Center for Academic Faculty Enrichment, digital and distance learning facilities, other academic support space, and faculty offices.

The New Academic Building will provide space and support for expanded student research and STEM-H programs, such as the summer STEM research program, development of new health profession degrees, and an expanded office of sponsored programs and research.

3. **Construct New Admissions Office**

O&M for FY19: \$166,000

Objective: 1

The New Admissions Office is a pool project that has been approved through construction (Chapter 759/769). The project will replace Longwood's current small and outdated Admissions Office with a 21,000 gross square foot building that will adequately support growth in prospective student visits and enrollment.

This replacement facility will include a large reception area, display and information areas, and adaptable conference and presentation rooms for interviews, group presentations and community outreach events. The New Admissions Office will signify that Longwood is a leader of higher education in both the Southside Virginia region and throughout the Commonwealth.

4. **Replace Steam Distribution System Wheeler Mall**

Objective 3

This is a pool project that has been approved through construction (Chapter 759/769). This project will replace, repair, and reconfigure elements of the underground steam distribution system in the Wheeler Mall area of the Longwood campus. This project is a direct result of

defects and deficiencies noted in a recent comprehensive study of the university's campus steam distribution system. A single overall project addressing all the problems in this area will be more cost effective and create less overall disturbance than a piecemeal approach of spot repairs and replacements.

5. Construct New Physical Plant Building

O&M for FY22: \$1,234,000

Objectives 3 and 4

This project will replace the current small and outdated Bristow Building with a new 70,000 gross square foot building for the Facilities Division and the Materiel Management Department. In the more than 40 years since the Bristow Building was built, enrollment has more than doubled, as has Longwood's building infrastructure, and the current facility no longer meets the functional needs of the Facilities Division or the Materiel Management Department.

In addition, the Bristow Building sits in a highly visible location at one of the main approaches to the Longwood campus. The New University Master Plan 2025 (currently in the final draft stage) recognizes that a maintenance facility with its associated equipment parking, delivery trucks, and storage and service areas is no longer the best and highest use for this very public location.

6. Renovate Heating Plant Facility

O&M for FY21: \$68,040 (GF) \$57,950 (NGF)

Objective: 3

This project will renovate the Old Heating Plant to install a new central chilled water distribution system. As part of this project, two electrically-driven chillers of 1,250 tons capacity will be installed, and a new underground piping system to distribute chilled water to buildings in the north and central areas of campus will be constructed.

Construction of this facility will result in significant improvements to Longwood's campus infrastructure, reducing energy and maintenance costs and improving reliability.

7. Construct Athletic Facilities

O&M for FY18: \$446,000

Objective: 2, 3 and 4

This is an umbrella project that will construct seven athletic facilities phased in over a multi-year period. Two of these projects are also necessary for Longwood academic initiatives, and one is strategically designed to increase community involvement with Longwood Athletics and the foot traffic between campus and downtown Farmville to enhance regional economic development.

8. Construct Performing Arts Center  
O&M for FY22: \$576,000

Objectives 2 and 4

This project will construct a new 500-seat assembly and performance hall with rehearsal facilities and additional Music Department space. The proposed site, as identified in Longwood's New University Master Plan 2025, is the current location of the university facilities operations building, Bristow Building.

The Performing Arts Center will fill a void for a wide variety of academic, student life, and community activities. It will be the only venue of this type and size in an eight-county area where lectures, visiting speakers, theatrical performances and civic gatherings can occur, thus greatly enhancing the interaction of the university community with the citizens of the surrounding region.

9. Construct East Madison Street Parking Garage  
O&M for FY22: \$288,000

Objectives 3 and 4

This project will construct a multilevel parking structure for approximately 466 vehicles in Longwood University's north campus area adjacent to East Madison Street. One of the chronic physical deficiencies of Longwood's campus is the lack of convenient, easily accessible parking for meetings, conferences, and other events. This project will offer parking support for a variety of university and community events.

10. Expand and Renovate Willett Hall  
O&M in FY21: \$1,134,000 (GF) \$419,000 (NGF)

Objectives 2, 3 and 4

This project will renovate and expand Willett Hall to include a large multifunction assembly addition, new offices, classrooms, and athletic space. The multifunction assembly space will be a three-level facility suitable for university convocation exercises, lectures and cultural events, large performances, basketball and other indoor sports events, and indoor sports practice. This assembly space will be available to the Farmville and Southside Virginia communities for business trade shows, local civic events, K12 athletic competitions and graduation events, and education fairs. The project also includes new instructional and academic office space to support education and outreach programs, including the Department of Health, Athletic Training, Recreation and Kinesiology (HARK), which is a rapidly growing program in need of additional space.

Willett Hall is one of only two existing buildings on Longwood's campus that contains significant assembly space. Over the years, the demands on the space in Willett Hall have increased dramatically, as Willett has emerged as the de facto activity hub of Longwood University, hosting academic, student, and community activities and events. There is now a significant decrease in space and time available for other previously accommodated activities, which restricts Longwood's ability to serve its campus constituents and help fulfill the venue needs of the local community and the Southside Virginia region.

**E. Restructuring – This section pertains to Level II and Level III institutions:**

- i. Level III and Level II institutions: please provide a list of any items that you feel need clarification under your existing authority (i.e., ability to provide employees with an early retirement plan). Please list any additional concerns or issues.
- ii. Level II institutions: there was proposed legislation in the 2015 Session that would have granted "Level 2.5 authority". Level 2.5 provided each institution with the three areas as authorized under the original Level 2 legislation (IT, capital outlay & procurement) plus some additional administrative and financial authority with the same post-audit checks and balances that Level III institutions operate under in order for these authorities to continue. Please list areas, issues, or specific items of additional authority that you would request through legislation and/or renegotiated management agreements.

Additional authority on capital projects would be beneficial. While we have not specifically contemplated requests for other additional authorities, we always welcome the opportunity to work with the Commonwealth and other institutions on ideas for providing more flexibility to reduce overall costs.