

The KSU R2 Roadmap To Success

Kennesaw State University seeks to establish itself as a top tier R2 university by 2023. The university will achieve this goal by (1) offering undergraduate students an exceptional education and a timely degree that prepares them to lead purposeful, productive and rewarding lives; (2) providing master and doctoral-prepared students with the education required for today's and tomorrow's complex fields, and; (3) producing research with relevance that creates and refines knowledge that is aligned to real-world applications.

Vision for Kennesaw State

Kennesaw State University has demonstrated dramatic growth and improvement in recent decades in multiple arenas, from enrollment to academics to athletics. Yet, its mission is different from other institutions across the region, and its community of students, faculty, staff and alumni are unique to this university. As such, Kennesaw State should not seek to mirror the success of other institutions. Instead, in its quest for excellence, KSU should embrace its own history, reflect on the experiences of others, and look toward the future in a way that promotes growth and success for the students of Kennesaw State University.

As the university plans for new heights, KSU must begin this quest based on its newfound national ranking and status. Kennesaw State University was recently classified by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education as an "R2" – a "Doctoral University" with "High Research Activity." Concurrently, *U.S. News and World Report* recognizes Kennesaw State University as a national university. In addition, KSU's economic impact to Georgia exceeds \$1.4 billion, resulting in a three-fold return on the University's annual budget.

The university's contributions to the surrounding community and state are evident, but KSU can develop into an even better institution for its students, faculty, staff and alumni by focusing on a shared goal of becoming one of the best R2 universities in the nation. KSU is home to more than 35,000 students, making it the third largest university in Georgia and one of the 50 largest public institutions in the U.S. As such, this vision will require setting goals, developing strategies to meet those goals, and determining whether or not those goals have actually been met through concrete metrics. Just as importantly, it will require the collaboration and support of the entire KSU community.

Kennesaw State University will establish itself as a top tier R2 university by preparing students for meaningful, productive lives through providing a high-quality, worthwhile education with an attainable path to graduating within four years (or a program's standard timeframe); by offering premier graduate and doctoral opportunities that lead to enhanced careers and wider community impacts; and by building upon its strong research foundation to produce premium research with real world applications.

From August through November of 2018, KSU's Graduate College and Office for Research conducted a comprehensive analysis of comparable universities that had employed specific and targeted strategies to significantly elevate their success in a relatively short period of time (five years or less). This analysis yielded five common themes that should be incorporated into each college-level strategy, as well as the overall university-wide plan.

1. Identify and implement areas of strategic emphasis and opportunity.
2. Establish tangible performance metrics for each goal and attach evaluation, reward, and accountability plans to each metric.
3. Ensure resource allocations align with expectations and performance.
4. Leverage opportunities, particularly interdisciplinary options that cross traditional disciplinary boundaries.
5. Be specific in goal setting and innovative in developing solutions.

The Roadmap

Creating the roadmap to set the course for KSU to establish itself as a top tier R2 university requires that the entire university community collaborate in developing unit and university-level goals. These goals should always put students first as we implement strategies to enhance student undergraduate success, develop new goals to impact student's professional options through enhanced graduate opportunities, and impact our region and world via increased research output. To achieve this vision, all elements of the university must contribute to these key goals. Each college's goals, strategies and objectives should support and advance the overarching mission of the university.

In 2016, a survey of approximately 5,000 faculty, staff, students, alumni, and other stakeholders of the consolidated KSU community demonstrated a high degree of affection for the University and pride in its success. While the university grew at a remarkable pace, the general consensus was the growth may have lacked a centralized, long-term strategy. A frequent comment was that the university seemed to be trying to "be all things to all people." Our future progress should acknowledge that high-performing R2 universities consistently identify key areas of strategic emphasis and growth, structuring the institution to support growth in those areas and developing metrics to ensure the university does not stray from that road. These areas can be inclusive and encompassing but must be sufficiently specific to contribute to advancing the institution's specific goals.

Key factors utilized in identifying other institutions' areas of strategic emphasis and opportunity have included the university's historical mission; potential areas for engaging governmental and commercial sectors; geographic location; opportunities in areas in which the university has a history of high performance; concentrations of faculty and other resources; and potential for interdisciplinary collaboration across multiple units, faculty, and fields. KSU can identify our strengths in these areas to advance our mission of being ranked among the best R2s.

Graduate Education

One of Kennesaw State's key goals as an institution is to prepare our students for success in their chosen professions. In recent years, an increasing number of careers have required a graduate degree for entry into a field or for promotion and advancement within a field. Bureau of Labor Statistics data highlight the value of post-undergraduate degrees; median weekly earnings in 2017 increased from a bachelor's to a master's and again to a doctoral degree, from approximately \$1,200 a week to \$1,400 per week for a master's to over \$1,700 per week for individuals with a doctorate. Within high-demand professional fields, increases are even more significant. In addition, the unemployment rate has the inverse correlation, with graduate degrees offering significant economic protection from the adverse effects of unemployment.

In order to not only retain its R2 status, but also develop its renown as a graduate institution, Kennesaw State must ensure it continues to meet and exceed the minimum number of research doctorates conferred in a Carnegie sampling year. As part of our existing FPA and workload models, high expectations for faculty in terms of research and productivity should be clearly communicated in an effort to recruit, retain and develop faculty to ensure an exceptional experience for graduate students.

Resources should be strategically directed to research and degrees with meaningful results for students and the institution. The University, colleges, and academic departments should identify and support graduate education in areas of strategic emphasis. It should be the goal of faculty and staff within KSU to identify and pursue these areas prior to other institutions in order to maximize the opportunity. This will not only sustain, but advance, the University's national profile.

Recommended goals and strategies are provided below to increase and enhance graduate education at KSU. The list is not intended to be exhaustive and colleges are encouraged to tailor their goals to the unique needs of their disciplines.

- Increase in overall number of graduate students
- Strategies to expand enrollment in current targeted graduate programs
- Opportunities to create new graduate programs based on pre-existing strength within a unit or demonstrated current or future market need
- Opportunities to create linked bachelor/master programs within and across colleges
- Allocation of resources to graduate degree programs that meet pre-determined ROI metrics (e.g., degrees awarded, research support needs, community impacts)
- Effective promotion and outreach to recruit students and publicize the excellence of specific graduate programs

The strategic vision and goals described above are well aligned with the strategic imperatives of the University System of Georgia and KSU's designation as a comprehensive university within the system. As such, in fulfilling this vision of becoming a top tier R2, we are meeting and exceeding the USG's mission for KSU.

Most importantly, KSU remains beloved and respected by its students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Kennesaw State already provides a premier education at a remarkably reasonable cost compared with other major universities in Georgia and beyond. These steps will enhance the overall experience and prestige at this great university. Owl Nation has a proud and storied history and will continue to ascend.

Timeline for Design of College and University R2 Strategies

Date to be Completed	Action
January 15, 2019	Deans charge task forces within college to recommend undergraduate, graduate, and research goals.
March 7, 2019	Deans meet with Provost, Dean of Graduate School and VP of Research to overview high-level goals for undergraduate, graduate, and research goals.
March 15, 2019	Provost, Dean of Graduate School and VP of Research compile results from college goals and establish overall framework of goals for university. Present to President for approval.
April 15, 2019	Colleges submit completed R2 strategies to Provost.
May 1, 2019	Provost, Dean of Graduate School and VP of Research submit final University R2 Roadmap (to include college plans) to President
Summer 2019	Deans, Provost, Dean of Graduate School and VP of Research finalize details to implement strategies identified in R2 Roadmap
Fall 2019	Launch R2 Roadmap