

STRATEGIC PLAN (2023-2028) PROGRESS REPORT

(as of fall 2025)

KPI and Selected Metrics Dashboard

Commonwealth University's (CU's) Strategic Plan KPI and selected metrics [dashboard](#) tracks performance indicators and additional measures of progress toward CU's five-year strategic priorities and targets. The results to date, which include different reporting timelines depending on the measure, show steady improvement in student outcomes and engagement, continued progress in equity and affordability, and strong fundraising performance, alongside ongoing challenges in enrollment, workforce diversity, and fiscal sustainability. The following provides highlights of outcomes.

- **Enrollment:** Fall headcount enrollment declined from 11,108 in 2023 to 10,829 in 2025, reflecting regional demographic pressures and broader enrollment trends across Pennsylvania.
- **Retention and Graduation Rates:** Retention to the second year improved from 74.8% for the 2022 cohort to 78.8% for the 2024 cohort. Four-year graduation rates have remained generally steady in the 41-43% range over recent years, though the 2021 cohort (most recent) showed a notable increase to 48.3%. Six-year graduation rates have similarly held stable between 54-56%.
- **Career Placement:** Career placement rates have consistently exceeded 90% over the last two years, demonstrating sustained post-graduation success and alignment with workforce needs.
- **Affordability:** Average unmet financial need decreased from \$8,884 in 2022-23 to \$7,806 in 2023-24, reflecting progress in financial aid and scholarship support.
- **Equity in Student Success:** For the 2022-2024 cohorts, underrepresented minority retention to second year remained stable (from 68.0% to 67.7%), and Pell retention improved (from 69.7% to 73.4%), though achievement gaps in graduation outcomes persist.
- **Workforce Diversity:** Underrepresented minority employee representation declined slightly from 5.7% in fall 2023 to 4.9% in fall 2024.
- **Student-Faculty Ratio:** The student-faculty ratio increased slightly from 17.3:1 in 2022 to 17.6:1 in 2024, reflecting measured progress toward the university's target of 18.9:1, as established by PASSHE.
- **Fiscal Performance:** CU continued to operate with recurring deficits; however, measures to enhance operational efficiency and reduce costs improved the net operating margin from -14.3% in FY24 to -10.7% in FY25.
- **Fundraising:** New gifts and pledges across the three affiliated foundations totaled more than \$47.9M over the past two years, with a record-breaking year in FY24, reflecting strong and sustained philanthropic support since integration.
- **Campus Climate and Engagement:** Campus climate was positively rated by 62.7% of survey respondents in 2022, while stakeholders rated CU's engagement with the local community as moderate (2.65/5.0) in 2024, reflecting ongoing efforts to strengthen a connected, inclusive, and student-centered environment.

Strategic Plan Outcomes by Priority

The following outcomes illustrate a selection of the actions and results that have advanced progress toward CU's Strategic Plan priorities. Building on the trends reflected in the KPI and selected metrics dashboard, these highlights showcase representative initiatives, investments, and achievements across each priority area, enhancing academic quality and innovation, strengthening student success and engagement, improving operational effectiveness and fiscal sustainability, and fostering a more welcoming and inclusive community. Together, they demonstrate meaningful progress toward CU's long-term strategic priorities and continued momentum in realizing the Strategic Plan.

Priority 1: Academic Excellence & Innovation

Building on the solid retention, graduation, and placement results noted earlier, selected metrics for this priority highlight continued progress in academic quality, engagement, and professional development. About three-quarters of students participated in credit-bearing, high-impact learning experiences such as first-year seminars, research, internships, clinicals, and service learning, and faculty and staff engaged in professional development. CU also introduced new workforce credentials to strengthen alignment between academic programs and regional employment needs. These outcomes demonstrate ongoing innovation and investment in teaching, learning, and career readiness. Examples of outcomes and initiatives include the following.

- **Academic Program Array:** Faculty developed teach-out plans for legacy programs and launched a single CU-wide academic program array, approving 296 program proposals (including concentrations) and 2,279 courses during the first year of integration. An institution-wide assessment oversight structure, platform, and process was implemented in 2023-24 for all academic and administrative units, completing two assessment cycles.
- **General Education:** CU adopted a new general education curriculum, approved more than 400 courses, and established faculty-led assessment with over 103,000 assessments of 1,250 course sections to date. Learning outcomes improved steadily, rising from 65.2% in fall 2023 to 73.0% in spring 2025. Deep-dive reviews in writing, oral communication, quantitative reasoning, and the first-year seminar produced actionable faculty recommendations.
- **Accreditation and Program Review:** MSCHE reaffirmed CU's accreditation in June 2025 with commendations for integration progress. Programs submitted reports, self-studies, and substantive change requests to maintain accreditation with 20 specialized accreditors. Following PASSHE's reinstated Policy 1986-04-A: Program Review, CU submitted 19 program review executive summaries in 2024-25, inclusive of faculty and external evaluator feedback.
- **High-Impact Practices (HIPs):** CU advanced HIPs by launching a university-wide first-year experience model, embedding diversity and global learning into general education, and scaling Professional U to integrate academics with career readiness. Experiential learning expanded through redesigned student employment and work-based learning initiatives supported by the PASSHE Strada grant. In addition, the ad-hoc HIPs committee strengthened CU's ability to define, track, and broaden opportunities. In 2024-25 nearly 76% of students were enrolled in at least one credit-bearing HIP.
- **Experiential Learning Investments:** Donor and institutional commitments reinforced applied learning, including \$465,000 in Professional Experience Grants (PEGs) awarded to 340 students; more than \$7M to the Honors College to expand scholarships, research, leadership, and study abroad; and \$14M to support programs and facilities housed in the McCormick Center including simulation labs, collaborative learning environments, and professional preparation spaces that directly advance HIPs.
- **Global Engagement:** CU strengthened its global presence by increasing international enrollment from 54 headcount students in fall 2023 to 72 in fall 2025, up 35%. To support retention, CU provided biannual international student orientations, immigration workshops, trips to regional destinations, and cultural programming such as Tea Around the World, India Day, and Japanese game nights. Study abroad participation grew, with 75 students studying abroad in 2024-25, supported by new pre-departure orientations, ISEP program implementation, and classroom presentations in first-year seminars and introductory courses.
- **Faculty Development:** CU supported teaching and research through expanded faculty development, including ACUE certifications and more than 55 CTL workshops and events in 2024-25, up from 29 the prior year, which focused on pedagogy, advising, advocacy and inclusion, artificial intelligence, and wellness. The CTL offers faculty mentoring supported by Brightspace, the learning management system. Additional programs included a teaching excellence bootcamp, book clubs, innovation awards, a faculty development recognition program, and teaching-with-technology grants. Research quality was strengthened through more than 700 CITI certifications and the PI Academy.
- **Workforce Development:** Over the past two years, workforce development grew substantially through the adoption of a credit for prior learning policy enabling the awarding of academic credit to more than

100 students, the integration of industry-recognized credentials into degree pathways, and non-credit programming that trained more than 3,000 learners each year.

Priority 2: Student Success

CU continues to strengthen student success through comprehensive academic, financial, and well-being supports that help students persist and achieve their goals. Recent data show steady gains in advising satisfaction, affordability, and post-graduation placement, along with expanded access to mental health and student success programs. Together, these efforts demonstrate CU's commitment to a holistic student experience that promotes achievement and well-being across all campuses. Examples of outcomes and initiatives include the following.

- **First-Year Experience (FYE):** CU implemented a holistic first-year experience encompassing orientation, transition programming, mentoring, and academic and social supports, including the FYS 100 course. As part of the senate committee structure, the FYE subcommittee engages in conversations toward continuous improvement of the first-year experience. Scheduling improved with 100% of students registered for orientation having full schedules by July 1 for the fall 2025 semester, up from 63% in fall 2024. Librarians delivered information literacy in 76% of FYS sections in fall 2024 and 86% in spring 2025.
- **Student Success Centers:** CU established student success centers on all campuses to provide coordinated support through orientation (84% new student participation with 89% positive ratings of the 2025 orientation experience), PASS academic support programming (persistence rising from 58% in 2024 to 62% in 2025), and proactive outreach (8,000+ contacts engaging nearly 6,000 students through outreach and programming). Of students who engage (through staff engagements and referrals), 71% persisted to fall 2025, up from 67% the prior year.
- **Academic Advising:** CU enhanced advising through faculty mentorship, CU Succeed, Degree Works, and expanded student success centers. Professional development through CTL and CATS emphasized technology use and best practices. Student perceptions of advising effectiveness improved, with the NSSE composite advising score rising from 5.2 to 5.4 (on a 7-point scale) and seniors' ratings of advisor interaction quality increasing from 5.2 to 5.5.
- **Math Placement:** CU adopted ALEKS as its math placement tool and streamlined communication and implementation through new advising resources, admissions materials, and orientation programming. ALEKS participation has increased, and early analyses confirmed that ALEKS scores are predictive of success in high DFW courses. Prerequisites will be fully enforced beginning in fall 2025 to strengthen outcomes.
- **Health, Counseling, and Wellness:** CU's health centers, counseling services, CARE Team, and wellness initiatives achieved KPI targets for responsiveness and follow up. Within this framework, health centers recorded student-patient satisfaction rates above 90% in 2024-25. Counseling services expanded capacity to meet growing demand while sustaining timely access and referrals. The CARE Team updated procedures and coordinated interventions to support students of concern more effectively. Wellness coaching expanded, increasing proactive outreach and well-being programming across campuses.
- **Student Activities and Recreation:** Campus recreation and student involvement expanded engagement opportunities in 2024-25, with recreation more than doubling programming from 180 events in 2023-24 to 405 in 2024-25. Student involvement saw continued growth in clubs and campus-wide events, featuring distinctive programs such as *Survivor Bloomsburg* and *Bloom Idol*, Lock Haven's *HAC Hump Day* and *Dirty Soda Socials*, and Mansfield's *Fall Festival* and *Spring Fling*. The launch of the Modern Campus Involve platform across all campuses streamlined event promotion, communication, and participation tracking, supporting continued gains in student engagement and community building.

Priority 3: University Success

CU continues to strengthen institutional performance through improved fiscal management, with increasing or stable retention and graduation outcomes for Pell and underrepresented minority students. Sustained growth in fundraising, combined with expanded operational efficiencies and prudent financial oversight, has advanced CU's long-term sustainability and its capacity to invest in academic excellence and student success. Examples of outcomes and initiatives include the following.

- **Enrollment Management:** CU continues to face undergraduate enrollment pressure, with fall 2025 headcount down 2.5% and FTE down 3.1% year over year, though graduate enrollment grew by 87 students. Retention trends improved, with second-year retention at 78.8% (+1.2% for the fall 2024 cohort) and third-year retention at 68.0% (+2% for the fall 2023 cohort).
- **Fiscal Stability:** CU reduced its E&G operating deficit by more than half, from \$32.4M in FY24 to \$13.2M in FY25, and improved auxiliaries from a \$4.9M deficit to an \$877K deficit. Year-to-year balance continues to rely on unrestricted net assets, highlighting ongoing fiscal pressures despite implementing numerous cost-control measures.
- **Workforce Stabilization:** CU streamlined divisions from seven to five, academic colleges from five to three, and departments from 28 to 19. Workforce reductions of 256 FTE (17%) and elimination of 10 management positions will yield \$2.1M in recurring annual savings beginning in FY26, contributing to \$29.6M in overall compensation savings despite rising contractual costs.
- **Facilities Right-Sizing:** CU initiated campus right-sizing to address excess square footage, particularly at Lock Haven and Mansfield, with plans in development for targeted demolitions and divestment of underutilized properties. These measures are expected to reduce recurring utilities and maintenance costs.
- **Onboarding and Orientation:** CU implemented a redesigned faculty onboarding process beginning fall 2024 that provides an overview of the university, policies, teaching resources, and support. The process was expanded to staff to ensure consistent onboarding that strengthens engagement, compliance, and productivity.
- **Technology Integration:** CU consolidated three student information systems into Banner OneSIS and implemented nearly 200 system integrations, including Argos, Coursedog, CU Succeed, Degree Works, Handshake, Nuventive, Parchment, PeopleAdmin, Qualtrics, and Slate.
- **Strategic Communications:** CU launched a major brand identity initiative, establishing a unified style guide, and in June 2024, consolidating legacy websites into a single site (commonwealthu.edu). CU established flagship accounts and rebranded the legacy accounts on the primary social media platforms.
- **Philanthropy:** All campuses exceeded fundraising targets, securing \$30.6M in FY24 and \$17.3M in FY25, and nearly doubling CU's endowment from \$56M in 2017 to \$110M in 2025, including a doubling of the Bloomsburg endowment.
- **Programs in Review (PIR):** In 2024-25, CU evaluated 28 programs, identifying four degree programs for moratorium and six others for consolidation or restructuring. An additional eight programs (e.g., concentrations and minors) will also enter moratorium in 2025-26. In spring 2025, the PIR process identified 38 programs to undergo review in 2025-26, 12 of which are being considered for potential moratorium, restructuring, or course sharing.
- **Scheduling Efficiencies:** Course schedule efficiencies, including a 17% reduction in sections and streamlined FYS delivery, improved faculty utilization, reduced costs, and focused resources on high-demand programs.

Priority 4: Welcoming and Inclusive Community

CU continues to foster a welcoming environment that values inclusion, belonging, and engagement across students, employees, alumni, and community partners. Climate survey results and engagement measures reflect ongoing efforts to strengthen communication, expand partnerships with local communities, and deepen student involvement in campus life, reinforcing CU's commitment to an inclusive and connected university culture. Examples of outcomes and initiatives include the following.

- **Shared Governance:** CU adopted a unified governance model with a university-wide senate, committees, and campus assemblies to coordinate policy review, approval, and sunseting. Regular “meet and discuss” sessions with faculty and staff unions, CU-wide meetings (e.g., in-person and virtual town halls), committee structures, and open office hours with senior leaders further strengthen transparency, idea sharing, and collaboration in decision-making.
- **Student Voice:** As part of integration, CU established clearer and more consistent channels for student input, creating a more responsive and transparent environment. Grievance and complaint processes were streamlined and made more accessible, while new opportunities were created through the President’s student advisory council and open office hours with senior leaders. A student government was maintained at each campus, and students now participate in CU senate committees, CU and campus-specific forums, and key bodies such as the strategic planning committee and the MSCHE self-study steering committee and working groups.
- **DEIB Programming:** CU advanced a culture of belonging through initiatives such as Respect Works Here, DEI on the Go, Crucial Conversations, student dialogues, alumni socials, and community partnerships. In 2024-25, DEIB perspectives were integrated into first-year seminars and courses in Black Studies, Women and Gender Studies, Social Work, and Psychology. Campus-based trainings, including PASSHE and Pennsylvania Human Relations Committee workshops, engaged over 200 participants and earned strong evaluations (3.7-3.8/5.0). Community outreach expanded through new service projects, partnerships, and cultural events, while alumni engagement of underrepresented minorities grew at Lock Haven and Mansfield.
- **Community Engagement:** CU strengthened local ties through initiatives across its campuses, including annual holiday receptions at all campuses, community workshops at Mansfield, the Lock Haven Town/Gown Committee, and Bloomsburg’s Big Event, which mobilizes hundreds of student volunteers. CU also partnered with regional nonprofits and economic development groups such as the Columbia Montour Chamber of Commerce, Develop Tioga, DRIVE, and the Clinton County Economic Partnership to expand outreach and workforce connections. The 2024 Optimal College Town Assessment community survey rated overall engagement with the community at large at 2.65/5.0, reflecting moderate progress and opportunities for deeper collaboration.
- **Alumni and Employer Engagement:** Through Professional U, CU directly connected alumni and employers with students through mentoring, internships, work-based learning, and distinctive programming such as career road trips, recruitment expos, and leadership boot camps. CU established 794 new internship agreements generating academic credit, and employer engagement reached a 92% success rate in achieving recruitment goals. Signature college conferences — including the Zeigler Institute for Professional Development (ZIPD) Business Conference, the Collaborating to Assist Teacher Candidate Hiring (CATCH) Conference, the ASL Conference and Career Expo, the CoHST Career Pathways, Careers in Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities (CASSH Con) Conference, Aspiring Educators Conference, Interprofessional Education (IPE) Day, and CoHST Research Day — were expanded across campuses. Alumni support grew significantly, with more than 1,100 unique alumni volunteers engaged in 2024-25. Over 60% of undergraduates engage in professional development activities annually.
- **Civic Engagement:** CU advanced civic engagement through expanded voter registration and turnout initiatives, service-learning, federal work-study community placements, and partnerships with local nonprofits and municipal agencies. Students played a central role in supporting local food cupboards, raising funds, and providing volunteer support, alongside other community programs such as holiday events and fundraisers. These efforts broadened opportunities for students to contribute through both service and democratic processes.