SHORTER UNIVERSITY
Strategic Plan 2020-2025

Mission Statement

Advancing God’s Kingdom through a commitment to academic excellence, spiritual growth, Christian leadership, and global service within the context of a biblical worldview.

Core Values

Christ Centered: Jesus Christ should not only be the foundation of our faith (1 Corinthians 3:11), but the very heart of our existence both as an institution and as individuals (Galatians 2:20; Philippians 1:21). Our desire is to build a thriving academic community where all can gain a greater appreciation of God’s grace, a more profound understanding of His principles and priorities, and a clearer vision of our place and purpose in the world (Matthew 28:19-20; Ephesians 1:18-23; 1 Peter 2:9). Apart from Christ we have “no hope” either in this world or the world to come (Ephesians 2:12); however, it is Christ in us which is the “hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27). It can only be Christ in us that enables us to prepare the next generation to become agents of reconciliation in a world that so desperately needs Him (2 Corinthians 5:17-19).

Excellence Focused: Believing that we have a higher calling as Christians, it is our responsibility and privilege to reflect the image of our Lord who is excellent in all his ways (Psalm 150:2). Our commitment to excellence in all facets of life should be carried forth with a grateful spirit, a humble heart, and with an aim to glorify God. Excellence is more than occasional achievements; it is an ongoing process and a way of life. Moreover, excellence must be coupled with integrity if it is to accomplish God’s purposes in the life of an individual (Psalm 15:1-2; Proverbs 11:3). Any less than our absolute best in any and every endeavor is an affront to our Creator and an impediment to Kingdom growth. Therefore, with a clear understanding that we are designed for excellence (Matthew 5:48; 25:21), we “press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13). [Philippians 1:9-10; Colossians 3:17, 23; Romans 12:2]
**Biblically Based:** Our ultimate source of authority is the Holy Bible, the written Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Since all truth emanates from God, we should indeed “examine everything carefully” (1 Thessalonians 5:21) and measure all philosophies and perspectives (Colossians 2:8) from a biblical worldview. While truth in varying forms and degrees can be found in every academic discipline and every culture, all information and knowledge must be analyzed in the light of the Truth (Jesus Christ- John 14:6) and His Word. Hence, we can fulfill the biblical mandate to make our “every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5).

**Service Oriented:** Because Christ valued individuals and exemplified servant-leadership (Matthew 20:25-28), it is imperative that we should strive to serve others with compassion (Galatians 5:13-14), treat them with dignity (Romans 12:3, 11) and encourage them to reach their full potential (1 Thessalonians 5:11). Our willingness to serve people with a sacrificial spirit should nurture within them a sense of self-worth, inspire them to succeed, and most importantly, help them to discover God’s plan for their individual lives.

**Vision**

Shorter University’s vision/motto is transforming lives through Christ.

**Planning Assumptions**

The following assumptions guide our strategic planning.

1. The Mission of the University as a Christ-centered liberal arts degree granting institution guides strategic planning.
2. Christian higher education will continue to be a meaningful model of higher education for potential students.
3. The primacy of teaching will continue as a major focus.
4. Analysis of assessment data will be used to guide strategic planning and continuous improvement.

**Strategic Plan**

Shorter University’s Strategic Plan is built upon our Core Values and guided by our Mission for the definitive purpose of seeing our Motto (Transforming Lives Through Christ) become a reality. To that end, we have developed a Strategic Plan composed with the following Strategic Themes:
Strategic Theme: Faith Integration

Assumptions:
- Faith impacts all aspects of a person’s personal and professional development.
- Faith integration aligns with the University mission.

Institutional Goal 1: *Ensure an environment in which biblical faith is prominent and permeates all areas and aspects of university life.*

Objective 1.1: Strengthen a cohort of faculty, staff, and coaches that has a clear understanding of faith integration and who can implement such a program.

Outcomes:
- Ensure a rigorous liberal arts education from a biblical perspective as the foundation of for student learning and success.
- Provide full-time and part-time faculty with relevant resources and development opportunities to help them integrate faith and learning.

Objective 1.2: Motivate students to understand, examine, and appreciate a biblical worldview.

Outcomes:
- Provide students with a learning experience that emphasizes the integration of faith and learning, academic excellence, personal responsibility, and leadership that prepares students for service of the institution and society.
- Prepare students to navigate the intersection of intellectual and religious traditions.

Objective 1.3: Nurture a campus community that values and participates in Christian service opportunities both on and off campus.

Outcomes:
- Articulate Christian values related to service of the community.
- Pursue opportunities to connect curricular and co-curricular activities in the service of the community.
- Ensure a culture that promotes the University’s core Christian principles.
- Enhance teamwork and collaboration.

Key Performance Indicators:
- Faculty satisfaction with their efforts at integrating faith and learning (faculty evaluation).
- Student satisfaction with faculty efforts to integrate faith and learning.
Strategic Theme: Student Achievement

Institutional Goal 2: Prepare students to succeed intellectually, professionally, spiritually, and personally.

Assumptions:
- The importance of student success will continue to increase for both students and their parents.
- The expectations of students (e.g., wants, needs, indicators of success) will continue to change.

Objective 2.1: Provide students with an exceptional college experience which deepens their knowledge in their chosen field of study, enhances their cognitive skills, and inspires them toward success upon graduation.

Outcomes:
- Provide a consistent student experience grounded in the core educational competencies.
- Provide access to quality, affordable textbooks, and course materials.
- Streamline university services and processes for incoming students.
- Improve customer service and communication for students.

Objective 2.2: Instill in students a comprehension of and appreciation for core values that contribute to personal and professional success.

Outcomes:
- Support student learning and success through engagement, leadership, and opportunities for interaction with faculty and staff.
- Prepare students to thrive in a changing environment.
- Provide students with an atmosphere that promotes and supports personal and professional development.

Objective 2.3: Inspire students to successfully complete their college experience by eliminating obstacles and providing resources.

Outcomes:
- Utilize technology to expand and enhance student services.
- Integrate student services and instruction.
- Implement policies that promote persistence and successful completion.
- Implement a university wide process for strategic course scheduling to meet student needs.
- Offer guidance on a clear path from enrollment to graduation.

Key Performance Indicators:
- Student performance (grades)
• Student retention and graduation rates.

**Strategic Theme: Faculty/Staff Development**

**Institutional Goal 3: Strengthen a community of faculty and staff committed to fostering a spirit of cooperation in service to all university entities and individuals.**

Assumptions:
- A Christian community is conducive to intellectual and personal development.
- Personal and professional development of faculty and staff is a continual process.

**Objective 3.1:** Enhance relationship building and Christian fellowship across the campus community.

Outcomes:
- Develop new tools and processes to ensure effective communication with the university and with community partners.

**Objective 3.2:** Strengthen a workplace environment that encourages respect for fellow employees, the sharing of ideas, and commitment to lifelong learning.

Outcomes:
- Increase faculty development in pedagogy, assessment, and student accessibility.
- Increase professional development for all employees.

**Objective 3.3:** Expand availability to a quality wellness program for all faculty and staff to provide a healthy working environment.

Outcomes:
- Strengthen health and physical education practices that promote a healthy lifestyle for faculty and staff.

Key Performance Indicators:
- Faculty satisfaction with professional development opportunities.
- End-of-course student faculty evaluations.

**Strategic Theme: Distance Education**

**Institutional Goal 4: Enhance online learning opportunities.**

Assumptions:
- Online education will continue to grow and be a significant delivery method of higher education.
- Data and analytics will guide the implementation and review of online learning opportunities and strategies.
**Objective 4.1:** Expand the online presence with programs offered from a biblical worldview perspective.

Outcomes:
- Create and implement a strategic enrollment management plan.
- Increase consistency in course content, outcomes, and requirements across modes of delivery.
- Align educational goals with current and future employment opportunities.
- Provide access to current technology and online support services for all students.
- Enhance online program support services.

**Objective 4.2:** Create new academic majors or degree programs that correspond with regional and/or national employment trends that meet student needs.

Outcomes:
- Identify programs for possible development for online learning.
- Provide professional development opportunities for faculty to enable them to use technology in an online learning environment.

**Key Performance Indicators:**
- Identify specific courses and programs needed for online development based on market research.
- Partner with faculty to identify relevant professional development activities.
- Enrollment and completion data in fully online courses.
- Faculty satisfaction with online support items.

**Strategic Theme: Institutional Identity**

**Institutional Goal 5: Enhance and advance a distinctively Christian identity that emphasizes excellence in all institutional programs.**

**Assumptions:**
- Institutional identity establishes a framework for examining institutional culture.
- Institutional identity establishes a framework for examining institutional interaction with the community.
- Institutional identity impacts faculty, staff, and student morale and success.

**Objective 5.1:** Identify specific marketing targets and develop an integrated marketing plan to achieve the university’s goals.

Outcomes:
- Strengthen partnerships with local businesses and workforce program development.
- Work with local high schools and home school organizations to improve college readiness.
• Create a process for seamless transition from dual enrollment to full-time student.
• Increase strategic marketing of all programs to the appropriate audiences.
• Reevaluate the current advertising campaign.
• Provide faculty, staff, and students with the tools to be informed and positive representatives of the University.

Objective 5.2: Foster a campus-wide spirit where the unique nature of the Christian faith is both prominent and celebrated.

Outcomes:
• Develop and implement additional faculty, staff, and student engagement activities within the university for the benefit of students.
• Promote a culture characterized by the principles of respect, responsibility, trust, integrity, and accountability.
• Promote an intellectual climate that contributes to the growth of the University.
• Develop and promote indicators for social and environmental sustainability.
• Identify and develop academic and administrative leadership potential at all levels.

Key Performance Indicators:
• Achievement of goals.
• Satisfaction of faculty, staff, and students with campus culture.

Strategic Theme: Responsible Stewardship

Institutional Goal 6: Exercise the utmost integrity and prudence in the use of university resources and funds.

Assumptions:
• Ensuring institutional financial sustainability is vital for student learning and success.
• Ensuring institutional financial sustainability will be a continual process.
• Data and analytics will guide the implementation and review will guide financial planning.

Objective 6:1: Enhance the university’s capacity to attract funds adequate to underwrite current expenses and projected capital investments.

Outcomes:
• Develop and implement indicators for financial stability.
• Develop and implement an intentional plan to refurbish campus buildings and grounds that is aesthetically pleasing.
Objective 6:2: Enhance strong financial support from alumni and other parties that identify with Shorter University’s mission and values.
Outcomes:
  - Increase financial contributions from private and public sources to support programs and operations.
  - Identify new financial partners and strengthen relationships with them.

Objective 6:3: Manage university assets with the most vigilant expertise and honesty.

Outcomes:
  - Utilize technology that best serves the mission and needs of students.
  - Align investment of resources with strategic priorities.
  - Strengthen the financial base of the institution.

Key Performance Indicators:
  - Increase in financial support from private and public donors.
  - Alignment of expenses with revenues.