

# INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING

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Form EAB 2.04 (New 2/09)



STATE OF WISCONSIN  
EDUCATIONAL APPROVAL BOARD  
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The Educational Approval Board (EAB) is a postsecondary education agency that employs a regulatory model focused not only on compliance, but also institutional effectiveness. To facilitate an environment in which schools seek to be effective organizations that improve over time, the EAB requires schools to submit an institutional plan during the annual renewal process. Although similar to a strategic or business plan, the institutional plan schools must submit will enable the EAB and school officials to engage in a dialogue over time about the future of the school.

Schools that already have some type of strategic or business plan (e.g., schools that have either a corporate or accreditation plan) must adapt these documents to the following requirements and focus on Wisconsin operations and students. *The EAB does not expect any school to divulge any sensitive, proprietary business information in the institutional plan.* Institutional plans must address the five elements identified below and provide the information requested.

## I. SCHOOL INFORMATION

Name of School:

Walden University

## II. INSTITUTIONAL PLAN ELEMENTS

**A. MISSION.** Describe your school's mission and vision, which identifies its purpose and its core values.

### Vision

Walden University envisions a distinctively different 21st-century learning community where knowledge is judged worthy to the degree that it can be applied by its graduates to the immediate solutions of critical societal challenges, thereby advancing the greater global good.

### Mission:

Walden University provides a diverse community of career professionals with the opportunity to transform themselves as scholar-practitioners so that they can effect positive social change.

### Strategic Aspirations:

Walden University's mission centers on our firm commitment to transforming our world for the better through higher education, by providing a diverse community of career professionals with the opportunity to transform themselves as scholar-practitioners so that they can effect positive social change.

To best support our mission, Walden's strategic aspirations are to be among the most trustworthy, caring, high-quality providers of accessible, useful, innovative educational programs and services for motivated career professionals who wish to make a difference in the world.

We seek to be leaders in thought and application in delivering learning solutions which can be customized to provide optimal learning for each student—and which furnishes our graduates with the core knowledge, skills and dispositions to be effective scholar-practitioners and agents of positive social change. To further support this, Walden recently aligned its college structures and missions to the Social Determinants of Health framework, creating ties for non-direct healthcare related programs to improvement of overall societal health. We will continue the focus on social change, further developing our vision to provide additional health care providers to the communities where our students live and promoting other programs as social determinants of

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health—those that do not directly enhance the healthcare workforce clearly serve to improve the health of communities and organizations as well as address the need for improved educational justice as a foundation of social change.

Likewise, our aspiration is to be among the most preferred career and work destinations for skilled, dedicated, innovative, and caring professional educators and support staff who share our commitment to support our students as they “Set a Course for Change.”

### **Walden’s Ongoing Institutional Goals**

- To provide multicontextual educational opportunities for career learners.
- To provide innovative, learner-centered educational programs that recognize and incorporate the knowledge, skills, and abilities students bring into their academic programs.
- To provide its programs through diverse process-learning approaches, all resulting in outcomes of quality and integrity.
- To provide an inquiry/action model of education that fosters research, discovery, and critical thinking and that results in professional excellence.
- To produce graduates who are scholarly, reflective practitioners and agents of positive social change.

### **University Outcomes**

Walden University strives to produce graduates with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to:

1. Facilitate positive social change where they work, in their communities, and in society.
2. Use their knowledge to positively impact their profession, communities, and society.
3. Demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning.
4. Apply their learning to specific problems and challenges in their workplace and professional settings.
5. Demonstrate information literacy.\*  
*\*Information literacy is defined as the ability to know when there is a need for information, and being able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively use that information for the issue or problem at hand.*
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the methods of inquiry used in their professional or academic field.
7. Practice legal and ethical integrity in their professional work.
8. Effectively communicate their ideas and the rationale behind them to others.
9. Support diversity and multiculturalism within their profession, communities, and society.

### **Our Values & Commitments**

Three values—**quality, integrity, and student & learning centeredness**—are the core of the university and the touchstones for action at all levels of the organization. They demand high standards of excellence, uncompromising openness and honesty, and primary attention to the learning outcomes and earned progress of Walden students. These values and principles give Walden University its unique identity and underpin our mission.

#### **Quality**

- Walden University believes that quality and integrity are the cornerstones of all academic processes.
- Walden University believes in innovation and flexibility in the conception and delivery of its educational programs, and that there are many different academic routes to achieve quality and integrity.

#### **Integrity**

- Walden University believes that education and social change are fundamental to the provision and maintenance of democratic ideals and principles, especially that of the common good.
  - Walden University believes that its learners effect positive social change when they behave as reflective or scholarly practitioners.
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- Walden University believes that the inquiry/action model fosters critical thinking and underpins research and discovery for reflective practitioners (bachelor's and master's students) and scholar-practitioners (doctoral students). This model provides the framework for teaching, learning, and assessment.

### **Student & Learning Centeredness**

- Walden University believes that all adult learners should have innovative educational access, especially those who are without opportunity in other venues.
- Walden University believes that academic programs must be learner-centered, incorporating learners' prior knowledge and allowing them to focus their academic work on their needs and interests.

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**B. MARKET.** Discuss the nature of your school and the business in which it is engages. Describe who your existing and/or potential customers are and what motivates them to enroll in your school. Explain how you let these customers know you are in business. Finally, identify who your competitors are and how you are different from them.

The university, in support of lifelong learning, offers programs in the educational, social, behavioral, health, and management and technology sciences. Walden is committed to providing access to education, especially for students who are nontraditional, representing underserved populations, and those who are in rural areas. Further, women comprise more than 79% of Walden's student body, and more than 50% of students self-identify as an ethnic minority.

Walden's mission, vision and commitment to positive social change differentiate the institution from its competitors, which are primarily institutions serving nontraditional students. Walden University demonstrates its uniqueness through its university mission, strengths in online education, Walden's commitment to serve non-traditional students, and its faculty model.

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**C. MANAGEMENT.** Describe your management team and how it functions to lead, administer and position the school. If your school has advisory boards, describe how the school uses them for program and school improvement.

As of August 2021, Walden became a wholly owned subsidiary of Adtalem and continues to operate as a separately accredited institution under the Higher Learning Commission. Walden retained its same name, current students continued in their degree programs, and the university continues to provide outstanding student-centered support. Adtalem is a leading workforce solutions provider and the parent organization of Chamberlain University, Ross University School of Medicine, Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine, and the American University of the Caribbean School of Medicine. Adtalem is deeply committed to maintaining Walden's record of academic excellence and exceptional student outcomes. The university retains an independent board of directors and operates under a separate governance structure that allows faculty and staff members to evaluate and develop programs autonomously to best meet the needs of Walden's current and prospective students.

Walden uses an organizational structure that places administrators in holistic management roles overseeing the academic, financial, and operational well-being of programs. This structure helps to ensure a shared understanding of the academic goals as well as administrative support systems. The Associate President and Provost /Chief Academic Officer (CAO) is responsible for academic governance, academic quality, instructional delivery, and curricular initiatives that improve learning experiences and student outcomes for Walden's diverse adult learner populations. Walden's Associate President and Provost /CAO role carries the authority previously granted to the president by the Walden University Board of Directors and carries accountability to the Board.

The Associate President and Provost /CAO collaborates closely with the Vice Provosts and Deans/Associate Deans, and other academic leaders through many processes, such as the University Curriculum and Academic

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Policy (UCAP) committee and the Academic Administrative Leadership Council (AALC), to provide academic leadership for the university. Reporting to the Associate President and Provost /CAO are the Vice Provosts of the academic divisions, as well as the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Administration. The academic division Vice Provosts supervise the Deans of colleges and units supporting the School of Lifelong Learning, the School of Interdisciplinary Undergraduate Studies, and Inclusive Teaching and Learning, and other academic units that provide services to support student success. In addition, numerous programs feature advisory councils comprised of faculty, administrators, students, and external members, such as alumni and key professionals in that discipline.

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**D. SWOT ANALYSIS.** Identify your school's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). Based on the results of this SWOT analysis, provide the following:

- 3 to 5 goals for strengths/weaknesses and how they will be addressed by your school.
- 3 to 5 goals for opportunities/threats and how they will be addressed by your school.

The goals should have specific objectives, defined results, a timeline for completion and metrics (some type of evaluation or measurement) by which the institution can evaluate/measure their success. In developing its goals, the school may wish to refer to the Elements of Effective Institutions graphic that is included on the back page of this form.

### **Strengths**

- Strong mission orientation throughout the organization, built on our history of fostering positive social change through the education of scholar-practitioners, many of whom have been underserved by traditional higher educational institutions.
- Strong stakeholder engaged governance model of decision-making, focused on transparency and supporting our mission, that is shared among the principal governance functions of the Board, Administration and the Faculty.
- Strong experiential and field-services placement team and services, which support students who participate in field experiences as part of their education.
- Strong student support services and resources that help student achieve their goals, from pre-enrollment, through program completion and into alumni services. Walden University continues to make substantial capital investments in technology and process services.
- Continued low 3-year Cohort Default Rates which is a rate that is below the national average for higher educational institutions.
- Streamlined and simplified academic assessment processes is necessary to continue to drive data driven decision making at scale. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness is working diligently to refine meaningful measurement that provides essential data rather than collecting data without clear design for its use.

### **Weaknesses (Areas for Improvement)**

- During the rapid growth of the past decades, we have lost some of the organizational flexibility and cross-functional integration that we once had, and there is room to re-commit to building core cultural capital that binds the entire university towards the same instrumental goals.
- The social change mission is strong, but updating the vision for social change 2020 guide to incorporate the university's focus on inclusive teaching and learning and the Social Determinants of Health framework will allow the institution to further strategize, refine, and operationalize the meaning of social change for the university.

### **Opportunities**

- With the advent of more advanced and integrated information services and strategies, there is an opportunity for Walden to provide more personalized and customized student learning experiences and journeys.
  - Moving to the Adtalem Global Education Inc. network of institutions offers new synergies, opportunities, and resources in coming months and years.
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- Migrating to Canvas from Blackboard as our learning management system has opened opportunities for advanced tool that will provide more real-time reporting and new opportunities for ways to engage students in the new classroom platform.

### Threats

- Walden continues to project growth in many areas but is faced with the continuing reality of the global pandemic and its consequences, including burnout, as are other higher education institutions.
- As the current national unemployment rate remains low, the number of individuals seeking education or new credentials falls. Walden will need to be even more alert to often rapidly changing career needs and develop new programs and alternative credentialing, such as other learning badges and certificates, that provide a compelling reason for students to enroll.
- An increase in the number of competing institutions, particularly state-funded schools have entered the online learning space, providing programs with various learning modalities that may limit the number of individuals enrolling at Walden. Walden will need to generate innovative solutions to remain competitive in the higher education area.

### Goals that Address the SWOT Suite

To achieve Walden's strategic aspirations moving forward, and to meet the various challenges identified in the above SWOT list, Walden will focus on, and commit to, supporting three major strategic themes through the 2022-2024 bridge strategic planning cycle:

- **Inclusive Teaching and Learning:**
    - Further incorporate the ITL strategic plan into the university's bridge strategic plan
      - develop and adopt an ITL learning model that will guide course development
      - complete creation of ITL rubric
    - Continue progress on Success by Degree/Students at the Center initiatives by further identifying support necessary to embed in courses for students to be successful and differentiating characteristics of master's and doctoral graduates
    - Develop and execute on research and thought leadership agenda around ITL in the online learning environment, such as the recent book publication, *Advancing DEI and Creating Inclusive Environments in the Online Space*, by Dr. Nina McCune, Associate Dean for Inclusive Learning and Teaching at Walden University.
    - Update the Vision for Social Change 2020
    - Align diversity of faculty more closely with student body
  - **Doctoral Progress and Completion**
    - Continue implementation and evaluation of doctoral companion courses to better prepare doctoral students for capstone and dissertation completion.
    - Identify success factors pertinent to students in professional doctoral programs vs research doctoral students.
    - Align all doctoral programs around the clear focus on workforce outcomes, particularly for professional doctorates.
    - Decrease time in stage to complete the prospectus to 6 months.
    - Increase 150% doctoral completion rate to 25% in 2023.
  - **Social Determinants of Health (SDoH)**
    - Review university mission and vision as an institution dedicated to positive social change through the SDoH lens
    - Restructured colleges and academic services/operations to mirror SDoH.
      - review and update colleges' missions and visions
    - Evaluate curriculum framework against the Social Determinants of Health and integrate elements of Adtalem sustainability initiatives and social justice.
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- Continue improved retention rates for undergraduates, recognizing the contribution attainment of a bachelor's degree has on communities and the lives of first-generation students
  - Increase undergraduate program completion rate to 37%
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**E. FUTURE THINK.** Describe your school 5 years from now. What will it look like and how it will be positioned in the market place.

Walden will continue to be a continuous learning institution, infused with the values of educating and supporting our students so that they can be effective agents of positive social change. We see ourselves maturing and becoming more integrated across all our functional teams, streamlining and simplifying our structure, our data collection and usage, and implementing strong institutional effectiveness processes with measurable outcomes. We will continue the focus on social change, further developing our vision to provide additional health care providers to the communities where our students live and promoting other programs as social determinants of health—those that do not directly enhance the healthcare workforce nonetheless clearly serve to improve the health of communities and organizations as well as address the need for improved educational justice as a foundation of social change. In 2023-2024 as we continue to integrate with Adtalem Global Education Inc. we are in the process of completing a revised strategic plan.

## I. SUBMISSION

*I hereby certify that the information contained in this form and any attachments to the form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.*

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Signature of Authorized School Official:

DocuSigned by:  
*Sue Subocz, Ph.D.*

Print or Type Name and Title:

**Dr. Sue Subocz, Associate President and Provost**

Date:

9/1/2023

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