

The University of Central Florida Strategic Plan: 2009

University of Central Florida, A Story of Excellence and Opportunity: The Strategic Plan Framing Narrative

UCF has embarked on a bold venture to become a new kind of university, one that leads as well as serves its region, its city-state. That is our goal. Our strategic plan must identify tactics that will enable us to achieve it in a competitive environment. As Florida and our nation confront a new era of economic turmoil and uncertainty, one may question whether this is the time for a new strategic vision that projects the university into such a demanding role. It is our view that this is precisely the time for the larger view that true strategic planning requires. From very humble beginnings, UCF has progressed to become a major metropolitan research university. Today, we stand at a crossroads, and we need your help as we develop the vision and strategies that will define our journey into the future. We will sustain our bedrock capabilities and continue to be “the people’s university,” offering access to a great university with a clear sense of itself and its role to offer an affordable, high-quality education to those with the ability, energy, and enterprise to pursue it. We will continue to champion and support a wide range of scholarship in the classic disciplines and emerging fields. We will sustain our abiding commitments to inclusiveness, excellence in all endeavors, and opportunity for all. We will be at the forefront of efforts to address the economic, cultural, intellectual, and societal needs of the Central Florida city-state.

This is a challenging, but exciting, time for our university, and your thoughtful support is important to our efforts to capture fully the opportunities afforded by strategic planning. We confidently project UCF as a leader in the Central Florida city-state. Our diverse and talented community of students, faculty and staff members, and alumni will enable us to continue to grow in size, quality, and impact on the region and the larger world. Still, finding the pathway to our best future will not be easy. Our current resource challenges are serious, and the road ahead has many obstacles. But as President Kennedy said in announcing the goal of going to the moon within a decade, “We choose to go to the moon...not because it is easy, but because it is hard.” UCF people have always risen to a challenge. Join us as we design our path to leadership and service for the Central Florida city-state.

Let us continue our strategic planning work with a brief overview of our university’s development as a major metropolitan research university. From its beginnings in 1963 as Florida Technological University, the University of Central Florida has actively sought to align its programs of teaching, research, and service with the needs of the regional economy it serves: to be *of* as well as *in* Central Florida. In its earliest days, this was reflected in its location midway between downtown Orlando and the Kennedy Space Center and in its curricular focus on engineering, the sciences, and business. As a technological university, it would be well positioned geographically and academically to serve the then-burgeoning aerospace industry.

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In 1978, the Florida legislature passed a bill changing the institution's name to The University of Central Florida. This reflected the belief that the region needed a more broadly conceived and comprehensive university. Indeed, its curriculum had from its beginnings included the classic disciplines of the arts and sciences and other fields vital to society, such as teacher education. As the years passed, more academic programs were added, and graduate study became more common, with doctoral programs emerging in key fields. A major, 1000-acre research park was created adjacent to the campus through the joint efforts of the university and Orange County. Throughout, the university held to the pattern of offering programs that met the needs of Central Florida's economy.

With Central Florida's emergence over the past quarter century as a *city-state*, a self-conscious, distinct regional economy and market, this paradigm has been broadened to encompass inclusion of curricular, research, and programmatic emphases designed not only to support existing components of the regional economy, but to foster its diversification in areas that will add to its strength and vitality. Thus, programs in fields as diverse as optics and photonics, hospitality management, digital media, biotechnology, and medicine have been added. Business incubators have been developed, some in partnership with Central Florida counties, all with the aim of stimulating the development of the regional economy.

Throughout its history, UCF has been an institution that works with others to accomplish ambitious goals. Our highly successful and prestigious programs in optics and photonics, which grew from the Center for Research and Education in Optics and Lasers (CREOL), owe much of their initial support to local businesses whose products are based on laser technology. Led by the late Bill Schwartz, industry leaders worked with UCF scientists and engineers to gain recognition of CREOL as a state-wide center of excellence, including ongoing financial support. More recently, the College of Optics and Photonics-CREOL won designation as the Florida Center for Optics and Photonics, which carried with it a multi-million-dollar package of endowment and operating support. The combination of world-class research and a continuing stream of talented graduates assure the vitality of this important high-tech industry in the Central Florida city-state.

In the same way, UCF's Institute for Simulation and Training (IST) has achieved recognition and success through its work in collaboration with the military simulation and training commands located in the adjacent research park. Literally billions of dollars flow through these commands to contractors, many of them with strong presence in the research park. This synergy makes Central Florida the world-wide center of simulation and training, providing remarkable opportunities for interdisciplinary research and development for UCF faculty members and their students. IST and related academic departments contribute their research capabilities and, through their graduates, a significant portion of the highly educated workforce needed by the simulation and training industry. Combined with facilities funded by the state, these partnerships serve to bind the industry to Central Florida.

In an analogous fashion, the needs of the tourism and hospitality industry of Central Florida have been served by the emergence of the Rosen College of Hospitality Management. Made possible by a gift of more than \$18 million by UCF trustee, hotelier

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Harris Rosen, and generous support from other members of the hospitality industry, the campus is located near the heart of the tourist industry and is the premier facility of its kind world-wide. The 2,400 students of the college represent a strong cadre of future leaders for an industry that has long been the backbone of the Central Florida economy.

In response to a request from Electronic Arts, UCF created the Florida Interactive Entertainment Academy, home to a master of science program in electronic game development. Housed in downtown Orlando in facilities donated and remodeled by the City of Orlando and funded jointly by the State of Florida and UCF, it prepares game developers for the burgeoning electronic, interactive game industry.

In recognition of the growing need for additional physicians in Florida and the nation, and in the belief that Central Florida's economy will benefit dramatically from the development of biomedical, life sciences, and biotech businesses that grow to surround medical schools in city-states, UCF sought and obtained approval for the development of a medical school. Through the generosity of the Tavistock Group, the new medical school sits on 50 acres of prime land in Lake Nona, a 7,000-acre green-field development near the Orlando International Airport. With the gift of the land, now valued at about \$30 million, and \$12.5 million in cash, the Tavistock Group has seeded the formation of a life-sciences cluster around the new medical school. Already committed is construction valued at approximately \$2 billion, including the Burnham Institute, VA Hospital, the Nemours Foundation Children's Hospital, a University of Florida research facility, and the research laboratories of the Orlando affiliate of the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. Current estimates place the annual economic impact of the medical school at \$1.7 billion and of the total life-sciences cluster at \$7.6 billion.

A common element in each of these success stories is partnership: entrepreneurial faculty members, students, and administrators teamed with leaders from Central Florida business, professional, and governmental communities to apply knowledge in ways that increased opportunity. UCF and its partners invested time, talent, and treasure in ventures that grew and diversified the regional economy and simultaneously expanded research and academic opportunities for students and faculty members. Scholarly capabilities have grown dramatically through these partnership ventures as research, both pure and applied, has been developed in fields that offer rich promise for enhancing the academic reputation of the university and the quality of life of Central Floridians.

It is also clear that, as a general rule, successful approaches are interdisciplinary. Institutes and centers organized around significant issues, questions, and problems have the ability to assemble teams of scientists and engineers with the interest and ability to support the development of basic and applied knowledge of sufficient quality to confer competitive advantage to Central Florida enterprises. This focus of talent and enterprise, irrespective of academic discipline, is a compelling advantage for the institute or center as an organizational model for universities that embrace leadership in the economic and social development of the city-states in which they reside.

Thus, as we chart UCF's course over the next three to five years, we will favor approaches that feature partnerships and interdisciplinary approaches to problems of significance to the university and the Central Florida city-state. Any university's most

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strategic resource is its people: talented faculty and staff members and students. We must do all we can to continue to attract and retain the brightest and best to our community. To achieve this objective, especially in challenging times, we must nurture and protect efforts that enable the university to achieve its core academic mission. These include, for example, programs that provide or support admissions and marketing, student success, fund-raising, procurement of research grants and contracts, and campus safety and security.

Strategic planning is a method designed to reveal opportunities to achieve success through the concentration of resources on key endeavors. Today's uncertain times require us to be more agile, adaptive and attuned to changing needs than in the past, making strategic planning and thoughtful implementation a dynamic, ongoing process. As UCF strives to sustain programs in its areas of historic strength—such as engineering, business, computer sciences, the natural sciences, and teacher education—it must, nonetheless, have the confidence and nimbleness to exploit strategic opportunities in areas as diverse as medicine, the performing arts and others in the future. We need and earnestly invite your ongoing contributions to this effort.

University of Central Florida Strategic Plan: Elements

I. Mission

The University of Central Florida is a public multi-campus, metropolitan research university that stands for opportunity. The university anchors the Central Florida city-state in meeting its economic, cultural, intellectual, environmental and societal needs by providing high-quality, broad-based education and experienced-based learning; pioneering scholarship and impactful research; enriched student development and leadership growth; and highly relevant continuing education and public service initiatives that address pressing local, state, national, and international issues in support of the global community.

II. Vision

UCF has embarked on a bold venture to become a new kind of university that provides leadership and service to the Central Florida city-state. While sustaining bedrock capabilities in the future, the university will purposely pursue new strengths by leveraging innovative partnerships, effective interdisciplinarity, and a culture of sustainability highlighted by a steadfast commitment to inclusiveness, excellence, and opportunity for all.

III. Goals

Goal 1: Offer the best undergraduate education available in Florida.

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Goal 2: Achieve international prominence in key programs of graduate study and research.

Goal 3: Provide international focus to our curricula and research programs.

Goal 4: Become more inclusive and diverse.

Goal 5: Be America's leading partnership university.

IV. Challenge

UCF will cultivate an engaging attitude of awareness, innovation, courage, and agile responsiveness in its members to promote discovery and address emerging needs within the university and the Central Florida city-state. The entire university community is empowered to identify, seek, develop, and capitalize on opportunities that arise in the future and meet the vision of the university.

University of Central Florida Strategic Plan: Implementation

I. Units: As units move forward in pursuing UCF's vision using this strategic plan as a guide, an existing program or a new initiative should be rigorously and routinely assessed using the following criteria:

- What are the clear and measurable “value-added benefits” to the university or city-state?
- Is it “central” to the mission of the university?
- Are there compelling “demand” metrics?
- What is the “comparative advantage” it brings to the university or city-state?
- What are the short and long-term “costs” and availability of resources?

II. Education Team: A Strategic Plan Education Team will promote and support an ongoing educational campaign designed to assist the UCF family (internal and external) to understand its future roles and goals in the central Florida city-state. Clarity and consistency of message are key to successful transition over time.

- Education and Approval
 - President and vice presidents
 - Board of Trustees
- Education

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- Roundtable participants
- Faculty Senate
- Student Government Association and other university groups (including UCF Foundation board, Alumni Association board, and college advisory boards)
- Community groups
- Ongoing educational campaign (print and electronic media)
- Ad hoc briefings, as required

III. Leadership Responsibilities:

- Articulate
 - How well have we told the “story”?
- Align
 - Are the “story” and day-to-day operations in synchrony?
- Measure
 - Do day-to-day operations fit the university’s vision and goals?
 - Institutional effectiveness program
 - Academic program reports
 - Periodic program reviews
 - Accreditation
- Execute and Assess
 - Who maintains a focus on strategy and monitors performance of key initiatives, processes and outcomes?