

# 2023–2024 Strategies and Tactics Summary Report

PRESIDENT’S COUNCIL established three annual strategies for the 2023–2024 academic year. Each strategy included one to three tactics — operationalized at the university-wide and division levels — reflecting the outcomes to which we aspire. A summary of select tactics and their relative impacts (when known) are below.

## Strategy 1 — Retention: Closing Opportunity Gaps for Student Progression

**Close opportunity gaps through continued improvements in equitable student progression and achieve an overall undergraduate student progression rate of 89%.**

To achieve this goal, we will adopt an equity-centered focus and make meaningful progress for students who identify as:

- Black students
- Indigenous students
- Latinx students
- Trans and Non-binary students

### Key Results:

[Daily Retention Dashboard](#) (e-Pass protected)

Retention Rates Summary Table

Group	Fall '22 to Spring '23	Fall '22 to Fall '23	Fall '23 to Spring '24	Fall '23 to Fall '24**
<b>Overall</b>	<b>92.6%</b>	<b>79.3%</b>	<b>91.0%</b>	<b>81.3%</b>
<b>Black or African American</b>	92.9%	71.4%	94.9%	79.5%
<b>Hispanic</b>	88.0%	75.0%	89.6%	79.3%
<b>Indigenous</b>	90.9%	72.7%	86.7%	70.0%
<b>Non-Binary (Other Gender Expression)</b>	85.3%	67.6%	96.7%	93.5%
<b>Enrolled in PLUS 100</b>	93.0%	79.3%	90.9%	80.9%

\*Enrollment as of August 22, 2024

### Highlighted Tactics and Impact Measures:

#### Reconstituted Retention, Persistence Advisory Group

- Worked with President's Council to monitor and examine disaggregated retention; suggest on-time, specific actions to support retention focused on equity and coordinate implementation of retention efforts.

- Committee made recommendations to the President's Council that included the shift to Knack tutoring platform; an increased accountability structure for improving FYEP teaching and offerings; and the adoption of the Chatbot (Edsights) AI interface for student engagement.

### Continued investment in PLUS 100 as high impact practice

- PLUS 100 continued to integrate multiple components that contribute to the effectiveness of the course as a high impact practice that is inclusive of all first year learners. These components included:
  - Common training for all instructors (who are educators from across the university) in effective shared curriculum syllabus design, elements of universal design and inclusive pedagogy, active learning strategies, and purposeful assessment of learning.
  - Inclusion of Teaching Assistants who share affinity of identity or interest with students in each PLUS 100 section and who also participate in training focused on inclusive pedagogy and active learning.
  - Attention to student basic needs (nutrition as essential to learning) through provision of a donor funded snack program for the course.
- The Executive Summary prepared for a donor documents the broader impact of the course and is available for [reference](#). A few highlights included: Overall course rating of 4.18/5; 95.6% of students receiving an A or P grade; 93% of enrolled students registering for Spring 2024; and direct assessment of learning across sections indicated that most students met or exceeded expected learning outcomes.

### Partnered with Knack tutoring platform

- PLU partnered with Knack to provide more access to and assessment of our peer tutoring resources. With Knack, we continue to hire, train, and support PLU peer tutors for all subject areas. Knack's platform allows students to book 1-on-1 and group tutoring sessions on demand, using an app. Tutoring is free and unlimited for all students and sessions can take place in-person or online through the Knack app, including through finals week (a change from our previous model). Early data shows an uptick in tutoring usage since the formation of the partnership at the beginning of spring semester.

### Knack Tutoring Usage Trends Feb. 9, 2024 – May 24, 2024

	# of Hours	# of Appointments	# of Students	# of Tutors
<b>Spring 2024</b>	<b>1,220</b>	<b>769</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>Spring 2023</b>	953	496	201	17
<b>Spring 2022</b>	416	415	178	17
<b>Spring 2021</b>	1,032	640	188	19

### Continued pilot of \$1,000 financial hold threshold

- Increased the amount of debt a student could owe PLU before experiencing a registration hold which can delay timely registration and impact student progression.

- This approach contributed to a short-term improved Fall 22 to Spring 23 persistence rate of 96.4% compared to a rate of 94.6% seen for other students. This was equivalent to approximately 5 additional students retained during the 2022-2023 academic year. Similar gains were not replicated (no difference noted between groups) from Fall 23 to Spring 24.

### **Revised FYEP framework and curriculum**

- During the 23-24 AY, our First-Year Experience Program added two new courses to its sequence: PLUS 100 and FYEP 102: Introduction to Diversity, Justice, and Sustainability (replacing FYEP 190). Housing PLUS 100 within FYEP enabled alignment between learning objectives and program components and provided more consistent instructor/faculty support across the three courses allowing opportunities for meaningful assessment and overall program improvement. A survey regarding FYEP 101 and 102 was administered to students and faculty in May 2024 to examine course experiences to date. A total of 155 students and 18 faculty members participated. Data showed that 141 (90%) of the students believed their FYEP 101 course was somewhat or very relevant to their daily lives and 86% believed their FYEP 102 course was somewhat or very relevant.
- To help prepare and support faculty teaching FYEP 102 in Spring 2024, a series of workshops were provided in summer and fall focused on active learning strategies and assessment. PLUS 100 and FYEP 101 instructors/faculty were invited to provide their perspectives of and experiences with first-year students at the end of Fall 2023. A series of follow up meetings occurred in the Spring to review how implemented strategies were working and to collectively problem solve further improvements.

### **Received Graduate Tacoma “Regional Challenge Grant”**

- In recognition of potential confusion over FAFSA changes, and in support of progression goals, we received \$15,000 to create “Money Moves” drop-in support sessions for continuing PLU students to fill out FAFSA with PLU staff. These sessions served a total of 23 students resulting in seven additional FAFSA filings.
- In support of recruitment initiatives, we received \$10,000 to develop and host workshops at local libraries on college application/essay completion in Fall 2024.

### **Redesigned wellbeing services and resources to prioritize equity in access and impact and impact**

- Coordinated data sources were built to understand utilization and outcome dynamics; an expansion of TimelyCare access and resources to include broader access to psychiatry among other resources; embedding of community providers in the PLU setting; initiation of affinity engaged psycho-social groups; and moving basic needs navigation, inclusive of the food pantry to Wellbeing Services and Resources (now fondly known as WSR).
- In its baseline year, Wellbeing Services and Resources (WSR) served a total of 1,551 students. WSR’s services and resources reached 55.5% (2792 students) of the AY 23-24 total student population. The dataset includes all students who could be eligible for services including students who may not have been likely to use services (i.e. non-matriculated students and alternative routes to certification students.)
- Trends in the disaggregated data raise important questions about who might be overrepresented in referral to - or use of WSR capacities - and who might be missing

opportunities to utilize helpful resources for wellbeing. A data analysis summary is available [here](#). In many cases, engagement with WSR does appear to support student progression.

- WSR was also a co-host, along with PLUS 100 leadership, for a PLU dedicated training in the evidence based Be Real wellbeing training offered by the University of Washington. Be Real is designed to teach and embed evidence-based wellbeing learning in behaviors in curricular and co-curricular contexts. All instructors scheduled to teach PLUS 100 in Fall 2024 (19 instructors), along with additional interested staff and faculty, participated in a 20+ hour training and are contributing to integration of Be Real content in the Fall 2024 PLUS 100 curricula. Because Be Real focused on applied learning, participants in the training also reported gaining personal wellbeing skills and knowledge as a result of their participation in the training. Over 85% of participants reporting that they had developed ways to reduce stress, skills for managing emotions, tools for coping with challenging situations, and practices for developing compassion.

### **Groundwork actions for future student enrollment and progression**

- Began pursuing status as an AANAPISI serving institution
  - Applied for and received a waiver to allow PLU to apply for grant funding as an AANAPISI serving institution thus laying the groundwork for full AANAPISI status. Also recognized by the Department of Education as a Minority Serving Institution.
- Funding to create a “Lute Leap” program was successfully acquired.
  - The program provides a tuition-free summer 2024 math course for 25 entering PLU auto-admit students from Tacoma/Pierce County, allowing students to enter the academic year with a strong math foundation, as well as experience navigating campus and interacting with a PLU faculty member. The initiative was designed to support our retention goals in light of data showing disproportionate DFWI grades for first-year student math courses.

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## **Strategy 2 — Resource Stewardship: Prioritizing for Well-being**

### **Align available resources to improve individual and community well-being.**

To achieve this goal, we will work collectively and collaboratively on:

- Piloting and evaluating novel approaches to accomplishing our shared work that enhances employees’ sense of well-being. This may include changes to staff work schedules, increased flexibility, and testing of other workplace and work-modality innovations.
- Approving changes to the daily schedule that support well-being and student learning.

### **Key Results:**

[Well-being Survey Results](#); [WISHES survey results](#)

### **Highlighted Tactics and Impact Measures:**

**Workplace Well-being Survey**

- A survey of all employees was conducted in October, 2023 in order to help prioritize action items. Results of the survey were made available via the IE website. The survey illuminated needs around improved feedback, review and acknowledgement efforts which will be uplifted as we move forward under the new Chief Operating Officer.

#### **Daily schedule task force**

- The Task Force submitted a comprehensive report that identified multiple options for consideration by President's Council. Follow up work that involves the collection of community feedback on select model(s) and evaluation by the President's Council will result in the selection of a model for implementation in 2025-2026.

#### **Change to bereavement leave policy**

- The Executive Council approved the revision of the bereavement leave policy to 1) increase available leave days per incident from 3 to 5 days; 2) expand the definition of qualifying relationships and 3) eliminate the wait period. In the 2023-2024 fiscal year a total of 32 employees took bereavement leave with an average of 23 hours per leave.

#### **Changes to flex time policy**

- Changes to the Summer Flex program to 1) increase flex days from 5 to 7 and 2) allow flex days to be used June 1-May 31 (no longer restricted to summer only). In 2023-2024 fiscal year a total of 319 employees claimed flex time with an average of 36.6 hours taken per person.

#### **Financial Decisions Indirectly Related to Well-being**

- Financial dashboard development
  - Creation of a new detailed financial dashboard to assist with improved financial management and planning and to significantly improve efficiency in budget work for all budget managers. Initial dashboard prototype is established and expanded utilization set to launch in 2024-2025.
- Outreach to possible Developers for property sales/development
  - Sent out RFIs to Real Estate Developers/Brokers; determined subset of respondents with whom to meet; Determining final costs/opportunities (fiscal impact).
- Merging of UG and GR Admissions and Elimination of Centralized Continuing Education
  - Alignment of resources and reduction of redundancies (human resources/workflow impact)
- Moved Commencement from T-Dome to Campus
  - Projected savings in FY24 of at least \$60k and elimination of Saturday staffing needs (human resource and fiscal impacts).

## **Strategy 3 — Recruitment: Community, Partnerships, and Resources**

**Strengthen our culture of Lutes opening doors — for prospective students, new colleagues, and university partners.**

To achieve this goal, we will:

- Exceed baseline enrollment targets of 525 first-year students, 100 transfer students, and 350 total graduate students.
- Increase diversity of faculty and staff hires.

- Launch no fewer than three new university partnerships for shared mission impact that will uplift the university’s profile and reputation, drive increased recruitment and retention, and provide revenue opportunities.

## Key Results:

### Enrollment Summary

Fall 2023	Goal	Actual
First Years	550	624
Transfers	100	108
Graduate	350	342
ABSN	144	126

### Faculty and Staff Diversity Fall 2023 Baseline Data (to be compared to Fall 2024)

Race/Ethnicity	Staff Count	Faculty Count
American Indian or Native Alaskan	3	0
Asian	29	19
Black or African American	9	6
Hispanic	18	14
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	4	0
Non-Resident Alien	4	2
Race/Ethnicity Unknown	9	3
Two or more races	25	2
White	253	171
Employees of Color	88	41

### Partnership for Health Innovation

[Partnership for Health Innovation](#)

## Highlighted Tactics and Impact Measures:

### Expanded Automatic Admission program

- Established 40 admission pathways as of 2/26/24 resulting in increased application, admits, deposits and enrolled students.

Admit Year	Applications	Admits	Deposits	Enrolled
2022	253	238	38	58
2023	560	545	126	129
2024	716	706	152*	
*as of 8/22/2024				

### Added Guaranteed Graduate Admissions program

- Established Guaranteed Graduate Admission for PLU students. Application from PLU undergraduates to PLU graduate programs jumped from 51 (2023) to 88 (2024) as of May 22

Year	Total Graduate Applications	Apps from PLU Graduates	% PLU Grad Apps	Enrollment Rate of PLU Apps
2020-21	748	119	15.9%	55.5%
2021-22	801	112	14.0%	42.9%
2022-23	702	95	13.5%	44.2%
2023-24	405	51	12.6%	56.9%
2024-25*	424	88	20.8%	61.4%
*data as of 8/22/24				

### Engaged an array of initiatives designed to increase enrollments in undergraduate, graduate and continuing education programs

- Established Intercollegiate Womens' Lacrosse (expected impact on enrollment +5)
- Engaged analysis and established systems for ensuring adequate and appropriate seats for new transfer students. For spring 2024, we were short 49 seats in high demand courses in Biology, Business, Kinesiology, and Psychology. Center for Student Success (CSS) advisors collaborated directly with College Deans to identify where enrollments could be increased and/or where additional sections could be added to ensure all incoming transfer students had full course schedules. While we don't have concrete data evidencing this pressure in past terms, anecdotally, CSS and Admission report having the same challenge every year (with the same high-demand programs). This fall, the team will use transfer "intend major" data in an effort to build appropriate seats into existing course offerings.
- Created Data Science major
- Created the Master of Science in Social Work in partnership with Multicare for funding and clinical placements. Enrollments (29) and projected revenue (\$546,960) exceeded established targets of 20 and \$412,800.
- Secured \$9.5M in capital funding for Science Center renovation.

- Expanded Alumni Referral program (Increase in referrals from 488 last year to 629 total referrals this year)
- Launched the Education Doctorate with 18 students enrolled in the first cohort.
- Expanded reputational reach through regional outdoor advertising campaign, featuring "All Are Welcome" billboards in King County (near Seattle Pacific University) and a separate targeted effort in downtown Olympia and near the airport during the legislative session to dovetail with PLU's new Government Relations strategies.
- Developed continuing education program for Tacoma General, Allenmore (West region) frontline supervisors/managers. Leadership Academy program serving a cohort of 30 TG employees. Over a span of four weeks, School of Business faculty will introduce effective models for managing, leading, and motivating employee performance and addressing diverse personalities and uncomfortable situations through role playing. Program can be replicated in the future if both parties deem it worthwhile.
- Intentionally and strategically paused or eliminated programs that are not meeting enrollment targets (MSMA; MSK)

### **Solidified multiple partnerships**

- The [Partnership for Health Innovation](#) (MultiCare & WSU) - including communication strategy and framework, key messages, visual brand, internal messenger training, website, constituent outreach, media outreach, and launch event as well as planned lower campus development.
- Multiple educational pathways with [Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences](#)
- Partnership with [Blue Zones Project Parkland-Spanaway](#) to locate project offices on PLU's campus, and as part of our ongoing commitment to fostering a healthy and thriving community, PLU is pursuing status as a Blue Zones Approved Worksites.
- Partnership with Pierce County to bring the business skills program to local entrepreneurs. PLU has worked with industry specialists to develop nine free continuing education courses that are highly relevant to the success of small businesses. These new classes cover subjects like bookkeeping, tax reporting, and business planning and can immediately be applied to increase productivity, efficiency, and profitability.

### **Initial steps taken to lay the groundwork for future partnerships**

- PLU participation via President Belton in the Executive Council for a Greater Tacoma
- Contracted with GTH Gov to engage formal lobbying efforts in Olympia with specific focus on Washington College Grant, capital requests, and data sharing agreements. Activity yielded increased visibility and strengthened reputation for PLU, especially among the Pierce County caucus, who endorsed PLU's capital proposal, and among legislators in PLU's primary catchment area and on relevant committees - [2023-24 Legislative Agenda](#)
- Creation and launch of Indigenous Community Advisory Network. Outcomes include strengthened relationships with local and regional tribes, development of Indigenous Scholars Program, and PLU partnering with the Puyallup Tribe of Indians this summer (2024) to offer a 7-



week camp for 15 rising high school juniors and seniors. The overall goal of the program is to cultivate a pipeline of Indigenous health professionals by exposing them to STEM fields.

- Initiated outreach to JBLM (Major General - Jimmy Collins) to assess education needs and opportunities.
- Initiated conversation about adding WSU as an additional partner for 3-2/Dual Degree in Engineering (intended to better serve in-state students who receive state funding)
- Pierce County Parks, PLU and Ecostudies Institute have partnered to create and rehabilitate a native prairie conservancy on PLU campus.

### **Improved Faculty and Staff Hiring Practices Focused on Increasing Diversity**

- Faculty hiring processes were modified in multiple ways to bolster our opportunities to recruit and hire candidates from diverse backgrounds. Dr. Jennifer Smith (Dean of Inclusive Excellence) and Laura Silcox (Associate Director of Human Resources) hosted position description writing workshops for faculty search committee representatives (previously, departments created their own descriptions without support). Two on-campus finalists for tenure track positions – both identifying as Black – named the inclusive position descriptions as the number one reason our jobs compelled them to apply (and both ultimately accepted our offers). We changed the required search committee composition, eliminating the “diversity advocate” role from each committee and instead expecting that *all* members of search committees have commitments to and training in diverse, equitable hiring practices.
- Staff hiring processes in Student Life continue to be made more consistent to, like the faculty process, include explicit commitments to and training in diverse, equitable hiring practices. Practices include ongoing attention to implicit bias training, search process purposeful pause points focused on composition of the candidate pool, and intentional all division on-boarding and gathering focused on strategic priorities and initiatives. Like the faculty process, position postings were also improved and resulted in positive feedback from applicants.

### **Philanthropic Growth and Partnership Development**

- Initiated new partnership with Sunderland Foundation resulting in \$1m grant for Science Center
- \$16.5M in gifts and commitments YTD, which is \$6.5M over total commitments in FY23.
- To date, Sponsored Programs has submitted 34 proposals totaling \$8.6M and received 24 grant awards totaling \$6.7M.
- A \$2.5M multi-institutional collaborative research project led by Dr. Tiffany Artime was awarded by PCORI.