



State of the University: Report to the General Board of the AME Church and Council of Bishops

Executive Summary:

Wilberforce University continues to position itself as an institution unafraid of innovation and engaging in the critical examination and introspection required for institutional transformation. In the past 18 months, we have been focused on defining the value proposition for the Wilberforce academic and student engagement experience and intentional in establishing a goal of becoming a premier liberal arts institution with an entrepreneurial intention. This has resulted in a more focused attention to program development and a thoughtful message about the Wilberforce University brand.

The Wilberforce Renaissance: Reclaiming Institutional Prominence remains the guiding strategic focus for our work, at once, recalling the magnificent legacy and history of the University while challenging and urging a renewed commitment to excellence and high performance. The departure of one president and the seamless appointment and onboarding of a new president has telegraphed succession planning and leadership continuity rarely seen in small, special-mission institutions like Wilberforce. Our most immediate and critical focus has been developing and executing an aggressive enrollment strategy to support the financial turnaround plan.

As we pursue this work, we are committed to applying a more disciplined and rigorous approach to our practice. To that end, we have developed six institutional value drivers that frame the management expectations and desired performance outcomes at the University. Additionally, to support the daily management of the University, we have developed the (2018-2020) Operational Goals. Both the Six Institutional Value Drivers and Operational Goals are included in this report.

While challenges persist, our path forward is increasingly clearer as opportunities present that assure a stronger, more sustainable Wilberforce. The Leadership Team is taking shape as we welcomed the latest member, Cynthia Roseberry, as our new Vice President for Institutional Advancement and Executive Director of the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation. We

have also committed to a review of the organizational structure at the University to determine the most effective placement of personnel and functions.

The ensuing State of the University Report highlights key current and planned administrative and programmatic activity at the University.

The core mission of Wilberforce University is teaching and learning with a central focus on a holistic student experience. To establish the institutional context for an outstanding student-centered collegiate experience, the University leadership has identified six value drivers which will provide the conceptual, administrative, management and programmatic foundation for the University's renewal and transformation. These value drivers will frame the on-going strategic thinking, planning and action at the University and will inform goal-setting, decision-making, all internal and external narratives about Wilberforce University and the development of the institutional strategic plan.

Wilberforce University will be a premier liberal arts institution with an entrepreneurial intention.

The Six Institutional Value Drivers will also guide the development and execution of operational plans for each department/unit at the University.

The six value drivers and their foci are:

1. **Operational Efficiency** Developing policies, procedures and practices which assure and assess the highest standard of workplace effectiveness and operational functionality which support the core mission of the University.
2. **Academic Excellence** Establish rigorous and challenging academic programs and intellectual experiences which prepare students for successful entry into the workplace, graduate and professional schools, and the pursuit of entrepreneurship. The academic experience will also encourage and facilitate an appreciation of ideas which results in life-long learning.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** Establish policies, procedures and practices which reflect the best and most promising key performance indicators in fiscal management and accountability to assure an excellent demonstration of the good stewardship of the University financial resources and assets.
4. **Student Engagement** Establish policies, practices and programs which create and support a vibrant, enhanced, rich, and holistic student experience that expands learning beyond the classroom.
5. **Image Enhancement** Establish a programmatic and campus infrastructure which supports the implementation of a comprehensive approach and plan to repair and enhance the image, reputation, and physical environment of the University with all internal and external constituent groups.
6. **Civility and Kindness** Establish policies, practices and programs which create and support an institutional and campus climate of genuine collegiality, mutual respect and workplace collaboration, excellent customer service and constituent satisfaction.

Operational Goals (Spring 2018)

Goal 1: To stabilize the fiscal position of the University by increasing revenues, addressing structural imbalances, strengthening financial, planning, and forecasting practices and demonstrating operational efficiency and high performance.

Strategic Execution:

- a) Financial Turn-Around Plan
- b) Enrollment Plan
- c) Development of the Wilberforce University Performance Scorecard.
- d) Position audits and performance evaluations

Goal 2: To repair and restore the internal and external image and reputation of the University.

Strategic Execution

- a) University website redesign
- b) Marketing and Public Relations Plan
- c) Community Outreach and Institutional Partnerships and Collaborations
- d) Comprehensive facilities review and prioritization plan

Goal 3: To develop innovative and relevant academic and student support programs to provide a rich, rigorous, expansive, and engaging collegiate experience for Wilberforce students.

Strategic Execution

- a) Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation
- b) College of General and Foundational Studies
 - a. Center for Academic Success and Student Support
- c) Masters of Rehabilitation Counseling Enhancement
- d) STEM Taskforce

Goal 4: To transform the teaching and learning spaces to more adequately provide and support a stimulating, rigorous, challenging, and affirming teaching, learning and student engagement collegiate environment.

Strategic Execution

- a) Comprehensive facilities review of the teaching, learning and student engagement spaces.
- b) Prioritization of facilities repair and renovation needs.
- c) Re-imagining the Rembert E. Stokes Library and Information Commons

Goal 5: To develop a creative, robust, and aggressive fundraising and institutional advancement strategy to solidly position Wilberforce University as an attractive, sought-after collegiate choice, investment, and institutional partner.

Strategic Execution

- a) Develop a robust fund-raising strategy and plan
- b) Assessment of the Division of Institutional Advancement

- a. Engage an Advancement consultant
- c) Hire a Vice President for Institutional Advancement

Goal 6: To strategically incorporate unexpected opportunities and unplanned Board and/or Presidential imperatives which may present to advance the University

The health and vitality of the University can be best assessed by examining activity and progress in five key areas of institutional life: accreditation, recruitment and retention, financial affairs, institutional advancement and academic life and student engagement. I have, therefore, organized this report to outline activity in those key areas to provide a more robust opportunity for further discussion and greater clarity.

I. Accreditation

- a. The University is awaiting a final disposition from HLC (Higher Learning Commission) on the results of a Focused Visit which occurred in October 2017 which focused on the University's response to HLC concerns in fiscal affairs, strategic planning and the CLIMB program. University officials met with the HLC team on April 24, 2018 in Chicago to respond to the report submitted by the Focus Visit team. Following that meeting, a report was submitted and the University submitted a response. The Board of Trustees of HLC will consider all the information submitted in reaching their final decision. The decision is expected on or near June 24, 2018.

II. Recruitment and Retention

- a. As of Thursday, June 21, 2018; 358 students are Confirmed for attendance in the fall; **269** students have pre-registered for the fall.
- b. The University has created the You Belong@ Wilberforce Campaign to aggressively attract and recruit prospective students. The campaign includes a Student Preview Day on campus and targeted follow-up with students who have been accepted to Wilberforce.
- c. A series of Renaissance Receptions for Future Wilberforceans have been planned in cities with large numbers of applications from interested students and active alumni associations. One has occurred in Atlanta and others are being planned for Chicago and Detroit.
- d. The University has partnered with NSORO, a foundation that supports student aging out of foster care, to establish a pipeline for students interested in matriculating at Wilberforce.
- e. The University hired a full-time recruiter located in Atlanta with responsibility for aggressively developing the Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, North and South Carolina recruiting markets.
- f. Project Success is a collaboration with the Great Lakes Association to support the provision of emergency aid, paid internships and information and training on financial literacy. The goal of Project Success is to remove as many barriers to student success and completion possible.
- g. The Division of Student Engagement and Success has:
 - i. Increases student participation in on-campus activities
 - ii. Implemented and engaged in a process of divisional assessment.

- iii. Created a process for reporting residential hall maintenance issues and concerns.
- iv. Restructured the residence life student staff program
- v. Collaborated to develop a feedback process for food services.

III. Financial Affairs

- a. The University is currently in final discussions with a private capital provider regarding securing a \$14 million loan to complete renovations of the four existing dormitories that need major repair before the facilities can become revenue-generating assets. The renovated dormitories will have approximately 520 beds. This project is slated to start in October 2018 and be ready for occupancy by fall 2019.
- b. The University has reached out to a private capital provider, Stonehenge Capital, to explore a partnership in financing the conversion of an existing single-use dining facility into a multi-purpose student activity center (SAC) and food court for both on-campus students and the University's growing commuter student population. Also, to be included is a CO-working, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation Lab for the University Community. Wilberforce University has requested an initial commitment of \$2 million with the ability to borrow up to \$3 million from the SCD Fund.
- c. The University has requested that the Department of Education forgive \$3.5 Million in non-statutory outstanding financial aid final audit determination findings. The University is currently completing a review of the files from Fy10, FY11 and FY14 to submit to the Department of Education for review. After the files are reviewed, the financial aid division of the department of education will submit the remaining items for forgiveness. The University expects this to be completed prior to November 2018.
- d. The University has an outstanding loan with the A.M.E. Church in the amount of \$1.75 Million that started in June 2017. The University is currently working with the Attorneys for the AME Church to retire this debt. The University plans to provide the A.M.E. Church with the deed to the University Walker Building, and lease-back the building to repay the loan. The lease back payments will extend through February 2020 if not paid off sooner.
- e. On December 7, 2015 the University received from The Third Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) a conditional promise to give whereby the University pledged land and buildings as collateral to KeyBank National Association for a \$1,909,060 loan that the University used to support general operations. The A.M.E. Church is obligated to pay \$20,460 each month for ten years or until such time the loan is paid in full. For the duration of the loan, the Third District of the A.M. E. Church will make the loan payment in lieu of the \$300K annual contribution to the University.
- f. The University has applied for the deferral of the HBCU Capital Loan payments over the next three years (FY19 – FY21). The University has requested a six-year deferment period; however, if granted, three of the six

requested deferment years will apply to prior years of non-payment of HBCU Capital Loan payments by the University. The current annual HBCU Capital Loan debt service obligation is approximately \$1.39 million, which has contributed to the challenge faced by the University of becoming fiscally stable and sustainable. The deferment would significantly improve the bottom line (net income) performance for the University and over the next three years would equate to a total of nearly \$4.1 Million dollars in available resources.

- g. For Fiscal Year 18-19 (July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019) the University has received \$2.6 Million in Grants: Department of Education \$2.2M, UNCF \$200K, Project for Success \$166K, Ohio Space Grant \$33K & National Park Grant for \$20K.
- h. The contributions for the fiscal year 2017-18 include cash, loans, and pledges received from July 2017 through June 21, 2018.

Source	Cash	Loan	Pledges	Total
Alumni	400,992		67,682	468,674
AME Church	44,842	50,000		94,842
Board of Trustees	227,900	458,000	172,500	858,400
Other Donors	269,584		3,751	273,335
TOTAL	943,318	508,000	243,933	1,695,251

IV. Institutional Advancement

- a. Hired a Vice President for Institutional Advancement
- b. Scheduled a 1.5-day training session with the Harvard University Institutional Advancement team (confirmed for August 20-21, 2018 at Harvard University)
- c. Hosted the Minority Business Enterprise Day with legislators, suppliers and business owners and aspiring Wilberforce University entrepreneur students as an introduction to the Wilberforce Renaissance and our focus on training future entrepreneurs and networking.
- d. Hosted the Footsteps to Freedom Educators Study Tour to introduce educators from California to the history and mission of Wilberforce University and the nations' HBCUs.
- e. Established the \$18.56 Campaign to get every alumnus to commit to give \$8.56 per pay period.
- f. Let the Board-Giving campaign with a \$100,000 goal.
- g. Challenged all alumni chapters to raise and donate \$20,000 each month for the 2nd quarter.
- h. Applied to the Tom Joyner School of the Month campaign.
- i. Submitted solicitation letters to major corporations and high network individuals (Key-Bank, Starbucks, Wal-Mart, Gates Foundation, Google, Coca Cola, Koch Industries, Wells Fargo, Goldman Sachs, Microsoft Corporation...)

V. Academic Life and Student Engagement

- a. Established the Mark and Shelly Wilson Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation
 - i. Emerging Entrepreneurship Program and Summer Internship, a selected cohort of students will receive support for the 2018-19 academic year to pursue their entrepreneurial endeavor, participate in workshops, build a network and participate in the Emerging Entrepreneur Road Trip.
- b. Established the Bayard Rustin Lecture Series.
- c. Expanding the Masters in Rehabilitative Counseling Program as a result of a \$2.4M grant from the Department of Education. We are currently preparing to conduct a self-study which is the first step in the process of achieving program accreditation through CACREP. (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs).
- d. Re-imagining the Center for Academic Support and Student Success to include a Writing Center, Mathematics Laboratory, and the New Center for Teaching and Learning. With Title III funding, we will renovate the space which is currently 10% complete.
- e. Participating in Year-2 of the UNCF Career Pathways Initiative to develop curricula and institutional infrastructure to support the placement of students in careers after Wilberforce related to their course of study.
- f. Re-imagining the Rembert E. Stokes Learning Resource Center and Information Commons (Library) with Title III funding and funding for the enhancement of the Master's Program in Rehabilitative Counseling.
- g. Continuing to identify the learning outcomes for all courses under the CLIMB program and have assembled a team of instructors to assist with curriculum mapping and developing stronger more relevant content per discipline.
- h. Three students participating in the James Baldwin Writers Colony in The Netherlands.
- i. Two faculty participated in the New York University Faculty Resource Network, a faculty development consortium of which Wilberforce is a member.

Conclusion:

This State of the University does not include all the work completed and ongoing at the University. It is meant, instead, to highlight salient activity that illustrate the significant and real commitment to the Wilberforce Renaissance and institutional transformation that will position Wilberforce as a premier liberal arts institution that is vital, vibrant, strong prepared to assume its rightful position about this nations' best institutional of higher learning.



Why Wilberforce?

Welcome to the venerable Wilberforce University, where a powerful history of self-determination and a noteworthy legacy as the nation's first, private HBCU exist as ever-present reminders of our birthright and the responsibility that comes with it. At Wilberforce, we are unapologetic in our embrace of excellence, kindness and innovation as core institutional values which anchor us as an intellectual community and workplace environment committed to operational efficiency, teaching and learning, research and scholarship, entrepreneurship and community service.

We are a university community which values and respects diversity of thought, critical thinking, intellectual rigor, spiritual development and the passionate pursuit of disciplined habits of the mind, spirit and body. We have been strategic in defining ourselves as a premier liberal arts institution with an entrepreneurial intention. This has allowed us to be especially focused on curricula and program development and student engagement which creates an academic culture which celebrates and cultivates the liberal arts while encouraging and developing, in our students, entrepreneurial thinking and action. This bold and creative vision for the academic enterprise at Wilberforce University has begun in earnest with the establishment of the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

Our new focus on entrepreneurship and innovation through the development of business partnerships will result in two very critical outcomes; the creation of the next generation of entrepreneurs and corporate leaders in the African American community and the establishment of alternative revenue streams for the University which will eliminate our sole dependence on philanthropic support and enrollment.

We look backward at our proud history to move forward to an exciting future. We are a University unafraid of risk-taking and innovation and have been audacious in declaring the Wilberforce Renaissance: Reclaiming Institutional Prominence as the guiding light to our path forward. As a community of teachers and learners, we take seriously the invitation to participate in the growth and development of our students as they welcome us into their lives. This is a sacred trust that we strive mightily as a University community to uphold.

Since 1856, Wilberforce University has existed as a living example of what is possible against formidable odds. Our institutional narrative provides a model of resilience for all those who enter to study and work at the University. Our collective commitment to our beloved Wilberforce and the principles for which it stands will assure a vibrant academic and student engagement community.

We are Wilberforce University.

Suo Marte