



Strategic Direction

*Advancing
Student Success • Institutional Vitality • and World Engagement*

Executive Summary and Rationale

Centenary University's Strategic Direction establishes a clear, measurable framework to advance **Student Success**, strengthen **Institutional Vitality**, and deepen **World Engagement**. These three priorities are mutually reinforcing: student success depends on a sustainable institution; institutional vitality is strengthened through focus and distinction; and world engagement gives purpose, relevance, and visibility to Centenary's mission.

The Strategic Direction is organized around five integrated goals that guide decision-making, resource allocation, and accountability across the University.

At the core of this framework is a commitment to **increasing degree completion**, recognizing persistence and graduation as central indicators of student success and institutional effectiveness. By strengthening the full student lifecycle, from recruitment and enrollment through graduation, Centenary will improve retention, completion, and student outcomes while stabilizing enrollment, tuition revenue, and long-term institutional planning.

This work is complemented by a focus on **career and life readiness**, ensuring that students graduate with direction, preparation, and purpose. Through individualized success planning, advising, mentoring, and experiential learning, students are better prepared for careers, graduate study, service, and entrepreneurship. This goal also strengthens Centenary's connections to employers, alumni, and community partners, reinforcing the University's relevance in the workforce and society.

To support long-term sustainability, Centenary will pursue **regional distinction through innovation in signature programs**, concentrating resources in areas where the University can achieve top-tier performance and recognition. Focused excellence strengthens Centenary's identity, drives enrollment and fundraising, enhances student pride and belonging, and improves academic and career outcomes.

Institutional vitality is further advanced through growing faculty, staff and student **engagement** coupled with **intentional campus and capital planning**. A comprehensive, long-term campus master plan will align facilities, infrastructure, and program investments with enrollment realities and academic priorities, ensuring responsible stewardship of resources while improving learning, living, and engagement environments for students.

Finally, Centenary affirms that higher education serves the broader common good. Through **impactful world engagement**, the University will shape faculty, staff and students as ambassadors based on our values and knowledge and launch multi-year initiatives that address real-world challenges and provide transformational learning opportunities. These initiatives deepen student learning, leadership, and civic responsibility while enhancing Centenary's visibility, partnerships, alumni engagement, and philanthropic support.

Grounded in the values of **Respect, Curiosity, Innovation, Excellence, and Service**, this Strategic Direction positions Centenary University as a student-centered, mission-driven, and impact-oriented institution—focused on outcomes, guided by purpose, and prepared to shape a sustainable and meaningful future.



Draft – Strategic Direction – Draft

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Centenary University's strategic goals advance three interdependent priorities, **Student Success, Institutional Vitality, and World Engagement**, and are designed to be mutually reinforcing. Together, these goals provide measurable outcomes, clear accountability, and a shared framework for institutional decision-making.

1. Increase Degree Completion

Alignment: Primary - Student Success | Secondary Alignment: Institutional Vitality

Goal 1: By June 2028, Centenary will increase the number of graduating students by 10 percent and by an additional 5 percent annually, thereafter, as measured by total degrees conferred and undergraduate and postsecondary completion rates. **Owner:** Vice President for Student Affairs

Why: Achieving this goal requires strengthening the full student lifecycle—from recruitment and admissions through graduation—through coordinated engagement across enrollment, financial aid, EOP, academic programs, advising, athletics, campus life, support services, and career development. By improving retention and completion pipelines and tracking cohort outcomes, the University reinforces shared responsibility for student persistence and achievement.

Increased degree completion also strengthens institutional vitality by stabilizing tuition revenue, improving long-term enrollment planning, supporting accreditation and state reporting outcomes, and reducing enrollment loss.

Key Metrics: degrees awarded; cohort completion rates; retention-to-completion pipeline.

2. Strengthen Career and Life Readiness

Alignment: Primary - Student Success | Secondary - World Engagement

Goal: By December 2027, Centenary will ensure that at least 25 percent of enrolled students have an individualized career and life success plan supported by advising, mentoring, or experiential learning. Participation will increase by 25 percent annually to reach 75 percent of students by 2029. **Owner:** Dean of Students

Why: This goal strengthens the connection between academic experience and student purpose through coordinated engagement across student experience, EOP, career services, advising, academic programs, campus life, experiential learning, and alumni. Through intentional advising, mentoring, and applied learning, students graduate with clearer direction and stronger preparation for careers, graduate study, service, or entrepreneurship.

Career and life readiness also advances world engagement by strengthening connections to employers, alumni, and community partners, expanding experiential opportunities, and preparing graduates to contribute meaningfully to the workforce and society.

Key Metrics: documented success plans; participation in advising and mentoring; career readiness and post-graduation placement indicators.

3. Achieve Distinction in Signature Programs through Innovation and Collaboration

Alignment: Primary - Institutional Vitality | Secondary - Student Success

Goal: By June 2030, Centenary will achieve top 10 percent regional performance among peer institutions of similar size in signature areas: business, criminal justice, equine studies, education, nursing, flourishing (Happiness Program), and four NCAA Division III sports. **Owners:** Vice President for Academic Affairs and Director of Athletics

Why: Focusing on signature programs allows Centenary to differentiate itself in a competitive higher-education market and concentrate resources where excellence and recognition are most achievable. Strategic engagement spans recruitment, admissions, academic departments, athletics, retention initiatives, communications, advancement, employer partnerships, and alumni engagement.

For students, regional distinction delivers higher-quality academic and co-curricular pathways, stronger licensure and career outcomes, and increased pride, belonging, and momentum.

Key Metrics: program enrollment and persistence; rankings and accreditations; licensure pass rates; competitive athletic outcomes; employer and student demand

4. Advance Campus and Capital Planning

Alignment: Primary - Institutional Vitality | Secondary - Student Success

Goal: By June 2027, Centenary will develop and approve a 10-year campus master plan encompassing academic programs, facilities, infrastructure, grounds, and program-specific equipment, with clear annual benchmarks and funding targets. **Owner:** Chief Financial Officer

Why: This goal aligns capital investments with enrollment realities and academic priorities, strengthening long-term financial stewardship and deferred maintenance planning. Strategic engagement includes academic leadership, facilities and operations, administration, enrollment management, advancement, athletics, arts programs, and external partners. For students, campus planning enhances learning and living environments, supports modern pedagogy and experiential learning, and strengthens recruitment, retention, and student well-being.

Key Metrics: master plan approval; capital funding secured; annual project milestones achieved

5. Lead Impactful Engagement for the Common Good

Alignment: Primary - World Engagement | Secondary - Student Success and Institutional Vitality

Goal: By December 2028, Centenary, in addition to current service projects, will identify and launch five multi-year service initiatives demonstrating positive impact locally, nationally, or globally. These initiatives will engage students, faculty, staff, and alumni, with outcomes reported annually to the Board, campus, alumni, and donors. **Owner:** President

Why: These initiatives translate Centenary's mission into action by addressing real-world challenges through applied learning, service, and partnership. Strategic engagement spans academic programs, student life, enrollment and retention, marketing and communications, advancement, community partnerships, alumni engagement, and student success initiatives. World engagement strengthens student success through transformational learning that builds leadership, civic responsibility, and global awareness, while advancing institutional vitality by enhancing visibility, strengthening fundraising narratives, deepening alumni connection, and reinforcing Centenary's impact-oriented identity.

Key Metrics: number of active initiatives; participation rates; measurable impact for people.

Centenary Values – Respect • Curiosity • Innovation • Excellence • Service

Respect – We honor every person and grow belonging through hospitality and compassion.

Curiosity – We pursue deeper understanding and invite others into shared discovery and learning.

Innovation – We create bold solutions that strengthen our community and expand opportunity for others.

Excellence – We give our best so students and colleagues flourish in their career and life.

Service – We use our gifts to uplift others and make a meaningful difference in the world.