

The University of the South

Operational Priorities Plan 2024-2029

April 2024 (Revised August 2024)

The operational plan emphasizes a number of areas that warrant improvement, revision, or expansion to support the new strategic plan and to elevate the University's quality and perceived value among faculty, staff, students, parents, alumni, and community members.

AREAS OF EMPHASIS

1. ***Operational Emphasis 1: Faculty Compensation.*** Improve faculty salaries and close the gap on our peer group by employing a specific methodology and identifying a substantive target.
2. ***Operational Emphasis 2: Salary Compression.*** Identify groups of employees (staff and faculty) where salary compression is an issue and develop specific measures to address the compression.
3. ***Operational Emphasis 3: Professional Development.*** Invest in a culture of on-campus professional development for faculty and staff that will build on existing programs and strengths and support improvement in operations and campus collegiality.
4. ***Operational Emphasis 4: Housing in Sewanee.*** Continue to grow opportunities for employees to secure affordable housing in Sewanee so that all who want to live on the Domain can do so.
5. ***Operational Emphasis 5: Deferred Maintenance.*** Undertake renovations and improvements of campus properties with a special focus on residence halls, teaching spaces, and athletic facilities.
6. ***Operational Emphasis 6: Communications and Marketing.*** Improve the flow and content of internal communications and promote better the brand and message of Sewanee as one of the nation's leading liberal arts colleges and Episcopal seminaries.
7. ***Operational Emphasis 7: Logistics.*** Improve campus-based logistical and parking arrangements, including evening transportation, and address off-campus transportation needs for those with limited transportation means.
8. ***Operational Emphasis 8: ERP and Data Governance.*** Identify and adopt an innovative, next-generation ERP system, coupled with a comprehensive data governance framework to support efficient operations and data informed decision-making.

FACULTY COMPENSATION

Action Items

1. Increase faculty salaries above the prior year's annual inflation rate. The percentage increases by rank will vary as needed to achieve the second action item.
2. Take steps to position the average faculty salaries by rank to be at the mean or above the average salaries of peer institutions.

Assigned Responsibility: Vice-Chancellor, Provost, Treasurer

Completion Timeline: On-going, but elevation above the average within our peer group for each rank within five years (by FY29).

KPIs / Markers of Progress

1. Percentage salary increases for continuing faculty by rank
2. Average Sewanee salaries compared to peer groups by rank
3. Average starting salaries for assistant professors

SALARY COMPRESSION and EQUITY

Action Items

1. Increase salaries for continuing faculty to widen salary differentials among cohorts of faculty, and increase salaries for continuing staff to address inequities.
2. Increase wages or salaries for those staff in dining, facilities maintenance, and other units where gaps were greatly diminished by the increase in the minimum starting wages in FY24. (Identify pay bands NE4-7 for examination.)
3. Increase wages and salaries for athletics staff who are currently paid for 9/5 months per year.

Assigned Responsibility: Vice-Chancellor, Provost, Treasurer, Human Resources

Completion Timeline: Begin with FY26 and complete by FY29.

KPIs / Markers of Progress

1. Spacing between cohorts of faculty
2. Space in wages/salaries for different career bands of staff
3. Length of athletics coaches' hiring terms

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Action Items

1. Establish a comprehensive mandatory in-person monthly new employee onboarding.
2. Conduct a comprehensive review of employee policies, benefits, and compliance, including the Employee Handbook, ADA, Title IX, Non-Discrimination, attendance, FMLA
3. Support employee affinity groups (LGBTQ, Colleagues of Color, Disability Employee Group, and AAUW).
4. Establish and publicize service opportunities such as the MLK Service Day and volunteer opportunities.
5. Regularly offer introductory and intermediate professional development courses.

Assigned Responsibility: Provost, Human Resources, LITS, DEI

Completion Timeline: Begin immediately, complete in three years.

KPIs / Markers of Progress

1. Number of offerings of professional development courses
2. Number of employee affinity groups
3. Completion of revised onboarding program for staff
4. Implementation of revised collaborative review process
5. Employee feedback on the quality of programs and processes

HOUSING IN SEWANEE

Action Items

1. Sewanee Village Ventures (SVV) will complete the design, planning and construction of the apartment community on 41A, with groundbreaking in the fall of 2024.
2. The University is exploring making leaseholds available to employees for building a home, and SVV will continue to build homes for employees when desired and look for ways to expand the affordable housing market.
3. As University and SVV rental housing offerings increase to meet demand from employees and students at the School of Theology, the University will explore renovating select rental units and placing them into the pool of affordable housing options for purchase by employees.

Assigned Responsibility: VP for Economic Development, Provost, Treasurer, University Rental Housing

Completion Timeline: Ongoing

KPIs / Markers of Progress

1. Number of new apartment, houses and leaseholds made available to employees on the Domain (beginning FY23)
2. Number of employees living on the Domain
3. Percentage of faculty living on the Domain
4. Percentage of staff living on the Domain
5. Percentage of houses owned by employee, former employees, non-employee part-time residents, and non-employee full-time residents
6. Average sale prices for houses, broken down by employee, former employee, non-employee part-time residents, and non-employee full-time residents

DEFERRED MAINTENANCE

Action Items

1. Develop a schedule for maintenance, upgrades and renovation of all University buildings.
2. Improve the quality of residence halls, with targeted renovation of facilities most in need.
3. Improve the quality of academic classroom spaces especially laboratories that require updating.
4. Undertake improvement of athletic facilities.
5. For new building projects and major renovations, seek gifts equal to 10% of the building project to establish deferred maintenance endowed funds.
6. Address deferred maintenance related to technological infrastructure, including classroom technology.

Assigned Responsibility: Treasurer, Facilities Management, Residential Life, Athletics, LITS

Completion Timeline: Scheduled upgrades based upon individual facility needs; renovation of two residence halls by FY27

KPIs / Markers of Progress

1. Number of renovated residential hall rooms
2. Student survey of residential life satisfaction
3. Number of academic rooms or buildings renovated
4. Number of administrative rooms or buildings renovated
5. Number of other rooms or buildings renovated
6. Dollar value of deferred maintenance backlog and deferred maintenance resolved

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Action Items

1. Improve internal communication between the administration, students, employees, and the Sewanee community. Develop streamlined communications, especially about events on campus.
2. Engage campus community to develop a refreshed platform and improved website to more effectively convey Sewanee's differentiated value, including: a strategic messaging framework, an evolved visual and verbal expression, user training, and an accompanying integrated marketing plan to reach key audiences.
3. Leverage existing and new tactics to create a more regular and predictable process for sharing Sewanee news and stories about the accomplishments of our students, alumni, faculty, and staff to help the University recruit students, hire faculty and staff, and help fundraising efforts from private donors and foundations.
4. Create a dashboard tracking key University metrics

Assigned Responsibility: Marketing and Communications, Provost, Office of Undergraduate Admission, University Relations, Student Life Division, Dean of the College, Dean of the School of Theology

Completion Timeline: Begin immediately, on-going meaningful progress, complete in three years.

KPIs / Markers of Progress

1. Implement tactics based on the findings of discovery sessions focused on communication issues.
2. Improved event attendance and less frequent conflicting events
3. Improved performance of critical admission metrics: number of inquiries, number of applications, conversion rate, and yield rate
4. Increased alumni, parent engagement and participation
5. Noticeably more coherent, consistent use of Sewanee's marks and messages

LOGISTICS

Action Items

1. Develop late-night transportation on weekends for students on campus.
2. Explore electric van service for major events, transportation from residence halls to central campus and the Village, and weekly trips to Monteagle and Winchester.
3. Reorganize parking so there is more visitor and disabled parking in the central campus and more student parking on the edge of central campus.

4. Enhance traffic calming measures and expand bicycle lanes.

Assigned Responsibility: Provost, Facilities Management, Police, Dean of Students, Office of Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability

Completion Timeline: Begin in FY24; complete by FY27

KPIs / Markers of Progress

1. Number of days a campus shuttle service operates
2. Number of days an off-campus shuttle service operates
3. Number of streets with bicycle lanes and/or traffic-calming measures
4. Number and location of parking spaces

ERP AND DATA GOVERNANCE

Action Items

1. Develop a data governance system for the University
2. Develop a dashboard of KPIs that is publicly available
3. Plan for the transition to a new enterprise resource planning (ERP) system

Assigned Responsibility: Associate Provost for LITS, Assistant Provost for Academic Services and Institutional Research, University Registrar

Completion Timeline: Begin work in FY25 and complete by FY28

KPIs/Markers of Progress

1. Adoption and publication of rules governing University data
2. Publication of dashboard with KPIs
3. Selection and adoption of a new ERP