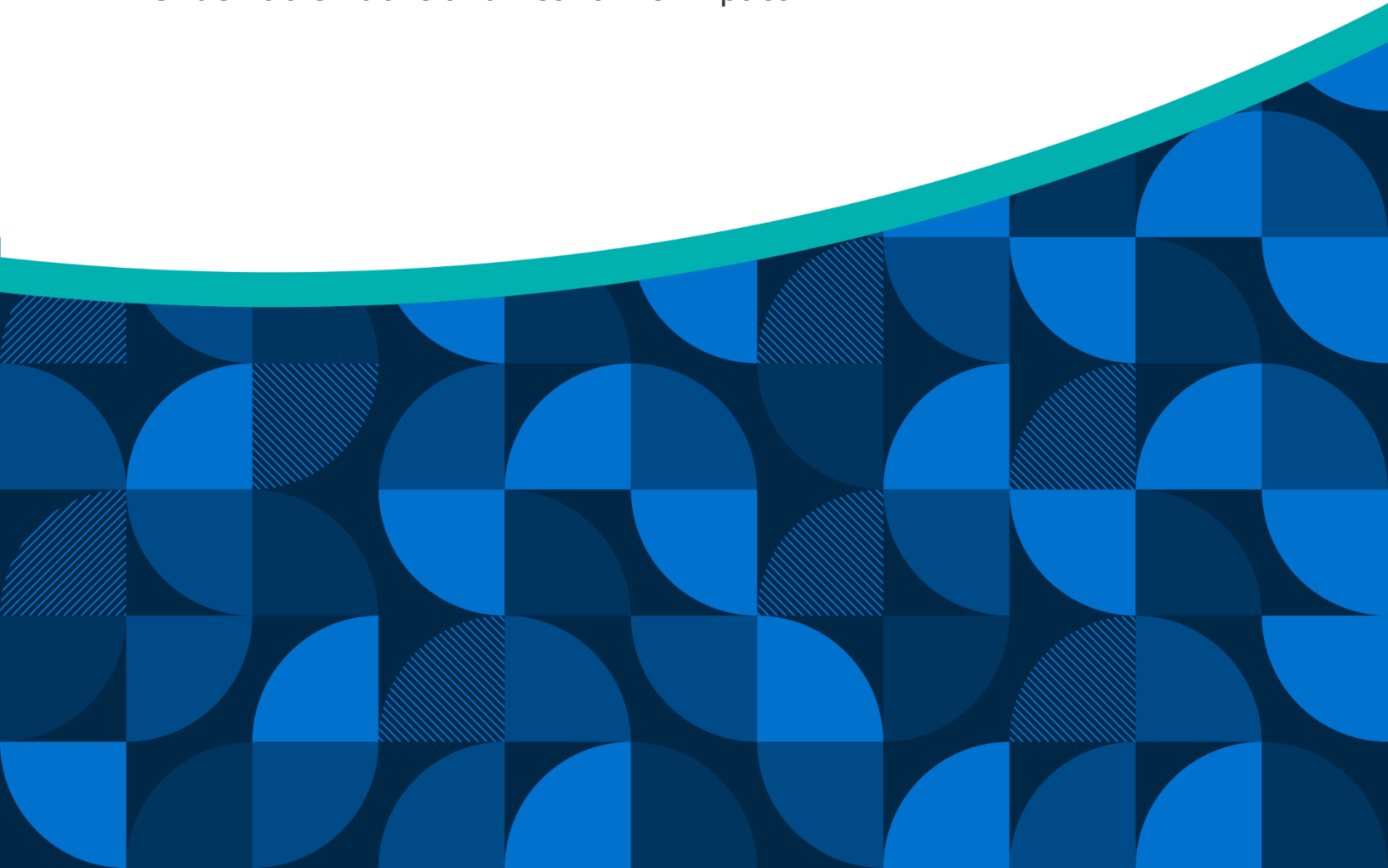




STRATEGIC ADVISORY SERVICES

A Modern Anchor Institution in Action

How Wichita State University Brought
Together Mission and Strategy to Drive
Undeniable Public and Economic Impact



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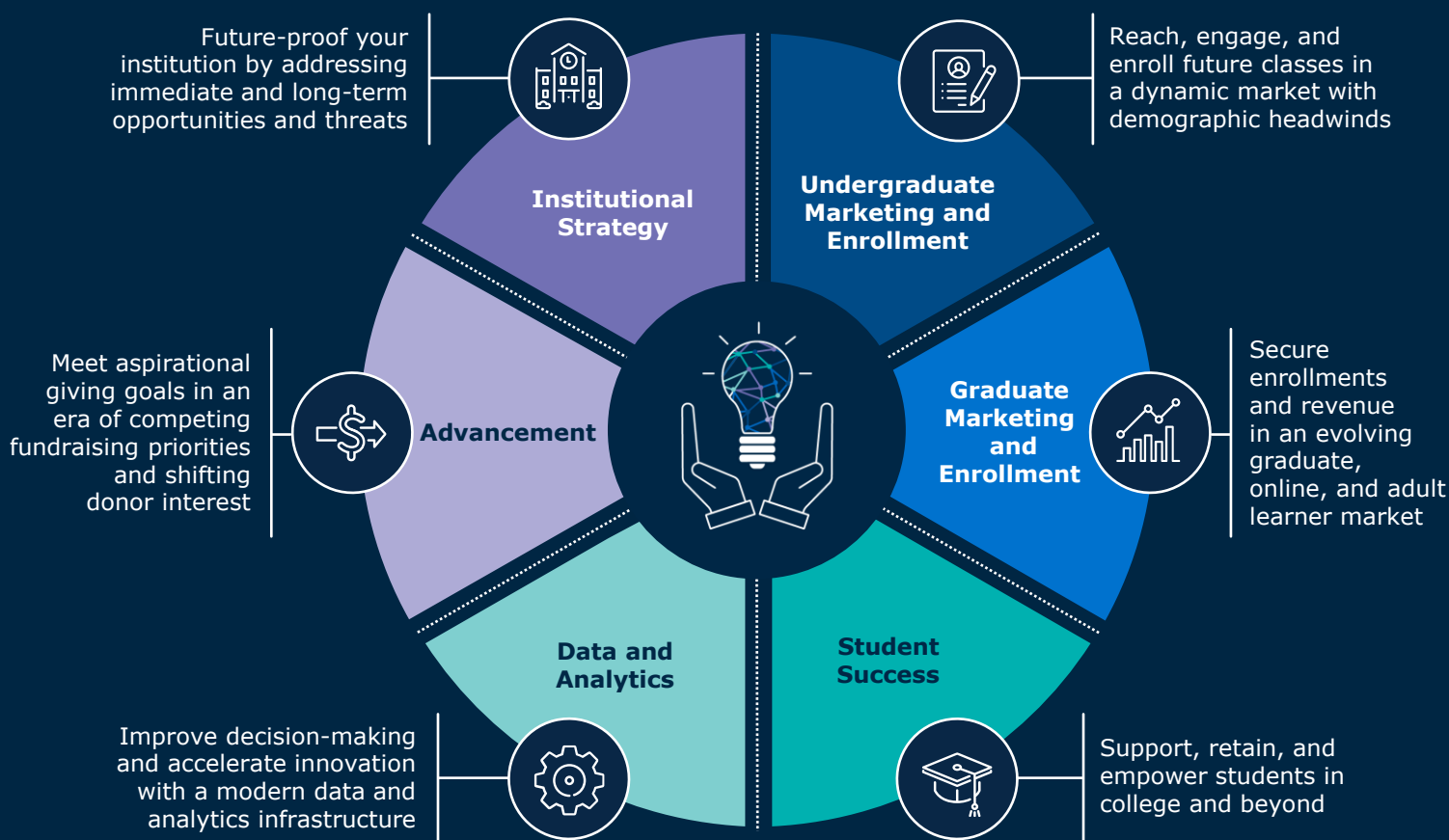
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At EAB, our mission is to make education smarter and our communities stronger. We harness the power of more than 1,500 institutions to uncover and apply proven practices and transformative insights. From kindergarten to college and beyond, EAB partners with education leaders to accelerate progress and drive results in three key areas: enrollment, student success, and institutional strategy. For more information, visit eab.com.



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Executive Overview

Current Stakeholder Pressure Requires Universities to Invest in a Better Strategy

Now more than ever, colleges and universities are facing greater pressure around relevance and accountability. Key external constituencies (students, families, employers, legislators, and donors) are behaving more like investors, questioning higher education institutions' outcomes and impact.

In today's environment, colleges and universities can no longer rely solely on traditional strategies shaped by internal priorities. Instead, they must adopt an outside-in approach that aligns their goals with the priorities of external stakeholders and the needs of their regions.

By adopting this approach, colleges and universities can transform into "modern anchor institutions" that place serving these priorities at the core of their strategy, rather than treating them as peripheral tasks or incidental benefits of their presence in a region. This shift will better position institutions to navigate financial pressures, attract future students, secure revenue, and build public support.

Based on 70+ research interviews and extensive review of policy, EAB identified external constituencies' top priorities for higher ed, along with four priority areas for strategic investment.

Four Pillars of a Modern Anchor Institution



Build the college-going pipeline through upstream interventions: take responsibility for providing wraparound K12 support and flexible re-entry pathways to bolster the institution's enrollment, community educational attainment, and regional workforce.



Reshape the academic experience to better deliver on social mobility: implement curricular and co-curricular changes to strengthen students' post-graduation outcomes, the institution's value proposition, and better serve local employers and regional industries.



Drive real-world impact by scaling community-centric research: adopt a new growth mindset oriented around practical solutions and cross-sector collaboration, thereby helping demonstrate higher ed's value through tangible, real-world impact.



Catalyze mutually beneficial economic development: embrace public-private partnerships at scale and directly invest in community development to boost enrollment, donations, and post-graduation job prospects along with overall quality of life.

How to Use This Case Study to Advance Your Own Institution's Anchor Strategy

This case study highlights Wichita State University (WSU) as an exemplar modern anchor institution. While many colleges and universities have made progress in one or two areas, WSU's across-the-board adoption of an outside-in strategy and pillar-spanning investments distinguish it from other institutions. There are dozens of initiatives that WSU has pursued in each area that contribute to its success as a modern anchor institution, and this briefing spotlights seven of the highest impact and most replicable in greater detail. See page 7 for an overview of each, mapped onto the four modern anchor institution pillars.

Cabinet leadership teams can use this case study to better understand the modern anchor institution concept and what progressive practice looks like in each area, gather inspiration for new investments their institutions could make, and proactively identify hurdles and solutions to implementation. See page 21 for a complete list of key lessons to consider when pursuing similar initiatives, and **ask your EAB Strategic Leader for additional support or resources (previewed on page 24).**

Wichita State University: A Snapshot

Location

WSU is a mid-sized, urban-serving doctoral research institution with eight campus locations across Wichita, KS (pop. 396,000). Wichita is a historic aircraft manufacturing hub and is currently home to design and manufacturing facilities for Textron Aviation, Learjet, Airbus, and Spirit AeroSystems as well as two airports and an Air Force base. Wichita’s population is majority (59%) White, 10% Black, and 18% Hispanic/Latino.

Institution Characteristics

Student Demographics

- 48% first-gen
- 49% of freshmen receive Pell Grants
- 54% White, 18% Hispanic, 8% Asian, 7% Black, 5% international
- Primarily non-residential student body

Financial Snapshot

- 2024 endowment: Approx. \$331 million
- 2025 planned expenditures: Approx. \$794 million
- 2025 in-state tuition¹: \$251 per credit hour, or approx. \$7,530 per year²

History

WSU was founded in 1895 as Fairmount College before becoming the Municipal University of Wichita in 1926. It formally became part of the state of Kansas’ university system in 1964, when it adopted its current name. It was an early adopter of applied research and industry partnerships through a 1940s test wind tunnel partnership with aircraft manufacturers Cessna and Beech. Still, WSU struggled to attract students, facing a record enrollment low in 2006 (14,076 students).

In 2014, former president John Bardo led an initiative to reposition WSU as a regionally-leading institution that would build upon existing ties with the local aerospace and manufacturing industry to attract talent and funding, thus making Wichita and Kansas globally competitive.

WSU launched a business and research park dubbed the Innovation Campus, developed its applied learning requirements for students, and rapidly increased applied research through industry partnerships. In 2018, WSU formally affiliated with WSU Tech (formerly known as Wichita Area Technical College), strengthening its ties with local workforce needs and K12 pathways.

Since becoming interim president in 2020 and later president in 2021, Rick Muma has expanded upon WSU’s mission to center Wichita as a talent and innovation hotspot. WSU has continued to develop its research capabilities and workforce partnerships in addition to strengthening ties with local industries and K12 schools. Under President Muma’s leadership, WSU is now diversifying beyond its aviation roots and is ambitiously launching the Wichita Biomedical Campus in partnership with the University of Kansas.

Institutional Success

+222%

Increase in total research funding from 2016 to 2022

74%

Of WSU students are employed in KS within one-year post-grad

+18%

Increase in enrollment since the launch of the Innovation Campus in 2014

1) In-state tuition is also applied to students living in "Shocker City" partner cities in nearby states (AR, CO, IL, IA, NE, OK, TX, MO)

2) Assuming a 30-credit academic year

Source: Heldman, "President John Bardo led strategic and physical transformation of WSU," 2019; "Research and Scholarship," WSU, 2023; "WSU Tech and Wichita State celebrate record-breaking enrollment in Fall 2024," WSU Tech, 2024; "2023 Annual Report," WSU, 2023; EAB interviews and analysis.

Wichita State University: A Snapshot (Cont.)

EAB's Four Pillars of a Modern Anchor Institution

Select Strategic Investments WSU Has Made to Bolster Outcomes and Impact

I

Build the college-going pipeline through upstream interventions



Through its affiliation with the Wichita State University Campus of Applied Sciences and Technology (WSU Tech), the two institutions partner **with local K12 schools through FutureReady Centers (FRCs)** to help students gain college credits while meeting local labor market needs. Students use lab and classroom space at the FRCs to take dual-credit courses that map directly to degrees in high-need fields.

II

Reshape the academic experience to better deliver on social mobility



WSU's **applied learning requirement** prepares students for their future careers by ensuring every student gains real-world experience, transferrable skills, and employer connections as part of their degree

The **Teacher Apprenticeship Program™** helps paraeducators earn teaching degrees and prepare for licensure while working full-time, thus addressing Kansas' teacher shortage while upskilling professionals.

III

Drive real-world impact through community-centric research



WSU's **outside-in industry partnership approach aligns research priorities to employer needs instead of traditional academic priorities**, leading to increased funding and deeper ties with industry leaders.

The Community Engagement Institute and Public Policy and Management Center conducts **applied research projects on behalf of community organizations**, resulting in tangible local impacts.

IV

Catalyze mutually beneficial economic development



WSU's future **Wichita Biomedical Campus**, built in partnership with the University of Kansas and funded by multiple public and non-profit sources (e.g., the Kansas Legislature, the Kansas Health Foundation) will provide jobs for local residents, revitalize an underutilized Wichita neighborhood, and increase health care access in the region.

Innovation Campus Supports All Four Modern Anchor Institution Pillars

1 Hosts camps, programs, and a physical hub for local K12 students

2 Partners with tenants to provide applied learning experiences for students

3 Fuels industry-driven research through shared labs and facilities

4 Offers retail and dining options for the local community

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.



Key Initiatives Advancing WSU's Outside-In Strategy

SECTION

1

1. **FutureReady Centers:** Improve Access and Workforce Readiness Through Career-Aligned Dual-Enrollment/Dual-Credit Pathways
2. **Applied Learning Placements:** Prepare Students for Future Careers Through Applied Learning Requirements
3. **Teacher Apprenticeship Program™:** Help Tackle the Teacher Shortage By Developing Flexible Pathways
4. **University-Industry Research Partnerships:** Meet Employer Needs Through Industry-Tailored Research
5. **University-Community Research Partnerships:** Solve Problems for Community Partners via Applied Research
6. **Wichita Biomedical Campus:** Launch Collaborative Initiatives to Drive Economic Development and Impact
7. **Innovation Campus:** Prioritize Infrastructure Investments That Support Multiple Constituencies and Goals

Seize Early Career Conversations Through Career-Aligned Dual-Credit Pathways

Often, institutions wait until students are nearing postsecondary decisions to engage in career conversations, missing a critical opportunity to influence their thinking early on. By moving further up the pipeline and initiating these discussions when students start exploring careers, institutions can position themselves as trusted guides in shaping aspirations and aligning them with educational opportunities.

Leaders in the Wichita Public School (WPS) system recognized this opportunity when they noticed students were making career and college decisions long before junior and senior year – the traditional start of college outreach efforts. Because of WSU’s strong reputation in technical education and its longstanding partnership with WPS, the two institutions came together to create the FutureReady Centers.

In 2023, WPS partnered with WSU through its two-year affiliate, WSU Tech, to create dual-credit pathways starting as early as 10th grade, focused on high-need career tracks such as healthcare and manufacturing. Students split time between their high schools and FutureReady Centers - facilities equipped with labs and experiential learning spaces staffed by WSU faculty. Unlike traditional dual-credit programs with per-credit costs, this initiative is fully funded through Excel in CTE, a program by the state of Kansas. The City of Wichita provided funds for the creation of the FutureReady Centers through the American Rescue Plan Act, and Blue Cross and Blue Shield established an endowment to support the Healthcare FutureReady Center.

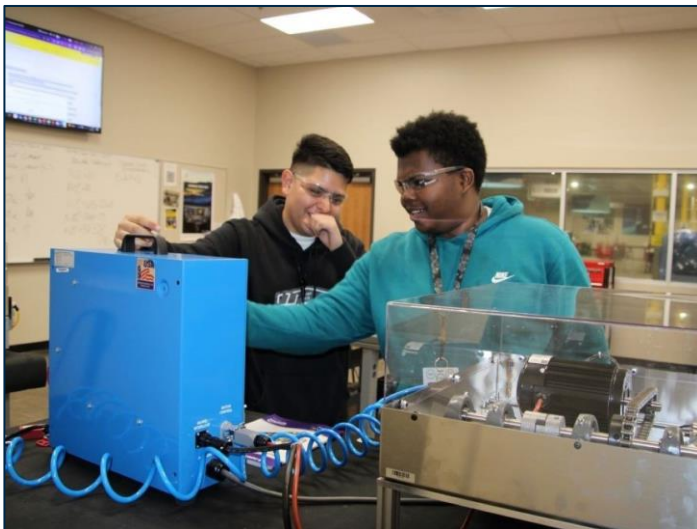
Participants not only earn college credits and industry credentials but also gain hands-on experience, a head-start into their careers, and early exposure to WSU faculty and facilities.

This program exemplifies how institutions can successfully move up the pipeline, becoming an integral part of students' career conversations. By engaging students early, WSU builds relationships, encourages career-focused education, addresses critical workforce needs, and positions itself as a key partner in students’ long-term success. Looking ahead, WSU will expand its efforts with the launch of an Information Technology FutureReady Center in Fall 2025.

Early Results Show Strong Student Interest

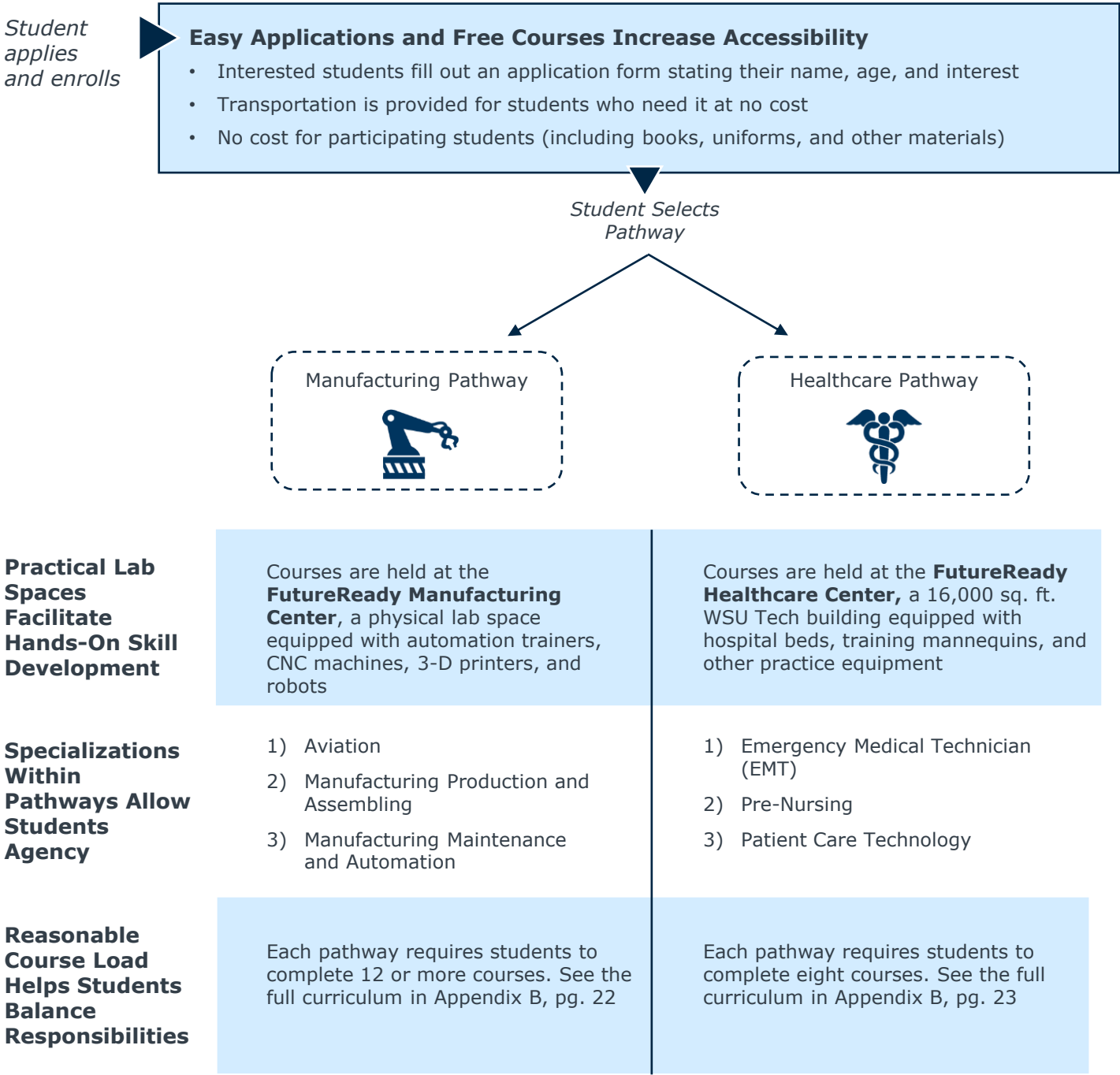
400+ Students predicted to enroll in program in 2024-2025 year

↑93% Increase in number of students from 2024 to 2025



Source: Barnwell, "The Future is Now: Partnership's Annual Meeting Highlights Next Era of Innovation," Greater Wichita Partnership, 2024; "FutureReady Centers," USD 259, 2024; EAB interviews and analysis.

Seize Early Career Conversations Through Career-Aligned Dual Enrollment Pathways (cont.)



Key Takeaways for Implementing a Similar Initiative on Your Campus

- Partner with local employers to identify regional labor market needs
- Create structured pathways aligned to careers in those high-need areas
- Provide applied learning opportunities within those pathways to drive career readiness
- Increase accessibility and drive enrollment by lowering student costs (i.e., through external funding) and offering an easy application process

Prepare Students for Future Careers Through Required Applied Learning

Many institutions offer, but do not require, applied learning experiences for students. The experiences (e.g., paid placements, co-ops, internships) involve students gaining real-world knowledge and expertise through placements in career-relevant roles. Voluntary participation in applied learning often limits access and participation in hands-on, real-world learning, leaving gaps in career readiness and workforce preparation.

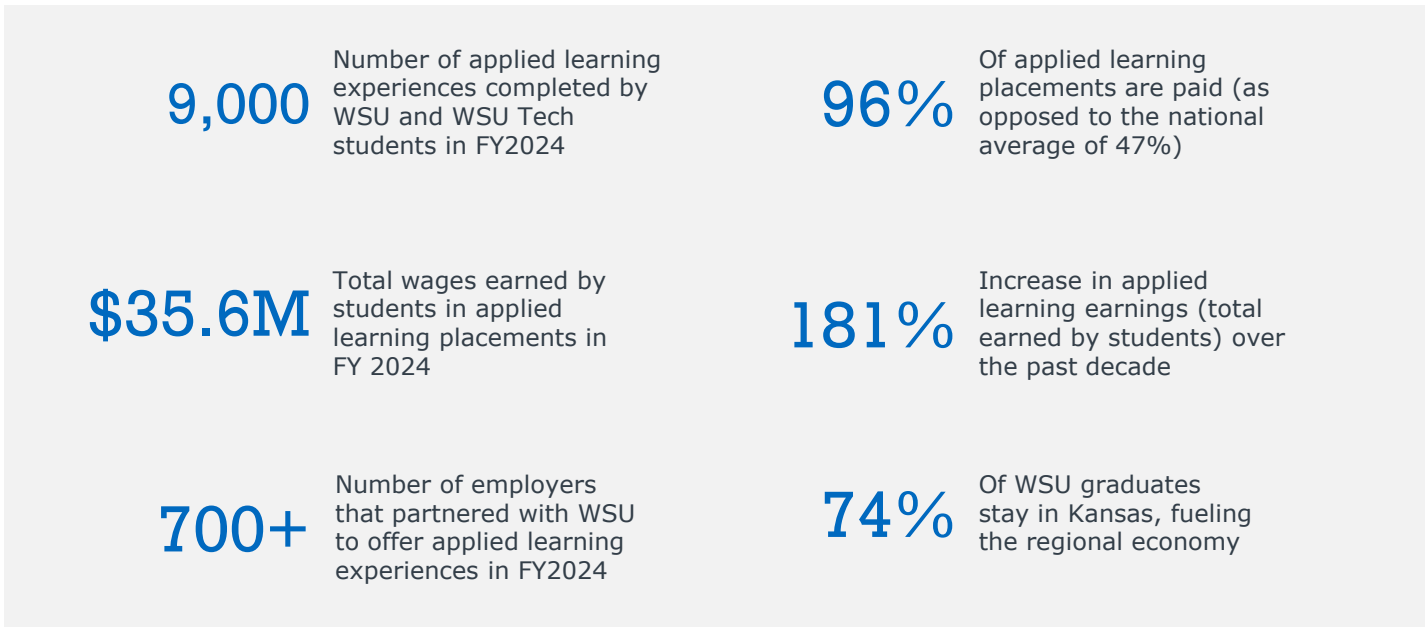
WSU provides a compelling example of how to address this. As part of its strategic shift to drive economic growth and innovation in Kansas, WSU mandated applied learning experiences for all degree-seeking students within each academic degree program. Leaders noticed a gap between the skills students gained in class and what employers expected, so they embraced applied learning placements with employers to help students develop practical skills while filling employer needs for entry-level employees.

In 2015, a faculty committee established six criteria defining an applied learning experience (see below). Many of these applied learning experiences are facilitated by the Shocker Career Accelerator, which is a physical hub that provides career services. By requiring applied learning, WSU ensures that every student gains essential career skills and is better positioned for success after graduation.

Six Criteria That Constitute an Applied Learning Placement

	Mirrors or embodies knowledge and practice in real-world situations		Involves development or creation of a work product, service, or idea
	Prepares student for a career or post-graduate education		Involves occupationally focused work
	Applies skills learned in academic program		Engages populations outside the classroom

Applied Learning, by the Numbers



Source: "Applied Learning at Wichita State," WSU, 2024; Bardo, "Innovations in STEM Mentoring, Training and Apprenticeships," Testimony to US House of Representatives, 2018; EAB interviews and analysis.

Prepare Students for Future Careers Through Required Applied Learning (cont.)

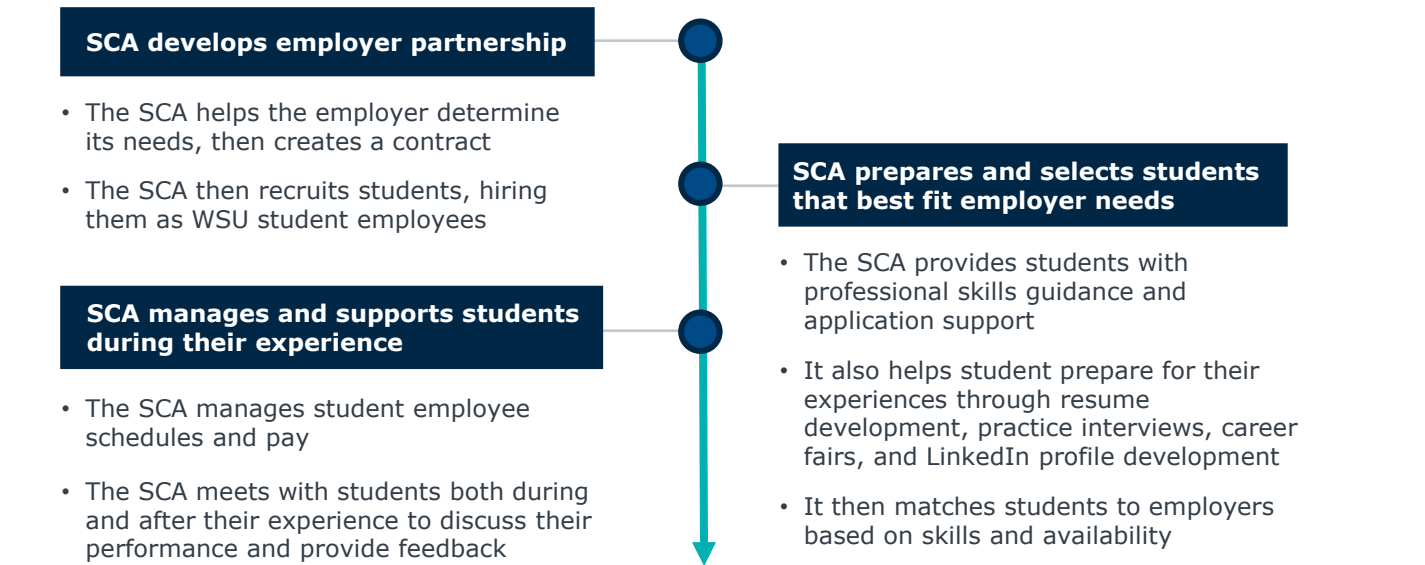
WSU ensures that meaningful applied learning opportunities are integrated into the entire student journey. The **Shocker Career Accelerator (SCA)**, located in the Marcus Welcome Center, is a key component of this journey. Prospective students are first introduced to WSU’s applied learning initiative through campus tours that progress from the Marcus Welcome Center to the Innovation Campus. The SCA then empowers enrolled students to navigate their career journeys through tailored support mechanisms including career assessment tools, a career database, hosted career events, and career coaching appointments (e.g., resume/cover letter building, mock interviews, LinkedIn profile optimization).

While WSU students obtain applied learning experiences through a range of different avenues, the SCA also plays a key role in facilitating meaningful applied learning experiences with industry partners.

SCA a Win-Win-Win for Students, Employers, and WSU

Students Kick-Start Careers Through Meaningful Work	Employers Develop Talent Pipeline	WSU Strengthens Industry Connections
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Students gain income (if placement is paid), connections, and skills/experience to add to their CVWSU’s applied learning requirements ensure that students are participating in meaningful, career-relevant work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Employers bolster talent pipelines through partnership with WSU’s skilled and SCA-supported studentsEmployers gain access to skilled talent at a cost-effective rate (compared to hiring an FTE) and do not need to allocate resources for student recruitment or management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">WSU enhances its existing ties and forges new partnerships with local and regional employersWSU re-invests a percentage of the money employers provide for student pay to offset costs, ensuring the SCA can continue to develop these valuable experiences

Applied Learning Placement Process for Industry Partnerships



Key Takeaways for Implementing a Similar Initiative on Your Campus

- Reach out to local employers to identify roles that could be filled by current students and identify gaps in recent hires’ skillsets that could be fulfilled through applied learning placements
- Remove barriers for students pursuing applied learning by hiring, selecting, and paying students for applied learning placements on behalf of employers
- Coach students before, during, and after placements to help them maximize their experiences and serve as strong ambassadors for your institution

Tackle the Teacher Shortage with Flexible Pathways

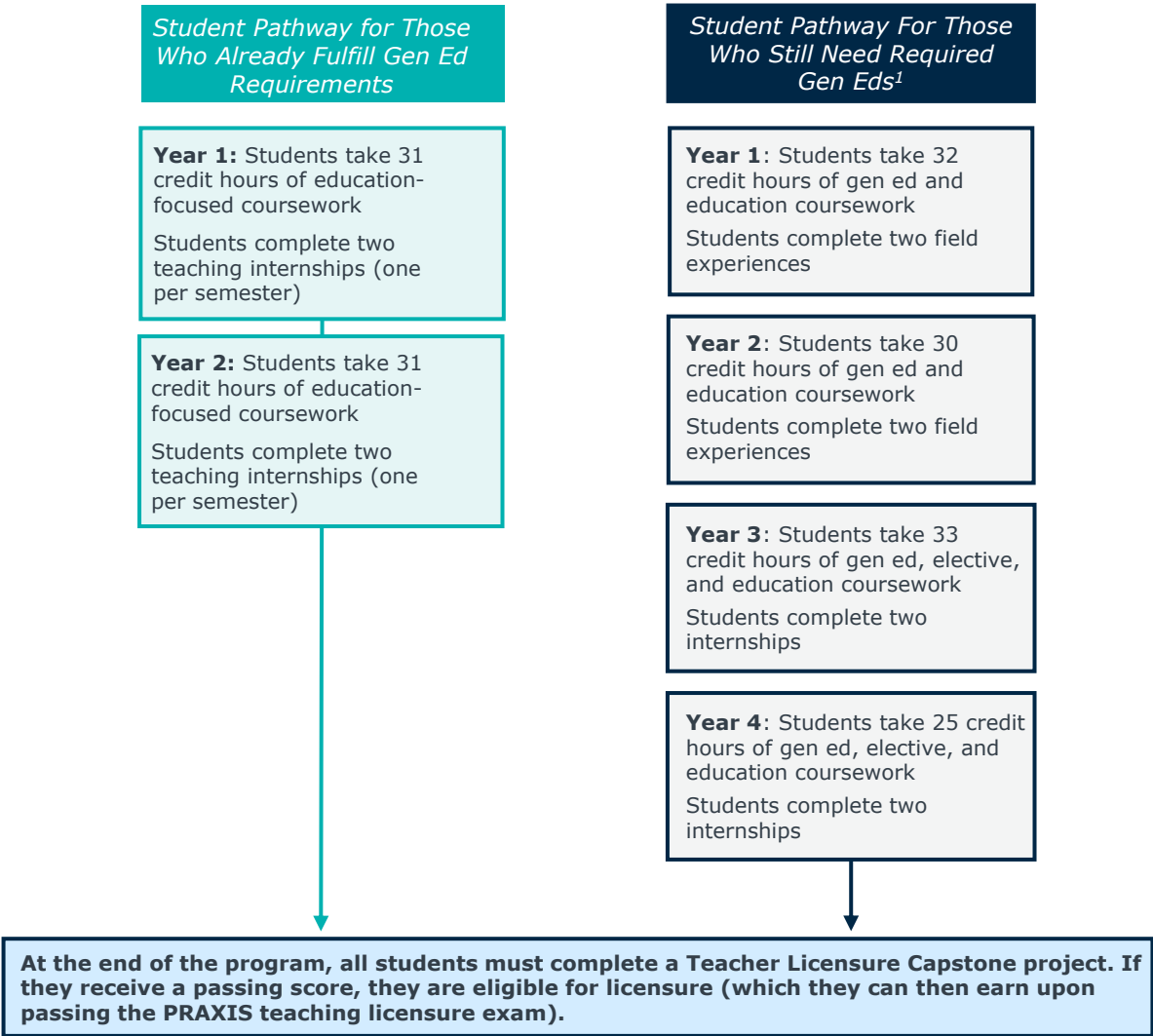
Like most of the United States, Kansas faces a serious teacher shortage. Teaching is an often low-paid, high-stress field. Students enter the profession via a four-year program that requires students to work in schools as unpaid student teachers. These financial barriers to entry often deters would-be teachers from pursuing licensure.

In 2016, Shirley Lefever, then-Dean of the College of Education, met with a local superintendent who asked her to help address the local teacher shortage. Dean Lefever noted that the WPS had a large pool of dedicated paraeducators potentially interested in becoming full-time teachers. To channel these students into the teaching pipeline, Dean Lefever led the development of the Teacher Apprentice Program™, which launched in fall 2017. The fully online program is designed to ease the transition from paraeducator to teacher and encourage more paraeducators into the teaching field.

In 2023, the Kansas Department of Education (KSDE) embraced the existing apprentice program and has since launched a statewide initiative. School districts who adhere to statewide apprenticeship standards can use KSDE funds to cover program participants’ costs.

Unlike traditional teaching pathways, the TAP allows students to fulfill licensure requirements while holding their paraeducator jobs. The program attracts working adults into the teaching profession through flexible admissions and structure, financial support, and dedicated mentorship. See page 14 for details.

Paraeducators and Long-Term Substitutes Follow Tailored Pathways to Teacher Licensure While Still Working



1) Students who still need gen ed requirements are typically those with zero to some college credits

Source: "Teacher Apprentice Program," WSU, 2024; Wilson and Heilman, "Most Kansas Districts Struggling with Teacher Retention," KWCH News, March 13, 2024; EAB interviews and analysis.

Tackle the Teacher Shortage With Flexible Pathways (cont.)

Teacher Apprentice Program™ Tackles Main Barriers to Licensure

It's difficult for working adults to both apply to and then complete a degree program

TAP Has Flexible Admissions, Program Structure



- Students can apply easily online. Three application deadlines mean students can do so year-round.
- Students can complete their coursework entirely online
- Degree pathways are customized based on each student's prior college credits; a student with their gen ed requirements already fulfilled may complete the program in as little as two years

Students are deterred by the costs of going back to college, especially for an often low-paid career



External Funding, Continued Work Reduces Student Costs

- School districts participating in the KSDE's Registered Apprenticeship Program receive Dept of Labor funding, which they then use to pay students' tuition and fees
- Students in districts not participating in the formal Dept of Labor apprenticeship program still benefit from a WSU discount for in-state students
- Students continue working in their paraeducator roles and therefore continue to earn money while pursuing their teaching degree

Becoming a teacher – and then working as one – can be difficult and stressful



TAP Assigns Mentors to Each Student for Support

- Each student is assigned a mentor who supports and guides them during their teacher training and experience
- TAP mentors host three to four monthly virtual meetings for their assigned students. Mentors also review students' work (e.g., lesson plans and videos of teaching) and provide guidance and assessment.
- Regular meetings with mentors help students feel supported and reduce stress

Program Success



Fastest growing program at Wichita State University

1K+

Program graduates as of 2024



Awarded 2023 Outstanding New Program by KS Dept of Commerce

► Key Takeaways for Implementing a Similar Initiative on Your Campus

- Identify local teacher shortages and a potential pool of students for an accelerated licensure model
- Offer online classes, flexible start dates, and mentorship to make the program responsive to working adults
- Align the program to Dept. of Labor standards to qualify as a Registered Apprenticeship program and earn federal or state funding

Source: "Kansas Registered Teacher Apprenticeship recognized as 2023 Outstanding New Program," Kansas State Department of Education, 2023 "Teacher Apprentice Program," WSU, 2024; EAB interviews and analysis.

Attract Funding and Drive Growth Through Industry-Tailored Research Approach

A key aspect of adopting an outside-in approach is aligning research strategy with industry needs. As an R2 institution, WSU was often excluded from funding typically awarded to R1 peers. To address this, WSU leveraged its industry partnerships to fill gaps and scaled research funding through decentralized units like the National Institute for Aviation Research (NIAR). Unlike traditional academic research, NIAR actively identifies and solves industry problems. Its decentralized structure allows quick adaptation to industry changes; and its staff, with both research and industry experience, is well-positioned to meet partner needs.



Research Strategy Drives Funding Growth, Infrastructure Development

563%

Increase in R&D expenditures since 2016

\$411M

Total R&D expenditures

#1

In aerospace engineering R&D expenditures

20+

Labs on campus as of 2024

Key Takeaways for Implementing a Similar Initiative on Your Campus

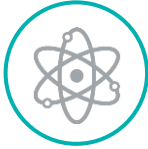
- Organize applied research under independent units to reduce administrative costs and match industry speed
- Ensure administrative staff have expertise in working with industry contacts
- Proactively assess industry partner needs and challenges to propose how university resources can support
- Engage students in applied learning opportunities that contribute to research projects while building talent pipelines for employers

Source: "[Wichita Breaks the Top 10 in NSF's Engineering R&D Rankings](#)," WSU, November 26, 2024; "[Research](#)," WSU, 2024; EAB interviews and analysis.

Provide Applied Research for Community Partners

Community organizations often struggle to access institutional research expertise, which limits institutional impact in the surrounding community. To drive greater impact, institutions should provide accessible applied research that directly serves community partners.

WSU's Community Engagement Institute (CEI) offers an excellent example of how to offer more accessible and relevant applied research to community partners. CEI is an independently funded WSU unit created in 1984 to support local non-profits with development, strategic planning, and community assessments. The CEI operates on an independent funding structure, allowing it to be highly responsive and efficient in addressing community needs. With 50 staff members, the CEI offers affordable services to non-profits, providing research that drives positive change in organizations and communities.



Conducts Accessible, Practical Research for Community

- Conducts applied research at rates that meet the needs of community partners based on their needs and funding
- Provides value for health care organizations, which are required to complete assessments to keep certification



Strengthens University-Community Ties

- Demonstrates WSU's community value via support on projects and assessments
- Demonstrates to other WSU units the value of community partnership, encouraging widespread community engagement



Uses a Sustainable Funding Model

- Decentralized funding structure encourages the CEI to keep costs low
- Reinvests any leftover funds back into its own unit, thus ensuring its financial health

Sample Step-by-Step Applied Research Process: Public Health Assessment

- 1 CEI staff meet with the organization's project team to develop plans for the assessment
- 2 CEI staff work with the project team to compile relevant data
- 3 CEI selects and conducts primary data collection (e.g., focus groups, online surveys)
- 4 CEI collaborates with project team to design and lead community meetings to identify strategic priorities
- 5 CEI gathers input on the organization's preferences for the final report and develops it accordingly
- 6 After presenting the final report, CEI meets with the organization to discuss future steps

► Key Takeaways for Implementing a Similar Initiative on Your Campus

- Structure applied research into self-funded units to boost efficiency, creativity, responsiveness, and enable reinvestment.
- Identify local needs (e.g., hospitals needing health assessments) and proactively engage community organizations to build partnerships
- Promote community engagement by highlighting partnership benefits (e.g., stronger ties, broader research) through newsletters, presentations, and meetings

Source: "Community Engagement Institute," WSU, 2024; EAB interviews and analysis.

Launch Collaborative Initiatives to Drive Economic Development and Expand Impact Potential





Barriers to broadening research focus and community impact can hinder progress in addressing community needs and realizing research potential. Collaboration helps overcome these challenges by pooling resources, accessing new funding, and combining expertise across disciplines. Through partnerships with academic, community, and industry leaders, institutions can diversify research, drive innovation, and enhance community development.

A great example of this is WSU’s Wichita Biomedical Campus. Historically focused on aerospace and manufacturing, WSU sought to diversify its research and strengthen faculty expertise in areas that would benefit the local economy. Inspired by business corridors in Phoenix and Houston, President Rick Muma initiated a partnership among WSU, its two-year affiliate WSU Tech, and the University of Kansas to create a 471,000 square-foot, \$300M health sciences facility in downtown Wichita. Opening in 2026, the campus will bring together a medical school, a four-year university, and WSU Tech, driving economic growth, healthcare investment, and overall community well-being.

Contributions and Programming by Institution

Wichita State University	University of Kansas
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Administrative offices (WSU and WSU Tech)• Academic home for WSU Tech students pursuing health care-related degrees and certifications• Simulation lab (WSU Tech)• Nursing and surgical technology programs (WSU Tech)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• College of Health Professions (includes gathering area, labs, classrooms) (WSU)• Physical therapy, dental hygiene, athletic training, physician assistant, and nursing programs (WSU)• Public, mental health service (WSU)• Speech, language, and hearing; psychology clinics (WSU)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Administrative offices• Academic home• Medical school facilities (classrooms, simulation centers, clinics, patient exam suites)• Center for Clinical Research• School of Pharmacy• Psychiatry clinic

Biomedical Campus Projected to Bring Economic Benefits, Increased Collaboration

<div>3,200+</div> <div>Students, staff brought to area</div>	 <div>Project will fulfill local labor market needs by both attracting new talent to the Wichita area as well as training more health care professionals for the region</div>
<div>1,600</div> <div>Jobs supported</div>	 <div>Increased foot traffic to the neighborhood will drive business for local companies, thus supporting the local economy</div>
<div>\$21.7M</div> <div>In supply-chain activity</div>	 <div>The Biomedical Campus will draw increased investment to Wichita due to its status as a hub for biomedical talent</div>
<div>\$60.9M</div> <div>In additional consumer spending</div>	 <div>Better health care for local Wichita residents will result in a more productive and healthy local population, contributing to a stronger economy</div>

► Key Takeaways for Implementing a Similar Initiative on Your Campus

- Collaborate with other institutions to fill gaps in institutional expertise or faculty knowledge in a specific field
- Plan new infrastructure in targeted neighborhoods to increase regional economic growth and attract local government support while expanding institutional impact and expertise
- Leverage facility and resource sharing with partners to reduce costs

Prioritize Initiatives that Target Multiple External Stakeholder Priorities in One Endeavor

Across this case study, we've highlighted key practices from WSU that align with the four pillars of the modern anchor institution, as well as critical external priorities and needs. Here, we want to spotlight an example where WSU successfully addresses multiple external stakeholder priorities and engages several pillars through a single, innovative initiative: the Innovation Campus.



WSU's Innovation Campus

The Innovation Campus is a major part of WSU's 2010s strategic shift to establishing WSU as a center for STEM research and development while also serving community needs. Former President Bardo wanted WSU to help develop south-central Kansas as a leading region for competitive technology fields (e.g., aerospace, smart manufacturing). To do so would require a major investment into the university's future.

In 2012, WSU began developing its master plan for building its Innovation Campus, a research and innovation park now home to more than 50 companies and agencies. Construction on a former golf course owned by the university began in 2014. Early corporate investors included the Koch Foundation, which donated \$3.75 million for a community makerspace in 2014, and Airbus, which signed on as a tenant in 2015.

Ten years later, the Innovation Campus features 120 acres of research facilities and partners with over 50 businesses. The Innovation Campus stands out from other innovation and research parks in that it targets multiple strategic priorities in one physical place (see page 20). Its buildings bring K12 students, industry partners, and community members on campus. Notably, it also involves WSU students through its requirement for all industry tenants to offer applied learning placements. This outside-in approach supports WSU's academics and enhances career preparation for students.

Selection of Featured Innovation Campus Partners, 2024

TEXTRON AVIATION



Deloitte.

AIRBUS

BCG

DASSAULT
SYSTEMES



HEXAGON

PACMAR
TECHNOLOGIES

CONNECTED
NATION

CITY OF
WICHITA

IRON
MOUNTAIN®
DATA CENTERS

NetApp

To meet multiple external stakeholder priorities while managing resource challenges, focus on initiatives that address multiple needs simultaneously (e.g., a workforce development program that also benefits K12 students). See a more detailed outline of WSU's Innovation Campus accomplishments this on the next page.

Source: Bardo, "Innovations in STEM Mentoring, Training and Apprenticeships," Testimony to US House of Representatives, 2018; "Innovation Campus History," WSU, 2024; "Innovation Campus Partnerships," WSU, 2024; "WSU Innovation Campus Wins Emerging Research Park Award," WSU, 2023; EAB research and analysis.

Prioritize Initiatives that Target Multiple External Stakeholder Priorities in One Endeavor (Cont.)

Below is a detailed outline of how WSU's innovation campus spans all four pillars of the modern anchor institution.

DRIVE COLLEGE-GOING PIPELINE

- K12 students and their families engage with WSU through **Wichita State Connect**, a physical campus hub that hosts programs and events
- **The College of Engineering** hosts a **variety of programs for K12 students**, including robotics challenges, dual-enrollment courses, summer camps, and Engineering Nights

RESHAPE THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

- All companies and organizations who partner with WSU on the Innovation Campus must **provide applied learning placements for students**
- This access to applied learning on WSU property is **key in helping WSU students close the gap between their classroom education and what employers need from them in the workplace**



LEAD COMMUNITY-CENTRIC RESEARCH

- The **Innovation Campus is home to multiple research hubs and institutes**, including the National Institute for Aviation Research.
- **Interactions between academic researchers and industry partners spur innovation and allow for shared resources.**

CATALYZE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- The Innovation Campus features a Hyatt Place Hotel, two apartment buildings for student housing, a mixed-use retail square, a YMCA, and a museum. These **businesses provide jobs and services for the greater Wichita community**
- **The University Village will bring needed services and businesses to the area.** These include a grocery store, pharmacy, small retail businesses, daycare, and housing

► Key Takeaways for Implementing a Similar Initiative on Your Campus

- Seek industry partners whose fields align with areas of institutional expertise
- Require partner employers to sponsor student applied learning placements
- Engage the community by expanding access to the institution's resources and expertise, such as offering health services in medical facilities, providing community meeting spaces, and granting K12 students access to labs for hands-on learning experiences

Source: "[Innovation Campus](#)," WSU, 2024; "[Wichita State Connect](#)," WSU, 2024; EAB research and analysis.



Appendices

- Appendix A: Key Considerations
- Appendix B: FutureReady Center Program Curricula
- Appendix C: Relevant EAB Resources and Services

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Appendix A: Key Considerations for Initiative Design

	Key Takeaways for Implementing a Similar Initiative on Your Campus
FutureReady Centers <i>Seize Early Career Conversations Through Career-Aligned Dual-Credit Pathways</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with local employers to identify regional labor market needs • Create structured pathways aligned to careers in those high-need areas • Provide applied learning opportunities within those pathways to drive career readiness • Increase accessibility and drive enrollment by lowering student costs (i.e., through external funding) and offering an easy application process
Applied Learning Placements <i>Prepare Students for Future Careers Through Required Applied Learning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out to local employers to identify roles that could be filled by current students and identify gaps in recent hires' skillsets that could be fulfilled through applied learning placements • Act as a staffing agency to hire, select, and pay students for applied learning placements on behalf of employers • Coach students before, during, and after placements to help them maximize their experiences and serve as strong ambassadors for your institution
Teacher Apprenticeship Program™ <i>Tackle the Teacher Shortage with Flexible Pathways</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify local teacher shortages and a potential pool of students for an accelerated licensure model • Offer online classes, flexible start dates, and mentorship to make the program responsive to working adults • Align the program to Dept. of Labor standards to qualify as a Registered Apprenticeship program and earn federal or state funding
Industry Research Partnerships <i>Attract Funding and Drive Growth Through Industry-Tailored Research Approach</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize applied research under independent units to reduce administrative costs and match industry speed • Ensure administrative staff have expertise in working with industry contacts • Proactively assess industry partner needs and challenges to propose how university resources can support • Engage students in applied learning opportunities that contribute to research projects while building talent pipelines for employers
Community Research Partnerships <i>Provide Applied Research for Community Partners</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure applied research into self-funded units to boost efficiency and enable reinvestment. • Identify local needs (e.g., hospitals needing health assessments) and proactively engage community organizations to build partnerships • Promote community engagement by highlighting partnership benefits (e.g., stronger ties, broader research) through newsletters, presentations, and meetings
Wichita Biomedical Campus <i>Launch Collaborative Initiatives to Drive Economic Development and Expand Impact Potential</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with other institutions to fill gaps in institutional expertise or faculty knowledge in a specific field • Plan new infrastructure in targeted neighborhoods to increase regional economic growth and attract local government support while expanding institutional impact and expertise • Leverage facility and resource sharing with partners to reduce costs
Innovation Campus <i>Prioritize Initiatives that Target Multiple External Stakeholder Priorities in One Endeavor</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek industry partners whose fields align with areas of institutional expertise • Require partner employers to sponsor student applied learning placements • Engage the community by expanding access to the institution's resources and expertise, such as offering health services in medical facilities, providing community meeting spaces, and granting K12 students access to labs for hands-on learning experiences

Appendix B: FutureReady Centers Pathways Curricula

Manufacturing Pathways

	Aviation Pathway	Manufacturing Production and Assembly Pathway	Manufacturing Maintenance and Automation Pathway
9th or 10th Grade Year at Student's High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Industrial Technology (recommended, but not required) • Hand and Power Tools (recommended, but not required) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Industrial Technology (recommended, but not required) • Hand and Power Tools (recommended, but not required) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Industrial Technology (recommended, but not required) • Hand and Power Tools (recommended, but not required)
FRC Semester 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSHA 10 • Hand & Power Tools • Quality Control Concepts • Forklift Operations • Production Blueprint • Manufacturing Processes and Production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSHA 10 • Hand & Power Tools • Quality Control Concepts • Forklift Operations • Production Blueprint • Manufacturing Processes and Production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSHA 10 • Hand and Power Tools • Quality Control Concepts • Forklift Operations • Production Blueprint • Manufacturing Processes and Production
FRC Semester 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assembly Aerostructures • Aircraft Systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metallurgy • Production Assembly • Work Ethics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance Training • Fluid Power • Electric Concepts
FRC Semester 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Composites • Composite Finish Trim • Composite Assembly • Composite Fabrication Methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manufacturing Processes and Production II • Maintenance Training • CNC Basics • Intro to 3D Printing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic PLCs (Programmable Logic Controllers) • Manufacturing Processes and Production II • Introduction to Robotics
FRC Semester 4	Manufacturing Work Based Learning Experience	Manufacturing Work Based Learning Experience	Manufacturing Work Based Learning Experience

Appendix B: FutureReady Centers Pathways Curricula (Cont.)

Healthcare Pathways

	Emergency Medical Technician	Pre-Nursing	Patient Care Technician
9th or 10th Grade Year at Student's High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Science 1 or Biology (recommended, but not required) Introduction to EMS (recommended, but not required) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Science 1 or Biology (recommended, but not required) Sports Medicine (recommended, but not required) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Science 1 or Biology (recommended, but not required) Sports Medicine (recommended, but not required)
FRC Semester 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical Essentials (careers and shadowing included) Medical Terminology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical Essentials (careers and shadowing included) Medical Terminology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical Essentials (careers and shadowing included) Medical Terminology
FRC Semester 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CPR for Healthcare Providers Biology I Principles of Nutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CPR for Healthcare Providers Biology I Principles of Nutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CPR for Healthcare Providers Biology I Principles of Nutrition
FRC Semester 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) 1 EMT 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certified Nurse Aide Home Health Aide EKG (Electrocardiogram) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certified Nurse Aide Home Health Aide EKG (Electrocardiogram)
FRC Semester 4	Health Care Work-Based Learning Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Care Work-Based Learning Experience Medication Aide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phlebotomy Patient Care Concepts and Technical Skills

Source: "Healthcare," USD 259, 2024; EAB interviews and analysis.

Appendix C: Additional EAB Resources and Services

Modern Anchor Institution Pillar	EAB Resources and Services
1: Build the College-Going Pipeline Through Upstream Interventions	<p><i>Services:</i></p> <p>EAB Undergraduate Enrollment Outlook</p> <p>Schedule a consultation to review how market forces are impacting your enrollment. The UEO reviews historical enrollment and forecasts how demographic decline, changing college-going rates, and increased competition will affect your institution through 2035.</p> <p><i>Other immediately available resources:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Degree Completer Recruitment Center • Student Readiness Resource Center • Evolving College Access Programs Report • Converting the Shadow Funnel of Non-Consumers Workshop
2: Reshape the Academic Experience to Better Deliver on Social Mobility	<p><i>Services:</i></p> <p>Forage</p> <p>Schedule a consultation to learn about leveraging virtual job simulations within and beyond the classroom. Forage simulations are self-paced, skill-building opportunities built with 130+ employers across diverse industries. They are available 24/7 and free for students, faculty, and universities.</p> <p><i>Other immediately available resources:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiential Major Map Workbook • Adapting Student Career Development for the Gen Z Era • Rightsizing the Academic Program Portfolio
3: Drive Real-World Impact by Scaling Community-Centric Research	<p><i>Services:</i></p> <p>Deans Advisory Services</p> <p>Connect your deans with EAB resources and support. Deans Advisory Services provides deans with dedicated research, services, and implementation assistance on topics like strategy and differentiation, faculty recruitment and retention, research administration, and more.</p> <p><i>Other immediately available resources:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competing in the Era of Research Superstars Workshop • Launch Grand Challenges Initiatives to Attract Large-Scale Research Investments • Build a Market-Smart Org Structure for University-Industry Partnerships
4: Catalyze Mutually Beneficial Economic Development	<p><i>Services:</i></p> <p>Expanding the Scope of Industry Partnerships</p> <p>Schedule a campus workshop on growing collaboration with industry leaders. This session will cover topics like identifying best-fit partners, communicating a distinct value proposition, organizing internally for effective decision making and relationship management, and more.</p> <p><i>Other immediately available resources:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Needs Assessment Tool • Economic Development Communications Trends and Tools • Navigating Public-Private Partnerships Briefing
Additional Resources and Services	<p>The Modern Anchor Institution Workshop</p> <p>Ask your Strategic Leader about bringing EAB's <i>The Modern Anchor Institution</i> research to your campus. This session will cover strategic investment options and quick-win tactics for effectively communicating impact.</p>



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ABOUT EAB

At EAB, our mission is to make education smarter and our communities stronger. We work with thousands of institutions to drive transformative change through data-driven insights and best-in-class capabilities. From kindergarten to college to career, EAB partners with leaders and practitioners to accelerate progress and drive results across five major areas: enrollment, student success, institutional strategy, data analytics, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). We work with each partner differently, tailoring our portfolio of research, technology, and marketing and enrollment solutions to meet the unique needs of every leadership team, as well as the students and employees they serve. Learn more at eab.com.