

MUW Council on Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (PIE) + Stakeholder Representatives

Meeting Minutes - January 23, 2026

Present: Brian Anderson, Kelly Ballard, David Brooking, Aaron Brooks, Hope Durst, Christy Dickerson, Josh Dohmen, Sally Doty, Buddy Foster, Trip Hairston, Jessica Harpole, Deborah Hodges, Tina Horton, Nora Miller, Andrew Moneymaker, Clear Moore, Jennifer Moore, Chad Murphy, Matthew Myles, Anika Perkins, Leigh Anne Puckett, Laura Quinn, Chanley Rainey, Stephanie Salvaterra, Barry Smith, Scott Tollison, Ethan Wilkins, and Elise Wilson

Absent: Phillip Cockrell and Ashley Dean

- I. Chairman Anderson called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Anderson welcomed PIE+, noting that we have 36 members in the group and warning that we will need to meet more frequently than once per month to maintain momentum and make considered decisions.

- II. PIE Council approved the October minutes (C. Moore, B. Smith)

- III. FY '27 Budgeting

- a. Reviewed FY '26 Approach

Anderson shared the guidance given to budget managers ahead of FY26 planning so that PIE could consider the priorities from the prior year. For FY26 planning, priorities were ranked in two tiers, with degree completion and financial sustainability in the highest priority tier. Discussion centered on the funding formulas being proposed to the state legislature and the fact that little in the university's situation had changed. Both factors appeared to weigh in favor of retaining FY26's two-tiers for use in FY27 planning.

- b. Discussed Zero-Based Budgeting (ZBB)

Anderson opened the floor to reports of complaints about the ZBB approach used in the previous year. No members reported hearing complaints.

- c. Voted to retain the budgeting process used in FY26 for FY27, using ZBB (but exempting salaries, non-student wages, and fringe benefits) and prioritizing degree completion and financial sustainability (Rainey, Tollison).

IV. 2026-2030 Strategic Priorities and Goals (SPGs)

Anderson reminded members that PIE+ has been formed to revise the university's SPGs (see Appendix I). The new edition will be used annually over the next five years to guide budgeting and for program assessments. PIE+ will hold a vote (rules will have to be determined soon) on what to recommend to the President's Cabinet.

a. Thorough and wide-ranging discussion touched on several themes:

i. Enhanced Student Experience

Harpole received substantial support among PIE+ for the idea that an excellent student experience should be emphasized so as to encourage all campus units to contribute. Several members noted that "Student Experience" is the second of five "strategic pillars" included in North Carolina Central University's (NCCU) strategic plan, which C. Moore had circulated ahead of the meeting (see Appendix II). While some wondered whether student experience would be best attended to by threading related goals throughout the other priorities, others thought it might be important to elevate its status as its own priority. Watkins noted that it is at least as important as community connection.

Foster, representing Athletics, shared that he struggles to align his budget priorities with the current institutional priorities. Having student experience explicitly in the list would recognize the fact that spending on athletics and other extracurricular activities for students is important to the university mission.

Miles suggested framing the priority as an "enhanced student learning experience."

ii. Importance of Institutional Advocacy & Branding

Rainey pointed to the emphasis on consciously promoting the university and its accomplishments evident in NCCU's strategic plans (Appendix II). Several members reiterated the importance of prioritizing efforts to tell our story and market ourselves to students, community, industry, government, etc. Salvaterra noted that engaging with the university's history was important to this work, especially to maintain alumni relations, while Ethan noted the importance of also looking forward to messages that will appeal to the next generation and that focus on improvement. C. Moore suggested the phrase "Engage Our Story" as a way to include both legacy and aspiration in the framing of this priority (Harpole informed everyone that MSU's strategic plan includes "Tell Our Story" as one of its five "pillars" and urged us to avoid language that is too similar (see Appendix III).

iii. Academic Excellence, Degree Completion, & Post-Graduation Preparation

Dohmen suggested that the goals related to academic excellence should include preparing students for responsible citizenship; in the 2021 goals, there is a narrow focus on preparation for work in the formal economy.

Ballard argued for expanding the focus beyond degree completion to better emphasize retention, career placement, etc. Related to the importance of conscious self-promotion, noted above, she urged PIE+ to embed statistics and accolades within the SPGs to showcase MUW's excellence in retention, completion, and community/workforce impact.

C. Moore asked whether Degree Completion should be integrated with Academic Excellence or Student Experience.

Hurst emphasized the alignment between some of the Degree Completion and Academic Excellence goals with the QEP's focus on career readiness and NACE skills.

Brookings said we need to focus on providing degrees that are going to help recruit students and that have obvious relevance to the job market.

Rainey asked about the university's ability to track graduates beyond the graduation survey and whether that might be something we should prioritize in our strategic plan, leading to a discussion about the services that have been used to gather this data in the past and those that might be used in the future. Tollison shared that Accelerate MS may be contracting with Strata to gather this sort of data in the future. The IHL system as a whole is wary of any efforts from Accelerate MS because of their record of discounting the value of college education broadly. As an alternative, they are considering InSpark. LifeTrack was formerly used but is limited to data on graduates who remain in MS.

iv. State/Regional Impact

Salvaterra suggested using language like "investing in the future of MS and the young people of the state" that aligns with the concerns of state leaders.

Hodges and Anderson raised the importance of emphasizing our contributions to Mississippi, though Brookings raised concerns about the fact that, realistically, most of our students come from outside of MS. This led to a discussion about the importance of prioritizing a larger, Southern regional focus, with Brookings emphasizing that funding does not currently reflect a priority of recruitment across the Southeast. He suggested that we think about increasing program accessibility in terms of online offerings.

v. Financial Sustainability - "Resource Stewardship and Growth"

Harpole initiated a discussion of Financial Sustainability and a desire to see a more positive, growth-oriented framing—something that doesn't suggest we are just trying to survive. Tollison added that we could drop the word *financial* in the title so that additional resources could be considered in the goals. The group settled on the language "Resource Stewardship and Growth."

vi. General

Tollison emphasized the importance of thinking about how to make SPGs that are actionable and straightforwardly applied. He encouraged PIE+ to aim for a living document that can be printed and kept in every office. Hairston echoed the sentiment, recalling that every meeting in which he participated while at the Mayo Clinic included explicit discussion of the institution's strategic priorities. Foster agreed and noted that Athletics has a list of core values on the wall in Hogarth.

b. Teams Collaboration ahead of next meeting

Anderson encouraged those suggesting a new priority or goals to go into Teams and create a new page where everyone can then contribute ideas. Within Teams, navigate to the Staff Notebook tab on the top menu. From there, use the left-hand menu to open Collaborative Space>Using the Collaboration Space>+ Add page. He asked that everyone engage those and other notes that may be added before the next meeting so that our discussion will have more concrete ideas to consider.

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Teams web interface. On the left is a sidebar with navigation icons for Activity, Chat, Teams, Assignments, Calendar, Calls, OneDrive, and Apps. The main area displays a notebook titled 'PIE+ MUW Strategic Planning Committee Notebook'. The notebook has a 'General' channel selected. The notebook's interface includes a top bar with tabs for 'General', 'Posts', 'Files', 'Staff Notebook', 'Reflect', and 'StrategicPlanning'. Below this is a ribbon with tabs for 'File', 'Home', 'Insert', 'Draw', 'View', and 'Help'. The 'Home' tab is active, showing a list of sections and pages. The sections listed are 'Welcome', '_Collaboration Space', 'Staff Meeting Notes', 'Shared Resources', 'Using the Collabora...', 'Initiatives', and '_Content Library'. The pages listed are 'Getting started with the ...', 'SPG 2021 - Academic Ex...', 'SPG 2021 - Advancemen...', 'SPG 2021 - Community ...', 'SPG 2021 - Degree Com...', and 'SPG 2021 - Financial Sus...'. The 'Getting started with the Collaboration Space' page is open, showing a title, a date 'Friday, August 12, 2022 7:10 PM', and a paragraph of text.

Getting started with the Collaboration Space

Friday, August 12, 2022 7:10 PM

The **Collaboration Space** is open to all staff, and all staff members can read or write on anything in this part of the notebook. Staff Leaders and staff members can also create new sections and pages in ways that work best for them. We've created a few example sections in the Collaboration Space to help get you started!

For example, if a group splits up into different projects, each subgroup could create a section in which to share project-related

c. Listening Sessions

PIE+ will share the existing SPGs and purpose of the process. These one-hour sessions will be recorded and virtual participation enabled via Zoom.

- i. Wilkes has scheduled a Student Listening Session for Tuesday, Feb. 17 from 6-7 p.m. in the Tiered Classroom in the Library, with the regular SGA meeting to follow.
- ii. Anderson asked Murphy and Sweeten to organize a joint Faculty and Staff Listening Session.
- iii. Wilson will reach out to alumni to schedule a listening session.

V. PIE+ adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

PIE will next convene on Friday, February 27, at 1:30 p.m.

Appendix I: Previous MUW Strategic Priorities and Goals

Academic Excellence

Academics are at the heart of a W education. Our dedicated faculty, respected in their fields, champion a commitment to teaching shaped by their research, scholarship, and creative expressions. Partnered with an equally committed staff, they foster a learning environment that is both broad and highly personalized. For the W, academic excellence results in graduates who are equipped for the competitive and diverse global economy.

- Provide a comprehensive academic experience
- Prepare students to be life-long learners and contributing members of today's global economy
- Provide resources to foster excellence in teaching
- Recruit and retain a diverse faculty and staff

Advancement Excellence

A strength of any institution is the level of engagement with those it serves. At The W, that includes a diversity of constituents: students, faculty, staff, alumni, friends, the community, and elected officials. By cultivating these relationships, we build support critical to the future of The W. One important outcome of valued relationships is the continued generosity of our larger W family, providing resources that allow us to improve quality across all aspects of the institution.

- Continue a culture of giving
- Foster pride in the university and its programs
- Offer more programming representative of diverse alumni base
- Provide resources to assist students financially
- Enhance services to shape career-ready graduates

Community Connections

The W's unique niche is not confined by geographic boundaries. By serving its communities through programs and partnerships, both locally and globally, the university will continue to communicate its value and explore ways to create significant impact through its

areas of strength. It should also identify innovative and diverse approaches that enhance health, quality of life, cultural enrichment, and society's overall economic potential.

- Cultivate collaborations to create healthy and vibrant communities.
- Provide outreach to underserved and diverse populations of our communities
- Forge meaningful and engaged partnerships that provide real-life experiences for students
- Contribute to the cultural enrichment of our communities

Degree Completion

The W recognizes that Degree Completion requires recruitment, retention, and support through graduation and into a career. We aim to provide holistic support for all students throughout their time at the university.

- Recruit a diverse student body to ensure a vital university community
- Provide equal access to advising, mentoring, and support services to all students
- Assist students to maintain financial, physical, emotional, and mental well-being
- Support students through degree completion and into their careers

Financial Sustainability

A financial model supports the efforts and goals of academics, student services, and the campus as a whole. The W's mission-driven approach involves clear strategic planning and actions that ensure the ongoing financial health of the University.

- Develop a strategic budget model
- Enhance and maintain campus infrastructure and facilities
- Invest in faculty and staff hiring and development

Previous Strategic Plans

- [MUW Strategic Priorities and Goals \(2016-2021\) PDF Document](#)
- [MUW Strategic Goals \(2010-2015\) PDF Document](#)
- [W-2009 Strategic Goals \(2004-2009\)](#)

Appendix II: NCCU Strategic Priorities and Goals

North Carolina Central University (NCCU) is embarking on a transformative journey with the development of its [2025–2030 Strategic Plan](#) (Soaring to New Heights: Vision 2030). Building upon a legacy of excellence in teaching, research, and service, NCCU is committed to charting a path toward becoming a premier institution that meets the evolving needs of its community and the broader society.

The new strategic plan is designed to guide NCCU's progress over the next five years, focusing on key areas that will enhance the university's impact and ensure its continued success.

Vision 2030 has five strategic pillars that guide our path to the future:

1. Academic Excellence
2. Student Experience
3. Institutional Sustainability
4. Operational Excellence
5. Transformational Engagement

Each pillar is designed to strengthen our foundation and elevate our impact, ensuring that NCCU continues to serve as a beacon of opportunity and a model of success.

Academic Excellence:

Enhance teaching, research, and community engagement.

Position North Carolina Central University as a nationally recognized leader in academic innovation, excellence, and student success by expanding high-quality programs aligned with emerging industries, modernizing academic infrastructure and technology elevating faculty and student achievement, and advancing research and scholarship to achieve Carnegie Research 2 (R2) status.

Objectives for Goal #1

1. Create new degree pathways aligned with emerging market and societal needs, including AI, cybersecurity, and public health.
2. Invest in research centers, competitive grant funding, and doctoral programs while strengthening faculty development and research administration to achieve Carnegie Research 2 (R2) classification.
3. Foster a culture of academic excellence by recruiting, supporting, and retaining exceptional faculty who advance the university's mission through innovative teaching, impactful research, and meaningful community engagement.
4. Expand community engagement models, including service learning and project-based coursework.

5. Develop an infrastructure to achieve the objectives set forth in the UNC System Performance Metrics including Four-Year Graduation Rate, Undergraduate Degree Efficiency, First-Year Debt, Transfer Debt, Average Earned Credits Per Year, Education Expenses Per Degree and Military Affiliated Enrollment.
6. Establish an academic technology infrastructure that promotes faculty excellence and enhances student success.
7. Strengthen and expand articulation and workforce development partnerships with community colleges.
8. Position NCCU School of Law as a leader in legal education, scholarship, and public service by enhancing academic programs, faculty excellence, and student outcomes.

Student Experience:

Promote student success, satisfaction, and well-being.

Cultivate a transformational student experience that prioritizes holistic development, belonging, wellness, and workforce readiness, ensuring that all students graduate prepared to thrive in a global economy and civic society.

Objectives for Goal #2

1. Prioritize the enhancement of housing, athletics, recreational, instructional and research facilities.
2. Expand academic advising, financial aid support, mental health, and wellness services.
3. Develop robust career preparation pathways that align academic and student programming with evolving workforce needs.
4. Increase student participation in global experiences, preparing students to lead in an interconnected world.
5. Enhance student development by cultivating essential life skills and promoting a culture of social responsibility to prepare graduates for personal and professional success beyond the university.
6. Design flexible learning spaces, including adaptive classrooms and hybrid learning environments, to support online education and evolving student needs.
7. Enhance accessibility and programmatic opportunities for students with unique needs.
8. Strengthen the academic success, personal development and well-being of student-athletes.

Institutional Sustainability:

Ensure financial strength and resource optimization.

Advance strategic, sustainable institutional growth and financial strength by expanding enrollment, modernizing infrastructure, optimizing resources, and enhancing philanthropic partnerships and community engagement.

Objectives for Goal #3

1. Strengthen financial stewardship, accountability and transparency.

2. Grow targeted enrollment areas (adult learners, military-affiliated and graduate students) by expanding online access and support, aligning recruitment and academic programs with market demand.
3. Increase student retention, persistence and graduation through data-informed academic support and targeted engagement strategies.
4. Unify university advancement under a single model integrating philanthropy, research and corporate partnerships for optimal impact and return.
5. Strengthen alumni connections and engagement fostering lifelong loyalty to NCCU.
6. Establish shared fundraising goals and messaging with Athletics that leverages athletic achievements for philanthropic opportunities.
7. Expand merit- and need-based scholarships to enhance student recruitment, retention and graduation.

Operational Excellence:

Improve efficiency and effectiveness in operations.

Achieve operational excellence by optimizing people, processes, technology and facilities to create a high-performing, accountable, and service-oriented institution.

Objectives for #4

1. Enhance performance and support internal growth opportunities for faculty and staff through investments in professional development.
2. Develop a performance-based accountability framework across divisions.
3. Create a succession planning process to maintain optimal production across campus.
4. Use data-driven decision-making to assess technology, facility and operations, ensuring alignment with institutional priorities.
5. Strengthen risk management practices.
6. Invest in competitive compensation structures to retain and attract talent.
7. Attract, develop, and retain a high-performing faculty and staff by fostering a culture of excellence, teamwork, and continuous growth, in alignment with the university's mission and strategic goals.
8. Enhance campus safety through proactive prevention, emergency response, and collaborative community engagement to ensure a safe campus environment.

Transformational Engagement:

Expand NCCU's role as a catalyst of innovation and development.

Strengthen NCCU's impact as a driver of economic development by aligning academic, research, and community engagement efforts with Durham, the Research Triangle, North Carolina, the nation, and the world.

Objectives for #5

1. Enhance branding and marketing showcasing NCCU's legacy and impact.
2. Strengthen the athletic program to achieve sustained Division I competitiveness and national recognition in performance, excellence, and engagement.
3. Deepen strategic partnerships with Research Triangle corporations and organizations to develop industry-driven innovation.
4. Strengthen relationships with local community and grassroots organizations to address common interests, including small business support and expansion of entrepreneurship efforts.
5. Enhance external engagement by fostering sustained partnerships with industry, government, and community organizations to co-create solutions, expand applied research, and accelerate economic and social development.

Appendix III: MSU Strategic Priorities and Goals

The [Transforming MSU strategic plan](#) charts a new vision for Mississippi State University as we redefine our role in solving some of the world's most critical challenges. Details of the plan are below.

Transforming MSU

At Mississippi State, we're redefining the role of a Land Grant university. We provide an innovative, hands-on learning experience, meeting all students where they are and equipping them for a world that needs their talent. We're working to help our communities prosper while exploring cutting-edge solutions to the world's biggest challenges.

Together, we're taking care of what matters in the 21st century – starting in our own backyard.

SERVE THE WHOLE STUDENT

Help students thrive through innovative academic programs and memorable experiences while ensuring a holistic focus on student well-being

STRENGTHEN OUR BONDS

Grow and nurture relationships that further enhance our vibrant community

IGNITE INNOVATION

Foster life-changing research and creative endeavors to advance our society

ELEVATE OUR COMMUNITY

Serve our communities with the knowledge and experience that address critical challenges and unique opportunities

TELL OUR STORY

Grow awareness and shape the perception of MSU by amplifying the stories, impacts, and excitement of our community

Our North Star Vision

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Together, we're taking care of what matters in the 21st century – starting in our own backyard.

Pillars

We have developed five key pillars to guide the collaboration and collective action that will support our university's transformation. Each pillar represents an essential focus area of our transformation roadmap, which summarizes the strategic goals of Transforming MSU.

Serve the Whole Student

Help students thrive through innovative academic programs and memorable experiences while ensuring a holistic focus on student well-being.

- Provide a supportive, vibrant campus environment that allows students to enjoy meaningful learning, research, and service activities during their MSU experience
- Prepare all of our students with the tools to live healthy and productive lives.
- Incorporate new academic content and teaching methods that enable students to use their knowledge and to lead fulfilling careers.
- Help student achieve their academic goals by providing services that enable them to graduate on-time and with distinction.
- Expand experiential learning opportunities for students so that we may instill a hunger for lifelong learning in all of our graduates.

Strengthen Our Bonds

Grow and nurture relationships that further enhance our vibrant community.

- Increase opportunities for employee development and advancement.
- Deepen the bonds we have with alumni to support their connection to MSU and the value of the degree they have earned.
- Expand partnerships with industry and employers to create new opportunities for students and ensure the education they are receiving is relevant for tomorrow's workplace.
- Build and enhance our networks with community and government leaders and with peer organizations to create pathways for mutually beneficial goals.
- Grow fan affinity and engagement through innovative experiences on and off campus.

Ignite Innovation

Foster life-changing research and creative endeavors to advance our society.

- Grow recognition for MSU's role in completing life-changing research in areas that matter to our state, region, and world.
- Expand programs for faculty and staff researchers so that they have the support they need to be successful.
- Renew our commitment to supporting entrepreneurship in all forms, especially in developing a strong workforce for Mississippi and communities like ours.
- Double down in our research and scholarly activity that promotes solutions in areas that matter like community health, child and youth development, and sustainability and resiliency.

Elevate Our Community

Serve our communities with the knowledge and experience that address critical challenges and unique opportunities.

- Expand outreach activities that allow us to apply the life-changing solutions evident in our research.
- Expand opportunities for service learning to inspire a continued commitment to serving our communities as MSU students, alumni, faculty and staff.
- Create more "on-ramps" for members of our communities to receive the knowledge and skills they desire through micro-credentials and stackable credentials.
- Grow capacity in communities that fosters economic development and social mobility.

Tell Our Story

Grow awareness and shape the perception of MSU by amplifying the stories, impacts, and excitement of our community.

- Grow our brand recognition beyond Mississippi and the southeast region
- Engage more individuals in experiencing all that MSU has to offer through our teaching, research, and outreach missions
- Celebrate the real value of MSU's efforts in Mississippi and communities like ours