

# ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY

Towson University, Maryland's Metropolitan University, is nationally recognized for its excellent programs in the arts and sciences, communications, business, health professions, education, fine arts and computer science. The university is located in the suburban community of Towson, Maryland, just eight miles north of downtown Baltimore.

Its beautifully landscaped 329-acre setting provides a pleasant environment for study and a diverse campus life, as well as easy access to a wealth of university and community resources. Towson University enrolls and graduates more undergraduate students from the region than any other institution.

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*(Approved by USM, pending Maryland Higher Education Commission final approval)*

## I. Summary Mission Statement

Towson University fosters intellectual inquiry and critical thinking preparing graduates who will serve as effective, ethical leaders and engaged citizens. Through a foundation in the liberal arts, an emphasis on rigorous academic standards, and the creation of small learning environments, we are committed to providing a collaborative, interdisciplinary and inter-professional atmosphere, excellence in teaching, leadership development, civic engagement, and applied and sponsored research opportunities at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Our graduates leave Towson University with the vision, creativity and adaptability to craft solutions that enrich the culture, society, economy, and environment of Maryland, the region, and beyond.

## II. Institutional Identity

Towson University, founded in 1866 as the Maryland State Normal School, offers nationally recognized undergraduate and graduate programs in the liberal arts, sciences, arts, and applied professional fields. Towson University is more than Maryland's largest comprehensive university, it is an institution that prepares a qualified workforce and produces innovative, evidence-based research. As a productive, research-oriented comprehensive university, it provides students with extraordinary opportunities to work alongside faculty in addressing significant issues, while also generating new knowledge to solve real world societal problems.

The university's longstanding commitment to creating a multicultural campus is advanced by policies and practices that promote the recruitment and retention of diverse student, staff, and faculty bodies that reflect local, regional, national, and global diversity. Curricular and extracurricular programming supports the university's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

As a large and complex learning community, the university offers rigorous undergraduate and graduate programs. The undergraduate curriculum promotes the intellectual skills essential for:

- communicating effectively,
- gathering and evaluating information,
- thinking critically and meaningfully,
- using technology effectively,
- appreciating diversity and commonalities, and
- making informed ethical choices.

These skills are grounded in the university's long-standing commitment to a strong liberal education core that emphasizes an understanding of how the arts and sciences gather, evaluate, and apply information to reach valid conclusions. The core curriculum, combined with focused study in a chosen discipline and a commitment to students' co-curricular experience, serves to develop intellectual and social abilities that will guide students as contributing members of the workforce and of a democratic society.

The masters and applied doctoral programs build on the strengths of the university and are in areas that are fundamental to the development and vigor of the institution and the State of Maryland by conducting critical research that informs business, health care, and educational practices. The goal of these programs is to prepare ethically and globally minded professionals who are leaders in their fields.

The six colleges that define the fields of study at Towson University include:

The College of Business and Economics, accredited by AACSB International (The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) in both its accounting and business administration programs, offers a one-of-a-kind Business Excellence program designed to prepare students to enter their careers. AACSB accreditation places the college in the top one percent of business schools worldwide and the top 10 percent in the United States. Offering both undergraduate and graduate programs, the college provides a comprehensive business and entrepreneurial focused education.

Recognized as Maryland's preeminent teacher education institution as well as a national model for professional preparation, Towson University has a distinguished history in the preparation of classroom teachers and education specialists. The College of Education offers a

comprehensive slate of high quality, performance-based, professional education programs for the initial and advanced preparation of teachers and education specialists. The majority of graduates from the college enter schools as teachers and specialists.

The College of Fine Arts and Communication encourages students to develop their creative and analytical abilities, tailored to their aspirations, by encouraging dialogue, inspiration, passion and beauty. These attributes are fostered through a broad liberal arts education and specialized professional training. Recognized as a thriving visual arts center for Maryland, the college contributes to the cultural life of Towson and the Greater Baltimore region.

The College of Health Professions develops outstanding professionals at the undergraduate and graduate levels in a wide range of health care, human service, and sport-related fields that promote and enhance health, well-being, and human performance in a diverse world. Students are supported in a wide array of applied experiences that complement their academic coursework, including via the Institute of Well-being, which provides a wide range of professional and inter-professional opportunities that develop and evaluate best practices, promote professional development, facilitate research, and enhance the lives of community members through outreach programs.

The Departments and Programs of the College of Liberal Arts explore what it means to be human, how people construct identities and institutions, and how individuals and groups interact over time – in communities, in cultures, and in nations. The college includes those disciplines customarily identified as the humanities and those generally identified as the social sciences.

The Jess and Mildred Fisher College of Science and Mathematics offers undergraduate and graduate programs in the physical, mathematical, computational and life sciences, with an emphasis on student success through improving student retention, persistence, and time-to-graduation. The FCSM promotes a wide range of opportunities for authentic research experiences for all undergraduates. The college is the home of numerous STEM education and outreach programs including Towson UTeach – Towson’s path to becoming a high school science or mathematics teacher.

### III. Institutional Capabilities

By Carnegie Classification, Towson University is a Masters (Comprehensive) University I. It has achieved national prominence as a premier comprehensive university by offering a wide-range of excellent graduate and undergraduate degree programs. Towson University has increased its regional and national reputation through its focus on student learning, innovative programs and pedagogies, faculty creativity and scholarship, applied and sponsored research, community service, and outreach to business, education, non-profit, and health care organizations.

Towson’s faculty members actively pursue scholarship and creative activities that complement and expand disciplinary knowledge while maintaining superior teaching. The university values and rewards equally the scholarships of discovery, teaching, integration, and application. Members of Towson University also engage in a wide range of research, entrepreneurship and service activities which support the university’s institutional outreach programs to government, health care, sport organizations, non-profit groups, education, business, and the fine arts. Towson University is designated by the Carnegie Foundation as a university recognized for curricular engagement, outreach, and partnership. Our intercollegiate athletics program is an integral part of

building campus community and pride. Athletics also provides leadership development and other co-curricular opportunities for both student-athletes and the student body as a whole.

The university capitalizes on its location by providing varied and distinctive opportunities for students, staff and faculty learning, leadership development, teaching, and research. It recognizes its obligation to serve at the local, regional, state, and national levels through its academic programs, applied research, and professional services. Towson University is an integral partner with the state’s community college system. The university serves a robust and growing transfer student population, focusing on program offerings, integration and success in completing their baccalaureate degree and beyond. As part of its pursuit to meet societal needs in a comprehensive manner, Towson University will maintain a wide range of baccalaureate programs while further developing graduate education, and expanding its focus on research, particularly in the applied fields.

As Towson University has grown, we strive to maintain our commitment to student-centered experiences that include frequent engagement with faculty and librarians through diverse course formats and settings. This value is reflected in the master plan that calls for substantial modification to and growth of the academic precinct over the next 10 years. The plan includes a focus on designing new academic and academic support spaces which emphasize the values of interactive learning, informal teaching and learning communication, and individual student attention.

### IV. Institutional Objectives and Outcomes

In keeping with the Towson University 2020 Focused Vision, the University System of Maryland Strategic Plan, and the Maryland State Plan for Higher Education, the university will pursue the following directions:

#### We are committed to:

- Rigorous undergraduate and graduate education,
- Expanded interdisciplinary and co-curricular experiences,
- Innovative community outreach to meet societal needs,
- The University Library as a center for intellectual inquiry, and
- Quality faculty and staff professional development.

Our undergraduate and graduate student learning outcomes include:

- Information literacy and technological competency
- Effective communication
- Critical analysis and reasoning
- Specialized knowledge in defined fields
- Working in multifaceted work environments
- Local and global citizenship and leadership

TU2020 is the evolution of Towson University’s two previous strategic plans, TU2010 and TU2016 and focuses the action items into institutional priorities as presented.

**Academic Excellence and Student Success:** Towson University’s top priority, academic excellence and student success, is dependent on the teaching and mentorship of faculty. Academic innovation through academic transformation and course redesign are central to enabling student success. We are committed to the continuous improvement process of examining programming, curricular and co-curricular offerings

to ensure students have outstanding educational experiences and opportunities.

*Assess and strengthen academic programs to ensure students develop Towson's Learning Outcomes.*

- Review and evaluate curriculum to ensure challenging content that addresses workforce and geographic demands.
- Include diverse perspectives across the curriculum.
- Support students and faculty in their quest for focused international experiences and through the inclusion of global awareness in the curriculum.

*Respond to student needs to strengthen student satisfaction and success.*

- Identify and respond to students' needs and promote access and availability of services, resources and technology.
- Develop innovative approaches to provide student support.
- Support the Library's role in academic support, student development and campus life.
- Improve recruitment, marketing and outreach to make Towson a first choice institution for an increasing percentage of students.

We will continue to improve graduation completion and retention rates, close the achievement gap, ensure a seamless transfer process, and prepare globally conscious students for an expanding workforce.

*Optimize retention and time to graduation for all students.*

- Strengthen student advising.
- Implement an early warning system to assist students throughout their academic career.

*Provide support programs for student populations with non-traditional needs.*

- Identify and address needs of non-traditional students.
- Support transfer student transition through model programs focusing on orientation and advising.

**A Model in Higher Education through Innovation in Teacher and Leader Preparation,**

**STEM Workforce Development, and a National and International**

**Reputation for Arts and Arts Education:** Towson University will focus program enhancements in areas of existing strength. We will continue to lead the nation as an example of best practices in teacher preparation and school leadership. In addition to teacher preparation, we will reinforce and expand our contributions to workforce development in critical STEM disciplines such as cyber-security, forensic chemistry, and environmental science.

We will continue to expand our national and international reputation in arts and communication.

*Feature the arts, academics and community outreach as key components of the Towson University experience.*

- Celebrate the accomplishments of the university community and alumni within the university and beyond.

*Continually assess our success in meeting marketplace demands and continuing education needs through feedback from alumni, donors, employers and business and government leaders.*

- Right-size enrollment, faculty and staff to build capacity in high demand fields such as STEM, health professions and education.
- Continue to develop and implement regular market research from opinion leaders, alumni and employers.

**Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Applied Research:** Towson University's focus on innovation and entrepreneurship facilitates collaborations and strategic partnerships with the community and state. We will continue to support our faculty, staff and student applied research endeavors and connect their work to teacher transformation, innovation and entrepreneurship.

*Enhance and support partnerships and collaborations with government, business and educational sectors throughout the region to promote economic development and address social issues.*

- Strengthen social partnerships and stewardship throughout the region.
- Build upon successful community outreach efforts and continue to enhance collaboration with our neighbors.

*Emphasize campus-wide applied research and scholarship efforts.*

- Support faculty efforts in grants and contract initiatives.
- Promote projects to support applied research and engaged scholarship.

*Communicate the significance of research and community engagement initiatives.*

- Find additional creative methods to emphasize faculty, staff and student initiatives.
- Highlight the scope and impact of faculty, staff and student research.

We will continue to promote economic and workforce development to keep the majority of Towson graduates working in Maryland.

*Continue to be a leader in workforce development in Maryland.*

- Identify workforce trends and adapt programs, certificate and non-credit offerings to meet demands.
- Enhance existing partnerships and develop strategic partnerships as they relate to workforce.

**Internships and Experiential Learning Opportunities:** Towson University will expand its emphasis on internships and experiential learning, and significantly increase corporate, educational, government and health care partnerships to help provide these opportunities.

*Increase corporate, educational, government, and health care partnerships to help provide internship and experiential learning opportunities.*

- Build upon successful community outreach efforts and continue to enhance collaboration with our neighbors.
- Further implement service learning as a component of the academic experience tied to the curriculum with linkages to the region.

*Increase philanthropic support to achieve the university's goals.*

- Maximize fundraising opportunities and collaboration throughout the university.
- Aggressively identify and cultivate friends and extramural funds for academic, arts, athletics, and community and student development endeavors.

*Involve students in co-curricular educational experiences on- and off-campus that build civic engagement and global literacy, and promote the Towson University experience.*

- Further implement service learning as a component of the academic experience tied to the curriculum with linkages to the metropolitan region.

**A Model for Leadership Development:** Towson University is rooted in our strong commitment to civic engagement, civility and ethics. The university supports personal and professional growth by recognizing and developing positive leadership philosophies and styles. Our primary goal is to instill in our students the qualities essential for outstanding, lifelong leadership in all aspects of their lives. We are committed to increasing credit and noncredit opportunities in leadership development for our faculty, staff and students.

*Challenge, inspire and support members of the academic community to perform at the highest level.*

- Provide credit and non-credit bearing programming for students, faculty, staff and the community to develop and understand leadership philosophies and styles.
- Inspire students, faculty and staff to become educated, engaged, informed citizens with leadership skills and a passion for intellectual challenge.
- Empower faculty with innovative pedagogical methodologies and establish best practices within each discipline.
- Offer professional development programs on the use of online delivery and new technology to support faculty and students.

*Emphasize the shared governance structure throughout the university to ensure responsive organizational leadership.*

- Encourage and support the university community to engage in effective shared governance.
- Improve communication in the development of priorities and policies.

**A Model for Campus Diversity:** Towson will further strengthen its commitment to diversity and continue to provide a safe, inclusive, welcoming, and peaceful community respectful to all. Our institutional strategies will expand and continue to provide a forum for campus dialogue and action.

*Enhance and celebrate a diverse and complex university.*

- Promote appreciation for and advancement of equity, diversity and inclusion at TU.
- Enhance recruitment and retention of students from underserved and/or underrepresented populations.
- Close the achievement gap for first generation, low income and students from underrepresented groups.
- Enhance recruitment and retention of faculty and staff from underserved and/or underrepresented populations.
- Support respectful and mutually beneficial community collaboration.

**A Model of Outstanding Stewardship – People and Natural Resources:**

Towson University is committed to serving as an effective steward of our natural resources. This includes ensuring that students, faculty, staff and the community are have opportunities to realize their full potential. We are dedicated to continue to empower our campus and greater community to make choices for lifelong well-being and effective stewardship of our natural resources.

*Enhance recruitment, retention and development opportunities for faculty and staff.*

- Improve succession planning and leadership development.
- Define faculty work and implement a more effective peer review process.

*Maintain a healthy, safe and environmentally sustainable campus.*

- Engage a campus-wide culture of energy conservation and sustainability.
- Address the health and wellness of the university community.
- Ensure the safety of all throughout the campus.

*Continue to execute the master plan to address the educational, research, environmental, housing, recreation and co-curricular space needs to support the Towson University experience.*

- Ensure commitment to the campus master plan through continued construction and renovation.

*Cultivate a campus-wide culture of excellent customer service and encourage innovation and continual improvement in the delivery of services for both internal and external constituencies.*

- Clarify expectations and provide motivation, training and the tools necessary to implement best practices for excellent customer service across the university.

*Continue to improve internal and external communications.*

- Seek innovative ways to promote the accolades of the university and alumni.
- Improve access to information for alumni, supporters and friends.
- Enhance and adopt technology that allows us to effectively reach more people.

*Maximize resources and success through stronger internal partnerships and collaborations.*

- Increase collaborations across the university.

**Excellence in Athletics:** Towson University is committed to a financially stable, gender-equitable, and competitive athletics program. The university will continue to support these goals by placing academics first. We will support opportunities for all Towson University students to participate in a range of sports activities and leadership opportunities that support physical well-being and personal excellence.

*Feature athletics as a key component of the Towson University experience.*

- Celebrate the accomplishments of the university community and alumni within the university and beyond.
- Encourage broader participation in activities by all members of the university and greater community.

The institution known today as Towson University opened its doors in 1866 in downtown Baltimore as the Maryland State Normal School—the

only institution devoted exclusively to the preparation of teachers for the public schools of Maryland. The first class consisted of 11 students.

In 1915 the school moved to Towson. By 1935, it established the Bachelor of Science degree in education and changed its name to Maryland State Teachers College at Towson. In 1946 it introduced an arts and sciences program, and in 1963 the institution expanded its offerings in the arts and sciences and became Towson State College.

Towson was granted university status on July 1, 1976, in recognition of its development into a comprehensive university. In 1988 Towson State University joined the University System of Maryland. On July 1, 1997, Towson State University became Towson University, a change that reflects its evolution from a state-supported to a state-assisted institution. As of May 2012, the university has awarded 135,963 degrees. Of those, 20,968 were advanced degrees. Enrollment for the 2012 fall term was 17,988 undergraduates and 3,972 graduate students.