



IOWA

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

STRATEGIC PLAN

2022–2027

YEAR 3 PROGRESS REPORT

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EXCELLENCE IN
TEACHING LEARNING



INNOVATIVE RESEARCH
AND CREATIVE
DISCOVERY



WELCOMING
ENVIRONMENT



HOLISTIC
WELL-BEING AND
SUCCESS



TRANSFORMATIVE
SOCIETAL IMPACT





Momentum You Can Measure

Dear members of the University of Iowa community,

Year 3 of our 2022–2027 strategic plan has turned ambition into record-breaking outcomes. From classrooms to clinics, research labs to communities across Iowa, we are delivering results that strengthen our state and elevate our standing nationwide.

Demand for an education from the University of Iowa has never been higher. For the first time, we received more than 31,000 first-year applications. This fall, we welcomed 5,561 new undergraduates, making this our second-largest first-year class in our history. More importantly, the students who choose Iowa are thriving. With record highs in first-year retention, four-year graduation, and six-year graduation rates, we have already surpassed our original five-year strategic plan goals.

In addition to being a leader in educational access, the university is celebrating achievements that exemplify our extraordinary academic excellence. Iowa faculty are earning the world's top honors, with highly prestigious awards in the arts, sciences, and medicine, including Michael Welsh's Lasker Award for his groundbreaking cystic fibrosis research. Meanwhile, our students continue to demonstrate the extraordinary things you can accomplish with a UI degree. As one example, Paras Bassuk became our fourth Rhodes Scholar during the past decade.

All of this outstanding progress is made possible by the hard work of members of the university community who are helping execute the strategic plan. We are also putting our Public–Private Partnership (P3) revenues to work in direct support of the plan. Since FY2021, the university has invested more than \$80 million of P3 funding to strategic initiatives that span all 12 colleges—expanding access to AI education, supporting cancer research, strengthening teaching and student advising, and recruiting and retaining world-class faculty.

Looking ahead, the launch of reSPARC [see page 34] brings together more than 100 faculty and staff to identify bold strategies for long-term financial health. The work of reSPARC to identify new revenues and new efficiencies will ensure Iowa's ability to continue enhancing our mission as the state's flagship university.

Thank you to every member of our community whose work fills this report. Your talent, your dedication to students, your service to Iowans, and your pursuit of innovation and discovery are building momentum we can measure!

Barbara J. Wilson
President

Kevin C. Kregel
Executive vice president and provost

Powering our Progress

A successful strategic plan is more than a set of goals. It is a framework for continuous improvement. The Strategic Plan Action and Resource Committee (SPARC) serves as the collaborative engine driving our plan forward, bringing together leaders from across campus to ensure our efforts are coordinated, effective, and aligned with our mission.

Visit the strategic plan website to learn more about SPARC’s responsibilities and to see a full list of work groups and members.

→ [STRATEGICPLAN.UIOWA.EDU/SPARC](https://strategicplan.uiowa.edu/sparc)

In Year 3, we launched four new SPARC work groups:



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Executing the university’s strategy and guiding principles regarding AI, with an emphasis on advancing education, research, and workforce readiness.



CANCER RESEARCH AND PATIENT CARE

Coordinating cross-campus collaborations and guiding strategic initiatives that aim to build upon the university’s robust ecosystem of cutting-edge facilities, outreach programs, and expertise in cancer.



BRAIN SCIENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH

Exploring opportunities for strategic investments, partnerships, and initiatives that leverage Iowa’s broad, institutional expertise in brain science and mental health.



reSPARC (REVENUE & EFFICIENCY)

Working in collaborative teams to identify opportunities for increasing revenue and improving operational efficiency to ensure the long-term financial success of the University of Iowa.



In February 2025, the university completed a mid-cycle update of the 2022-2027 Strategic Plan to align our strategy with new state and Iowa Board of Regents priorities and establish updated goals for the coming years.

Updated Goals for 2027

91%
FIRST-YEAR
RETENTION RATE

65%
FOUR-YEAR
GRADUATION RATE

30%
INCREASE IN HEALTH
CARE PATIENT CAPACITY

A DESTINATION UNIVERSITY

Driven by targeted outreach, brand storytelling, and strategic enrollment management, demand for an Iowa education is stronger than ever. The university received a record-breaking **31,000** applications and welcomed **5,561** new first-year students for fall 2025.

13%
INCREASE
in total applications

2x
HIGHER
deposit rate for prospects
exposed to UI brand campaign

Nearly
200
ADDITIONAL
non-resident student deposits

“We began investing in this class more than 20 months before they ever set foot on campus. By collaborating with campus partners to align our marketing strategy more closely with the admissions funnel, we were able to achieve record levels of brand exposure for the incoming class.”

– Brent Gage, associate vice president for enrollment management and strategy

Attracting and Retaining World-Class Faculty

Our commitment to being a destination for talent extends to the scholars, researchers, and creators who are at the heart of our academic enterprise.

This year, we welcomed two world-class leaders under our Transformational Faculty Hiring Program: Mark Burkard, director of Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center and C.E. Block Chair of Cancer Research, and Martin Grace, professor and Clement T. and Sylvia Hanson Family Chair in Finance and faculty director of the Vaughan Institute of Risk Management and Insurance. Their arrival has added unparalleled expertise in cancer and risk management, elevating our research and creating incredible new opportunities for our students.

Creating and maintaining an environment where exceptional faculty choose to build their careers is central to our faculty success efforts. Through the strategic plan, we have launched and enhanced a wide range of targeted support and development programs.

Helping faculty thrive

- **Strategic Investments**

We've invested \$21M+ through the High-Impact Hiring Initiative (HIHI) to support 79 recruitments and 33 retentions since 2021. Other university-funded initiatives, such as the Investment in Strategic Priorities fund, Scholarly Teaching Program, and SoTL Scholars, offer development opportunities for faculty in various career stages and tracks.

- **Fostering Mentorship**

A new faculty mentoring resources webpage and a peer mentoring program for instructional-track faculty are helping foster a stronger sense of community.

- **Empowering Leaders**

New onboarding tools, data resources, and leadership programming ensure Departmental Executive Officers (DEOs) have what they need to lead their departments effectively.

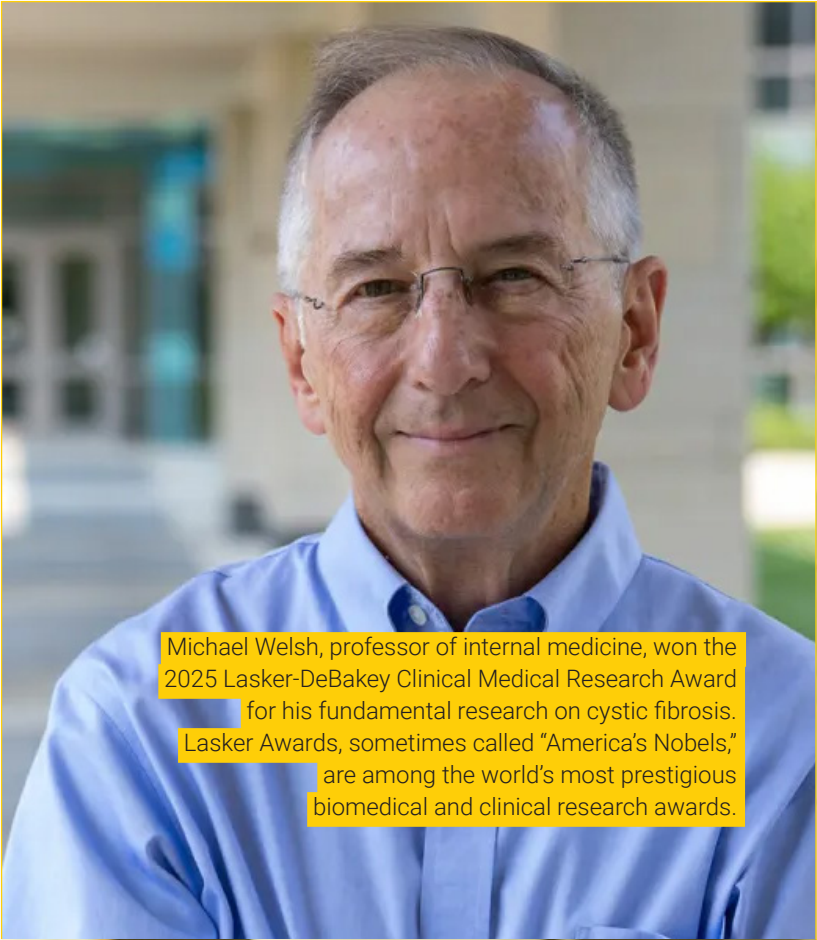
96.3%

FACULTY RETENTION
RATE IN FY 2024

40

MAJOR NATIONAL
AWARDS AND HONORS
earned by UI faculty
since 2023

Earning Acclaim



Michael Welsh, professor of internal medicine, won the 2025 Lasker-DeBakey Clinical Medical Research Award for his fundamental research on cystic fibrosis. Lasker Awards, sometimes called "America's Nobels," are among the world's most prestigious biomedical and clinical research awards.



T.J. Dedeaux-Norris, associate professor in the School of Art, Art History, and Design and African American Studies, was one of 35 recipients of the 2025-26 Rome Prize.



Stanley Perlman, professor of microbiology and immunology and pediatrics in the Carver College of Medicine, was elected as a member of the National Academy of Sciences.



Edwin Stone, professor of ophthalmology and visual sciences, was elected as a member of the National Academy of Medicine.

Growing Our Reputation for Excellence

The university continues to invest in distinctive collaborative opportunities, which were identified and prioritized in Year 3 of the strategic plan.



WRITING AND COMMUNICATION

Iowa established the Office of Writing and Communication. Led by Daniel Khalastchi, an award-winning writer and accomplished academic leader, the new office will serve as a strategic hub for writing and communication on campus.



BRAIN SCIENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH

The UI responded to the growing demand for mental health professionals with the creation of a new Counseling and Behavioral Health Services (CBHS) undergraduate major. The P3-supported major already had 52 students as of fall 2025, with 840 students enrolled in a CBHS course.



CANCER RESEARCH AND PATIENT CARE

UI Health Care purchased Mission Cancer + Blood. Mission has more than 20 community cancer clinics across Iowa that are now backed by UI Health Care’s National Cancer Institute-designated Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center, bringing the most advanced oncology care closer to home for more Iowans, particularly in rural areas.



Mark Simpson-Vos, a senior editor at the University of North Carolina Press, met with 36 UI faculty and graduate students as part of the Editor-In-Residence program.

Investing in Discovery

By providing seed-funding opportunities and fostering a culture of collaboration, the strategic plan is creating the conditions for groundbreaking work to flourish. Investments in P3 projects and other interdisciplinary grant development programs will help Iowa compete for significant research funding.

“

We are bringing together our talented researchers and scholars, harnessing their combined talents and passions, and sparking innovative interdisciplinary ideas to address and solve today’s complex challenges.

— David Schwebel, vice president for research

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Cultivating Written Scholarship

In partnership with the P3-funded "Writing for the Public Good" initiative, the Obermann Center for Advanced Studies piloted two successful programs this past year:

- The Editor-in-Residence program connected faculty and graduate students with a senior editor from a major university press, providing invaluable, behind-the-scenes guidance on how to craft a compelling book proposal and navigate the path to publication.
- The inaugural End-of-Year Writing Retreat brought together nineteen writers from across campus for several days of dedicated writing time, peer discussion, and inspiration, including a conversation with acclaimed author Garth Greenwell.



Making Student Success a Top Priority

200+

faculty, staff, and students attended the inaugural Mentoring at Iowa Conference

1000+

courses with experiential learning components tagged on MyUI

2,500+

undergraduates used the My Career Path career preparation tool as of spring 2025

The University of Iowa is committed to ensuring all Hawkeyes are given the opportunity to achieve their goals. Our strategic plan has helped make student success one of the core principles of how nearly every college, department, and unit approaches its work.

By building a culture that appreciates the value of teaching and learning, seeks to eliminate barriers, and provides in-demand skills and experiences, we are achieving exceptional outcomes when it comes to student success.



Holistic approach to cultivating teaching excellence

Strategic plan investments have increased professional development opportunities for instructors and advanced knowledge of teaching and learning across the university. The Building a Culture of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) P3 project helps faculty from all disciplines research, implement, and share effective, evidence-based teaching methods.

Finding structural barriers to student success

The Curricular Analytics P3 project used transcripts and financial aid data to identify instances where courses in a student’s program of study may be delaying time to graduation. Analysis of ten student cohorts revealed that majors with rigid, homogeneous course paths are linked to lower four-year graduation rates, particularly for students with average or below average test scores.

Expanding experiential learning and career preparation

With support from a \$300,000 grant from the Strada Education Foundation, the university is scaling My Career Path, a P3-supported online tool that helps students explore interests, map experiences, connect with employers, and build résumés.

Understanding student academic experiences

Students as Partners, an initiative led by the Center for Teaching, integrates student voices into the design and delivery of large lecture courses. Through semester-long collaborations, instructors are paired with one or two trained undergraduate student partners who offer constructive, real-time feedback on course structure, pedagogy, and student engagement.

Sara K. Ahmed, a UI alumna and internationally known speaker, gave the keynote address at the Connecting K-12 and Higher Education Conference.

“For our first semester, first-year course in the College of Engineering, our student partner has provided an invaluable perspective on how we can best connect with and engage the students.”

— Alec Scranton, professor of chemical and biochemical engineering

92%

employee participants in
You Need A Budget (YNAB) pilot
who reported improved financial
well-being

A Culture of Support

The University of Iowa's greatest asset is its people. Excellence in the classroom, lab, and clinic is only possible when faculty and staff feel supported, valued, and cared for. Guided by the strategic plan, the university continued to make significant new investments in the well-being of employees, recognizing that their success sets the foundation for achieving our goals.

Retirement plan modernization. A major modernization of the university's retirement plans has provided participants with greater flexibility and improved long-term outcomes.

Supporting families with paid parental leave. A new Iowa Paid Parental Leave program offers eligible employees up to four weeks of paid time off to care for and bond with a new child.

Financial well-being. Through a partnership with Hills Bank, all employees can access free financial coaching, webinars, and online tools.

Onboarding and supervisor tools. A new Supervisor Toolbox provides managers with a comprehensive hiring and onboarding guide, ensuring that new employees receive a consistent and welcoming experience.

Recognition resources. A new Recognition Toolkit for supervisors provides a step-by-step guide for building a recognition program tailored to their teams.

“

The notable increases in our Working at Iowa results show progress in multiple areas of our strategic plan. The results confirm that we have a highly engaged, goal-oriented workforce that feels welcome on campus and takes ownership of our mission. We will continue to work toward making Iowa a top destination for faculty and staff.”

— Cheryl Reardon, chief human resources officer and
associate vice president

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Data from the 2024 Working at Iowa survey underscores the university's progress in creating an environment where faculty and staff can thrive. Employee responses showed improvement in 14 of 19 survey questions compared with 2022.



Expanding our Impact on Iowa

The strategic plan continues to guide our efforts to have a transformational impact on our society, starting with our local communities and the state of Iowa. By leveraging our distinction in health care, research, and education, the university is helping address some of the state’s biggest challenges and providing more Iowans with access to the services they need.

Expanding health care access and training

New facilities to meet growing needs

The new state-of-the-art health care facility in North Liberty expands capacity for outpatient surgery and specialty orthopedic care. UI Health Care also reopened a 44-bed inpatient unit at the downtown campus, further enhancing the ability to care for patients with complex needs.

Fighting cancer in Iowa

The Iowa Cancer Registry launched the 99 Counties Project, an initiative that brings up-to-date cancer data and resources to every county in the state. The goal is to give local leaders, health care providers, and residents the tools they need to act.

Training emergency care providers

The UI Department of Emergency Medicine partners with hospitals and first responders across the state to deliver hands-on training sessions. These workshops ensure that rural hospitals have access to specialized expertise and that patients receive timely, high-quality care.



The KANI DARE summer program brings college students from across the Midwest to the University of Iowa for a two-week, paid internship focusing on extreme weather data collection and promoting agricultural resilience for rural communities.

The UI formally added community-engaged scholarship to promotion and tenure guidelines for tenure-track faculty, signaling that the university values partnerships with communities and recognizes public facing work.

Community Engagement by-the-numbers in 2024-25

- 150 student, faculty, and staff members of UI Community Engagement Network
- 45 faculty trained on community-engaged teaching and research
- 52 participants in three Community-Based Participatory Research seminars
- 17 undergraduate students provided funding to design and implement service projects in their home communities

P3 Overview

About the program

The P3 Program uses funds from the University of Iowa Strategic Initiatives Fund – formed through the university’s public private-partnership (P3) with ENGIE North America and Meridiam – to provide flexible, readily available resources to support the university’s strategic plan.

Up to \$15 million is expected to be available each fiscal year. A competitive process is used to select one- to three-year projects from a campuswide call for proposals. Remaining funds may be used to support other strategic plan initiatives, such as academic infrastructure, or reserved for use throughout the fiscal year to support implementation of the strategic plan.

\$80.2M

STRATEGIC PLAN
INITIATIVES SUPPORT
since FY21

42

INTERDISCIPLINARY
PROJECTS involving all
12 colleges and all central
academic units

135

PRELIMINARY
APPLICATIONS received
from FY22 to FY26

Guiding Principles

- P3 funding is an investment into the University of Iowa's core missions of teaching, research, and scholarship.
- All funds will be used for initiatives that support the UI 2022-2027 Strategic Plan.
- \$15 million in annual revenue will not be enough to support all the strategic needs of the university.
- A portion of the funds will be awarded each year through a competitive grant process open to all of campus.
- P3 funds will be most valuable when used to leverage other support or grow new sustainable efforts in support of the strategic plan.
- Sustainability of strategic activities beyond P3 support is essential.
- Proposals for multi-year non-recurring funds (up to 3 years) will be considered, balanced with proposals that could benefit from one-time or shorter-term support.
- Remaining funds may be used for campus projects of high strategic importance, such as key infrastructure projects.
- The allocation process will be evaluated annually.

P3 funding has supported the renovation of the Performing Arts Annex to create a modern space for the Department of Dance. Relocating Dance from Halsey Hall will unlock a series of campus projects.



FY21

In FY 2021, the UI distributed \$7.5 million in P3 funding to five projects

Hawkeye Introductory Courses

Transforming undergraduate introductory STEM courses at UI
\$300,000 over two years

High Impact Hiring Initiative

Recruit and retain outstanding faculty to strategically enhance priority areas of excellence
\$4.25M over two years

IowaRISE

Transforming experiential research and education
\$350,000 over two years

Jumpstarting Tomorrow

A collaborative research pilot program for interdisciplinary research communities
\$2M over three years

UI P3 to NCI/NIDCR P50

Multidisciplinary approach to oral cancer etiology and treatment
\$600,000 over three years



The UI led, NASA-funded TRACERS mission successfully launched in July 2025. In FY22, the university awarded \$3.6 million in P3 funding to help accelerate key aspects of the TRACERS mission by enhancing infrastructure and creating new student opportunities.

FY22

In FY 2022, the UI distributed \$12.7 million in P3 funding to eight projects

Extending Iowa’s Success in Space-Based Research Across Campus

Promoting interdisciplinary research to strengthen grant competitiveness
\$3.6M over three years

Learning@Iowa
A campus-wide framework to increase students’ academic success
\$900,000 over three years

Learning at Iowa has contributed to goals of improving undergraduate retention and persistence through graduation by helping students learn how to learn. Members of the project team employed a comprehensive strategy to spread the Three Ms for Effective Learning (Mindset, Metacognition, and Memory) across campus, reaching an impressive number of students, faculty, and staff.

Accomplishments:

- Since 2021, all new incoming students have been introduced to Learning at Iowa and the Three Ms during the On Iowa! Excel Lecture, exposing approximately 24,000 undergraduates to effective learning practices as they transition to the university.
- Learning at Iowa principles were integrated into several general education and gateway courses, impacting more than 3,500 students so far.
- Participation in the Learning About Learning (PSY:1010) course predicted GPA increases in the subsequent semester, even when controlling for students’ prior academic performance.

Next Steps:
The learning strategies promoted by Learning at Iowa will continue to be incorporated into teaching practices and curriculum across the university. A \$400,000 grant from the National Science Foundation will support integrating the project’s cognitive science-based strategies into second year engineering courses.

The Iowa Health Data Resource

Building the future of health informatics at the University of Iowa
\$2.2M over three years

Examining and Tailoring Academic Policies

Enhancing undergraduate student success and equity
\$114,000 over two years

Closing the Gap

Experiential education for all undergraduates at Iowa
\$540,000 over two years

Seeding Excellence

Strengthening the university as a destination for research and scholarship
\$4M over two years

Equity in Health Science and Practice

Translating research findings into community-based interventions
\$759,000 over three years

Academic Analytics Subscription

Uncovering research trends and identifying new opportunities
\$579,000 over three years

FY23

In FY 2023, the UI distributed \$15 million in P3 funding to eight projects

Excellence in Teaching and Learning (ETL)

Developing a set of effective strategies for course and curriculum innovation
\$477,960 over two years

Pathways to Success

Ensuring high quality career development for every Hawkeye
\$407,040 over three years

External Job Placement Services

Identifying opportunities for partners of recruited faculty and select senior-level staff
\$315,000 over three years

Midwest FLASH Lab

Developing next-generation radiotherapy delivery and expertise at the UI
\$3M over three years

The Midwest FLASH Lab project looks to redefine cancer treatment by exploring ultra-high dose-rate radiation therapy, known as FLASH. This innovative approach, delivering radiation in milliseconds instead of minutes, offers a way to preserve healthy tissue while effectively targeting cancer cells. The project's primary goal is to establish Iowa as a leading institution for FLASH treatment and training in the U.S.

Activities to date:

- Installed and brought the new FLEX-9 FLASH linear accelerator online on May 1, 2025.
- Trained four faculty and staff members on how to operate the system in the Midwest Flash Lab.
- Provided FLEX-9 FLASH services for four research investigators, reaching around 10 hours of use per week. Early research collaborations have produced promising results in the testing of how tumor cells respond to FLASH radiation versus conventional radiation.
- Established the Summer Cancer Undergraduate Research Program (SCURP), with 11 undergraduate students from multiple states attending in 2025.

Next Steps:

The Midwest FLASH Lab team plans to increase usage of the tool to 20 hours per week, add FLASH X-ray capability by June 2026, and submit several research proposals, including three R01 grant applications and a P01 grant application, using preliminary data results from the tool. The team will also submit a multi-college T32 application for graduate and post-doctoral FLASH training to support the goal of becoming a destination university for FLASH science.

High Impact Hiring Initiative (HIHI)

A program to strategically recruit and retain talented faculty
\$7.5M over two years

Higher Education Mental Health

Creating a more positive mental health environment for students, faculty, and staff
\$700,000 over three years

Post-tenure Faculty Support

Providing career development opportunities for tenured mid-career faculty
\$2M over three years

Redox Regulation of Immunological Responses During Cancer Therapy

Using novel redox active molecule approaches that both enhance anti-tumor immune responses and limit normal tissue injury
\$600,000 over two years

FY24

In FY 2024, the UI distributed \$15 million in P3 funding, including \$2.6 million to four projects selected from a campuswide call for proposals

A full function mobile app for the UI

Increasing access to information and supporting interventions
\$1.7M over three years

The Use and Impact of Targeted Need-Based Financial Assistance at the UI

Determining when and for whom financial assistance is most effective
\$130,617 over two years

This project examined the impact of University of Iowa need-based financial assistance programs on students' GPA, credits earned, retention, and graduation rates. Specifically, the researchers looked at the approximately 400 off-cycle need-based grants delivered per semester via the Student Life Emergency Grant, Hawkeye Retention Grant, and Hawkeye Completion Grant.

Project Results:

- Project researchers leveraged substantial institutional data to understand Iowa’s use of targeted need-based financial assistance and examine its impact on student success.
- Researchers determined that nearly \$1 million is awarded annually through the Student Life Emergency Grant, Hawkeye Retention Grant, and Hawkeye Completion Grant.
- Researchers found that recipients of grants (typically \$1,000 or less) achieved higher GPAs, earned more credits, had better retention rates, and graduated at higher rates compared to otherwise similar peers.
- Students in their third-year who received aid experienced:
 - 4.5% increase in GPA
 - 3.2 more credits earned
 - 9.1% higher retention rate
 - 11.8% higher four-year graduation rate

Next Steps:

The project was able to demonstrate the clear return on investment the university could see from expanding these types of financial aid programs. SPARC leaders are now evaluating how the university can make additional investments in emergency grants and proactively work with students in need to ensure they are aware of the resources to support them.

Recognizing, Recruiting, and Retaining Merit Staff

Increasing engagement and reducing turnover
\$520,000 over three years

Writing for the Public Good

Establishing Iowa as the leading institution where faculty communicate research and scholarship with our state, nation, and world
\$270,000 over three years

In addition to the four projects, the P3 Strategic Initiative Fund Board also endorsed \$5 million for enhancing academic infrastructure on campus, including classroom updates and the planning stages of a project to relocate the Department of Dance to a remodeled Performing Arts Annex. The remaining \$7.4 million approved for FY 2024 was used to support funding from the SPARC Strategic Plan Implementation Fund.

FY25

In FY 2025, the UI distributed \$15 million in P3 funding, including \$2.2 million to two projects selected from a campuswide call for proposals

Airborne and Ground-based Earth Science Measurement Capability
Growing Iowa into a leader
\$1.3M over three years

The Iowa Health Data Resource (IHDR)
Extending the impact
\$902,890 for one year

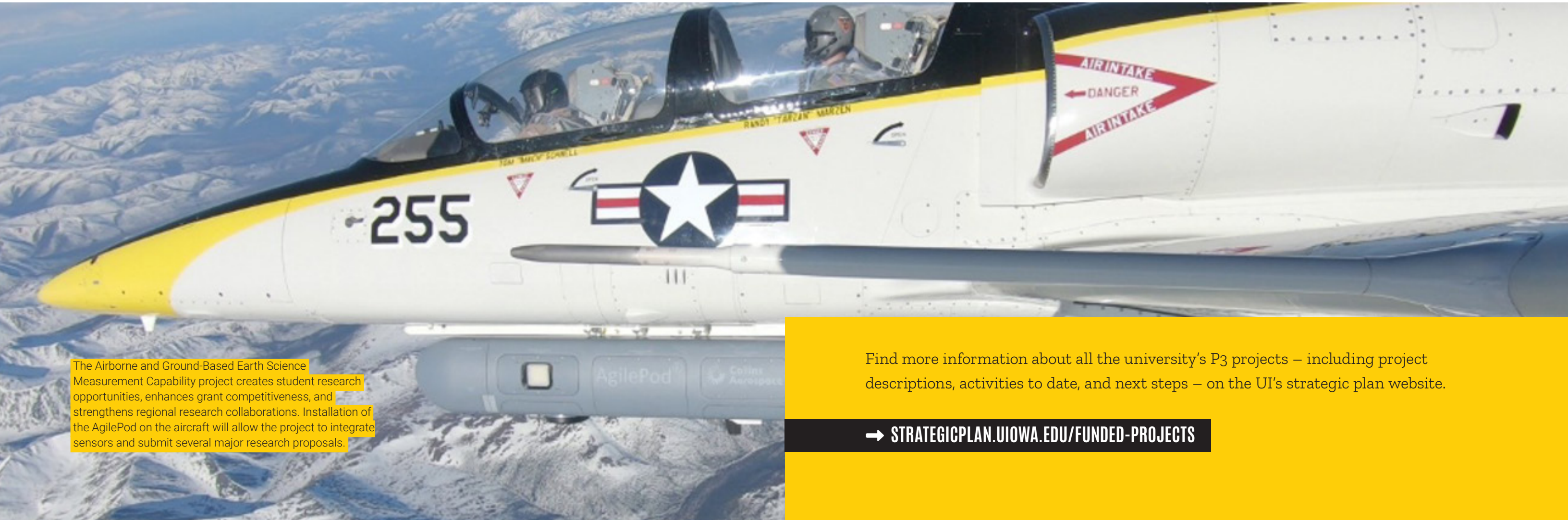
In addition to the two projects, the P3 Strategic Initiative Fund Board also endorsed \$5 million for enhancing academic infrastructure on campus, including additional classroom updates and the continuation of the project to relocate the Department of Dance to a remodeled Performing Arts Annex. The remaining \$7.8 million approved for FY 2025 will be used for the SPARC Strategic Plan Implementation Fund, which provides flexible, timely support for strategic initiatives throughout the year.

FY26

For FY 2026, the UI has allocated \$15 million in P3 funding, including \$642,896 to one project selected from a campuswide call for proposals

Exercise Oncology Clinic
A new clinic for improved patient outcomes, high-impact experiential learning, and innovative research infrastructure
\$642,896 over three years

In addition to the project selected from the campuswide call for proposals, the P3 Strategic Initiative Fund Board also endorsed \$3 million to continue renovations to the Performing Arts Annex (former art museum), which will become the new home of the Department of Dance. The remaining \$11.36 million approved for FY 2026 will be used for the SPARC Strategic Plan Implementation Fund.



The Airborne and Ground-Based Earth Science Measurement Capability project creates student research opportunities, enhances grant competitiveness, and strengthens regional research collaborations. Installation of the AgilePod on the aircraft will allow the project to integrate sensors and submit several major research proposals.

Find more information about all the university's P3 projects – including project descriptions, activities to date, and next steps – on the UI's strategic plan website.

➔ [STRATEGICPLAN.UIOWA.EDU/FUNDED-PROJECTS](https://strategicplan.uiowa.edu/funded-projects)

SPARC Strategic Plan Implementation Fund

These one-time, non-recurring funds support tactics, strategies, or objectives to help reach goals outlined in the strategic plan. Requests for funding are developed by the SPARC work groups responsible for implementing the strategic plan, with a SPARC member serving as the project lead if the request is approved.

Projects funded for FY24

High Impact Hiring Initiative (HIHI)
A program to strategically recruit and retain talented faculty
\$5.5M for one year

Reducing the Impact of Lung Cancer Among Iowans
Promoting prevention and early detection
\$576,000 for one year

Marketing Strategies for Online Graduate and Professional Programs
A pilot to expand online opportunities at Iowa
\$500,000 for one year

Building a Culture of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)
Advancing faculty and student success
\$237,000 over three years

Creating a Helping Professions Framework
Development of a new undergraduate major
\$200,000 over two years

AI for Iowa's Future
Short- and long-term support for AI research at Iowa
\$150,000 for one year

Investing in the Development of Teaching Practices
Promoting student and faculty success through a scholarly teaching program
\$132,000 over two years

Curricular Analytics
Identifying and addressing bottlenecks to improve student retention and timeliness to degree
\$105,000 for one year

Projects funded for FY25

High Impact Hiring Initiative (HIHI)
A program to strategically recruit and retain talented faculty
\$4M for one year

A Proposal for Iowa's AI Journey
First steps in general AI support
\$784,517 over two years

Iowa's AI Journey
First steps in AI support for research scholarly and creative activities
\$615,000 over two years

Key Drivers of Cancer in Iowa
Identifying factors contributing to the state's high cancer incidence rate
\$985,417 over three years

Launching the Next Phase of Iowa Space Missions
Preparing for future major contract proposals
\$653,485 over two years

AI in Undergraduate Education
Adding Artificial Intelligence (AI) learning outcomes for undergraduates
\$195,000 over three years

This project is supporting the development of a new undergraduate Certificate in Artificial Intelligence. A campuswide call for course proposals to support a new undergraduate Certificate in Artificial Intelligence generated more than 30 submissions from faculty across a range of academic disciplines. From those proposals, 10 courses were selected for funding, along with a new core introductory course that will serve as the foundation of the certificate. Faculty whose courses were selected will serve as Provost AI Fellows and meet regularly to share progress, discuss certificate goals, and collaborate on continuous improvement of AI education at Iowa.

Cancer Drug Discovery and Development
Support for a NIH T32 Training Grant application
\$193,950 over two years

Startup Company Patent Support Pilot
Helping UI researchers commercialize their innovations
\$185,000 over two years

Implementation of Academic Advising Recommendations
Supporting continued development and improvement of advising services for students
\$285,000 over three years

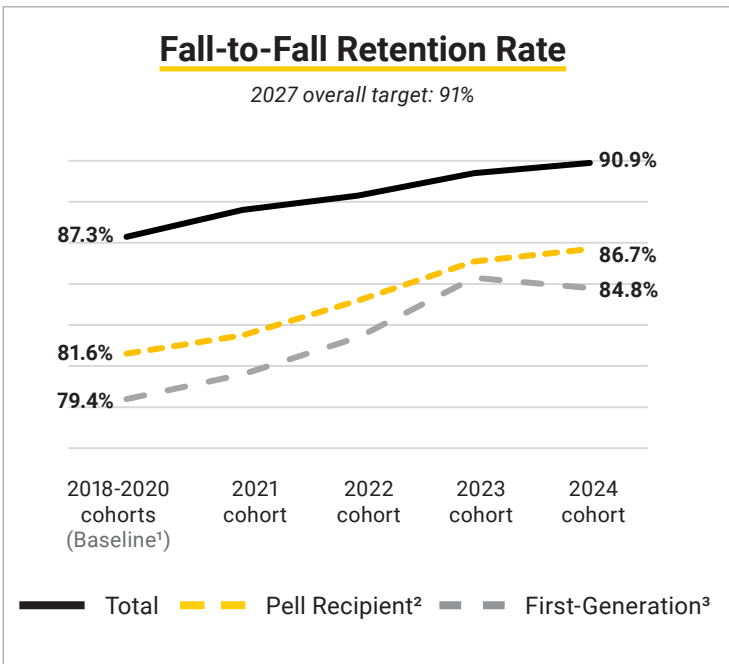
Projects funded for FY26

High Impact Hiring Initiative (HIHI)
A program to strategically retain and recruit talented faculty
\$4M for one year

Metrics and Indicators of Progress

As part of the effort to measure the impact of the strategic plan, the university has set specific five-year targets for several high-level indicators and will report on progress toward meeting these targets annually. A full list of metrics is available on the strategic plan website.

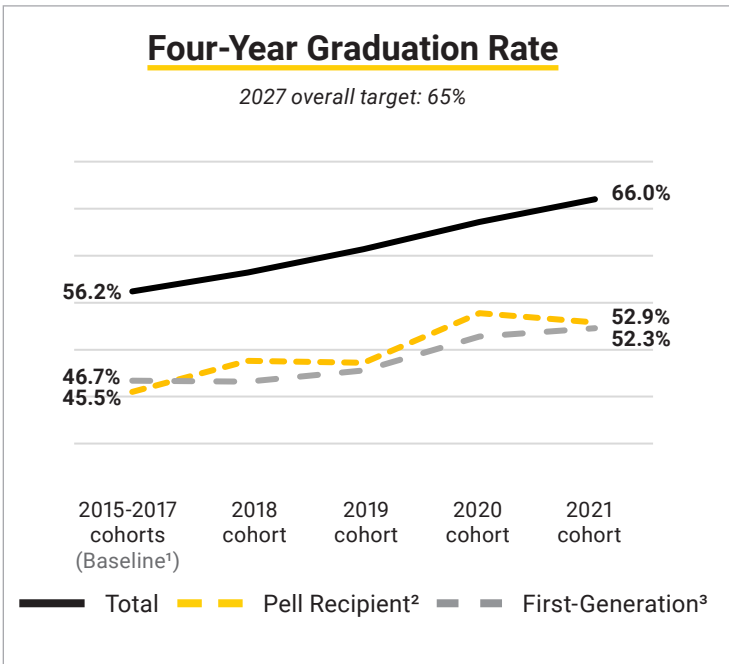
Graduation and Retention



90.9%

FIRST-YEAR RETENTION RATE
for students who entered fall 2024

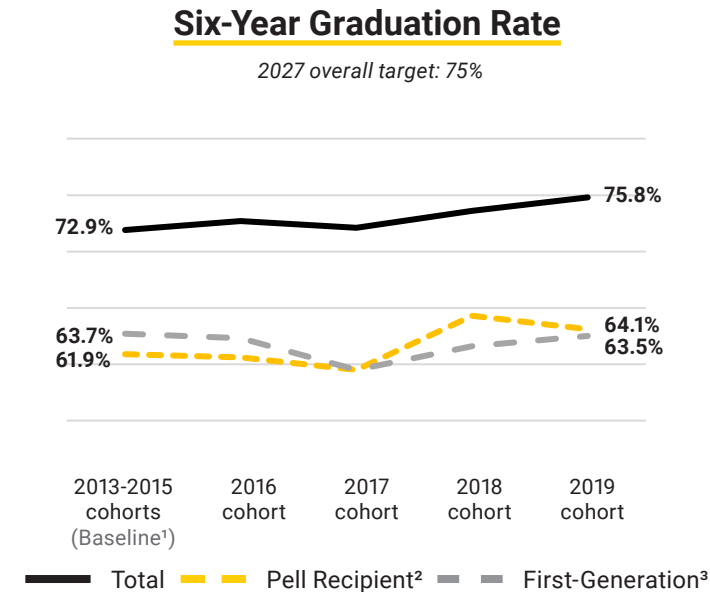
Strategic campuswide efforts to ensure a smooth college transition, innovate curriculum in STEM courses, and promote effective teaching and learning methods have resulted in continued improvement in first-year retention, with new record retention numbers established each year since the start of the strategic plan.



66.0%

FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATE
for students who entered fall 2021

The university’s focus on student success over the past five years is resulting in continued growth in the number of undergraduate students earning their degree in four years or less, with the 2021 cohort achieving another record four-year graduation rate.



75.8%

SIX-YEAR GRADUATION RATE
for students who entered fall 2019

A record number of undergraduate students from the 2019 cohort graduated in six-years or less, a reflection of the positive impact the strategic plan has had on persistence toward degree since its start in 2022.

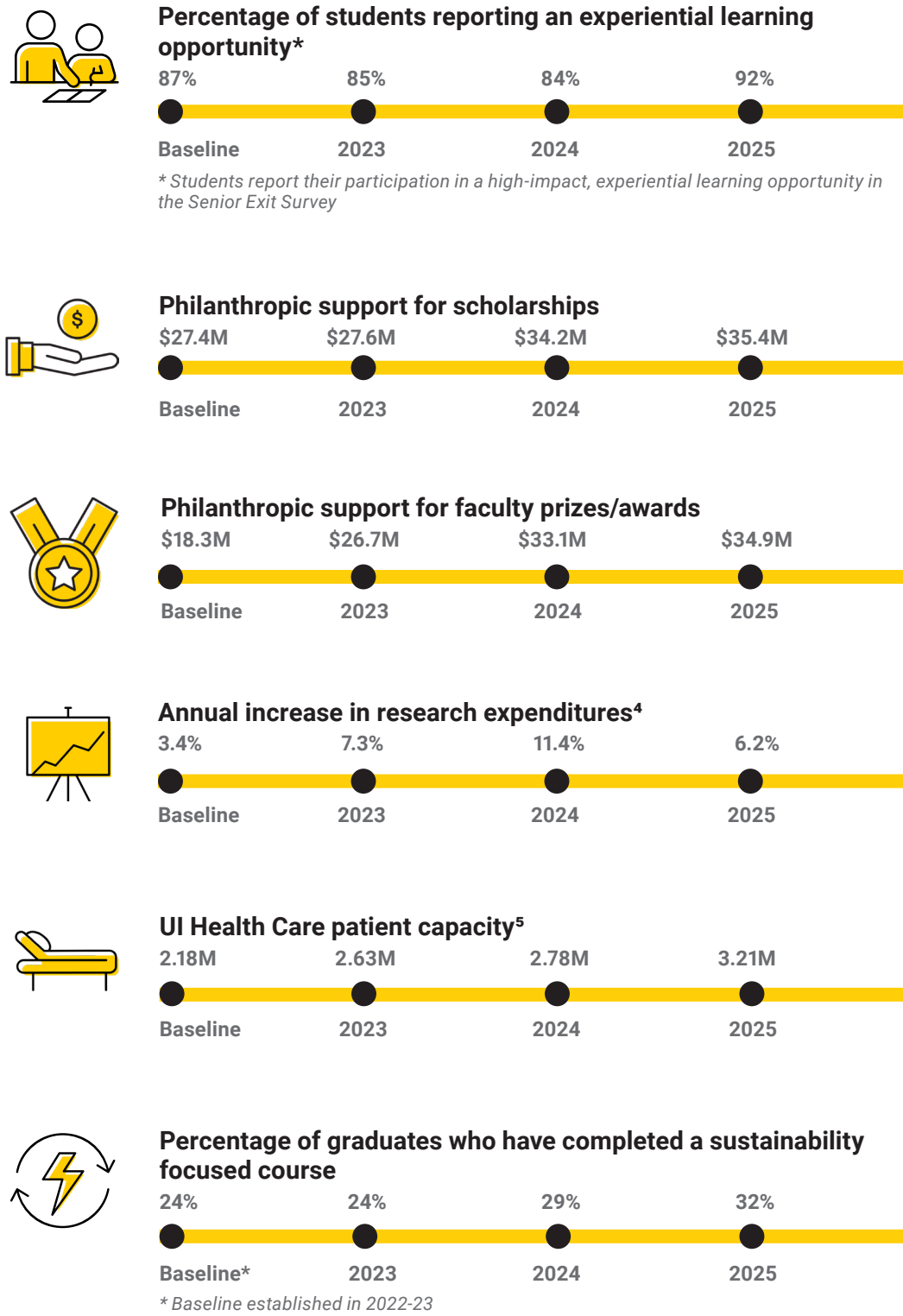
¹ All baseline numbers are three-year averages unless otherwise noted.

² The Pell Grant is the largest federal grant program offered to undergraduate students and is designed to assist students from low-income households.

³ A student is considered to be of first-generation status if neither parent or guardian holds a four-year degree. This is self-reported information collected on the undergraduate admissions application.

Annual Progress Indicators

All baseline numbers are three-year averages unless otherwise noted.



2027 GOAL

90%

\$32.4M

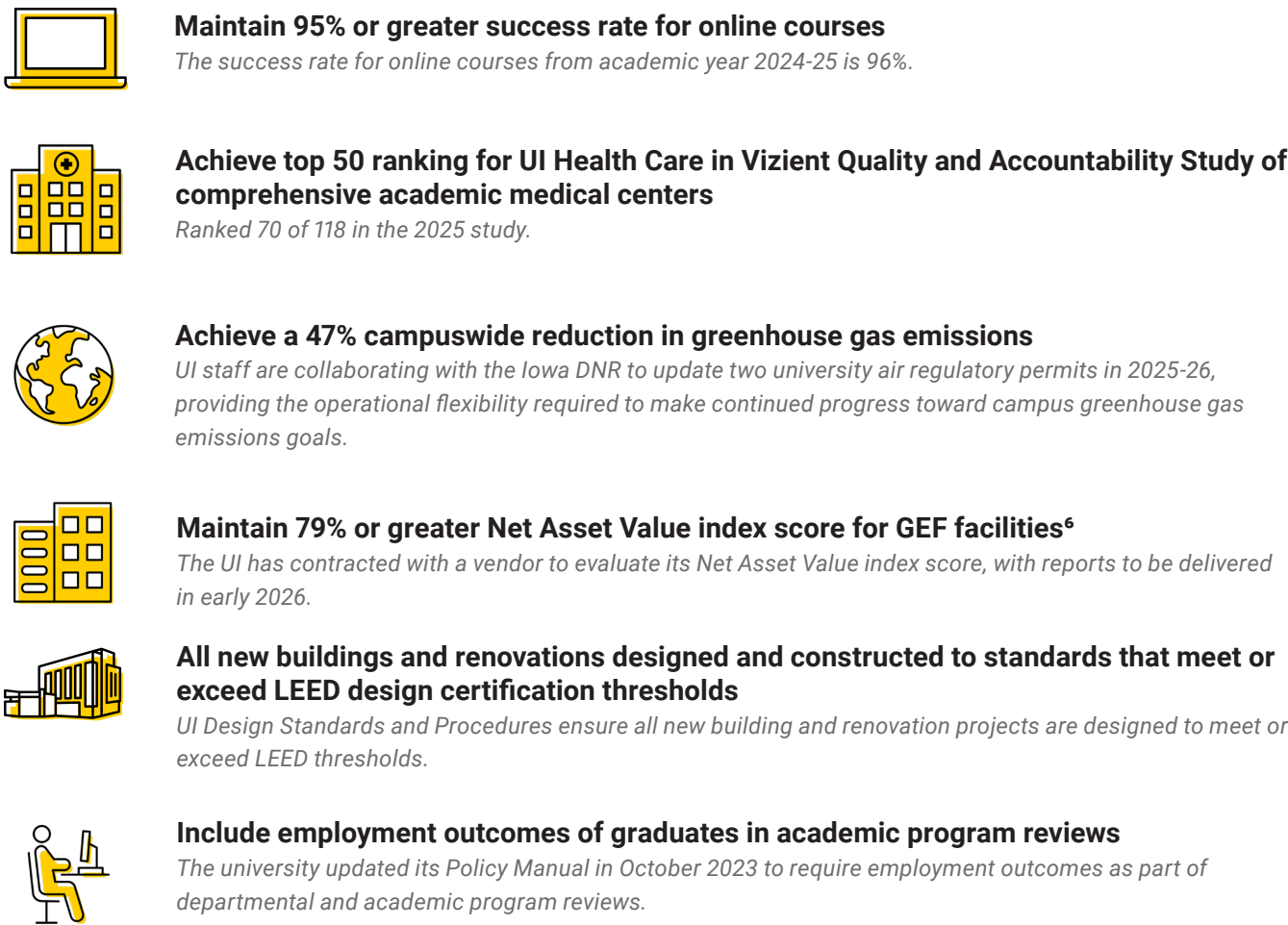
\$21.6M

5.0%

2.83M
(30% increase)

75%

Targets for 2027



We continue to make progress in several key areas outlined in the university strategic plan, such as reducing student loan debt and recruiting and retaining talented faculty.

⁴ As reported to the National Science Foundation Higher Education Research and Development (HERD) survey.

⁵ Excludes COVID-19 clinic and telehealth activity during the pandemic.

⁶ Measure of building stewardship and condition, calculated using a dollar value of facility needs and replacement value.

Introducing reSPARC

Securing Our Financial Future

The University of Iowa launched the Revenue and Efficiencies Strategic Plan Action and Resource Committee (reSPARC) in early August, with the goal of helping the university build upon its strong financial trajectory to achieve future goals.

reSPARC is a proactive, campus-wide initiative to explore long-term strategies for increasing revenue and improving operational efficiency. Using the strategic plan implementation as a model, reSPARC will help sustain the current plan's momentum and establish a blueprint for how Iowa can continue to invest in its core missions for years to come.

More than 100 faculty, staff, and administrators from across campus are members of reSPARC, which is divided into collaborative teams focused on developing innovative proposals that can help generate new revenue or allow the university to manage its resources wisely.

“reSPARC is our commitment to the future. By thinking strategically about our resources today, we are ensuring that the University of Iowa will have the strength and agility to seize the opportunities of tomorrow.”

— Barbara J. Wilson, president, University of Iowa

A Guide to reSPARC

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the university launching reSPARC?

The University of Iowa is in a strong financial position today, thanks to disciplined choices and strategic investments. However, the higher education landscape is shifting rapidly due to challenges such as financial constraints, rising costs, and an anticipated “demographic enrollment cliff.” reSPARC allows Iowa to proactively plan for the future—rather than respond to crisis—by identifying ways to enhance revenue and manage resources wisely.

What does the term “operational efficiency” mean?

The goal of exploring “operational efficiency” is to find ways to work smarter, improve processes, reduce administrative burdens, and better leverage our collective resources and technology. The focus is on making the university stronger and more sustainable for the long term, which in turn supports our employees and our academic mission.

How does reSPARC relate to the strategic plan?

reSPARC is an extension of the Strategic Plan Action and Resource Committee (SPARC) and aligns directly with the goals of the 2022–2027 Strategic Plan. reSPARC is a specific, action-oriented initiative designed to help achieve goals related to the university's long-term financial outlook. It builds on the collaborative framework already established by the SPARC and puts that framework into action on the key topics of revenue and efficiency.

Who is involved in reSPARC?

More than 100 individuals, including faculty, staff, and campus leaders, from 35 different units are part of the reSPARC initiative. This broad representation ensures that a wide range of perspectives and expertise from across the university is included in the process.

What happens to the ideas the reSPARC teams generate?

The teams are tasked with developing proposals based on their research and discussions. These proposals will be shared with reSPARC's leadership for review to ensure they align with the university's strategic goals. From there, proposals will be advanced to the president and provost for a final evaluation and a decision on potential implementation.

How can I stay informed about reSPARC's progress?

The strategic plan website will serve as the central source of information for the reSPARC initiative. As teams make progress and key milestones are reached, updates will be on the website and through quarterly updates in the Iowa Now newsletter.

Sustaining Our Momentum

How the strategic plan will endure beyond 2027

As we enter the final two years of our current strategic plan, our work is not winding down—it is accelerating. The progress detailed in this report has built tremendous momentum that will carry us forward into our next plan. While our SPARC work groups continue to drive results, we have already begun the process of planning for the next chapter.

Our goal is a seamless transition, building directly upon our current successes to establish the next set of priorities that will fuel our university's continued progress.

A Collaborative Vision for the Future

The next strategic plan will be built the same way as the current one: through collaboration, engagement, and a shared commitment to excellence. Over the next two years, the planning team will:



Meet with Campus Partners

To develop the next plan, we will engage with faculty, staff, students, and leaders across the university.



Gather Feedback

We will host focus groups and listening sessions with members of the campus community to understand the strengths, challenges, and opportunities to focus on in the next plan.



Build the Framework

Using the feedback from campus, we will begin to collaboratively construct the goals, objectives, and strategies that will help us sustain our momentum from the current plan.

The University of Iowa is in a position of remarkable strength. Our success is a testament to the talent, dedication, and innovative spirit of our entire community. Thank you for your role in bringing our strategic plan to life.



SPARC work groups have completed 44 tactics over the first three years implementing the strategic plan. An additional 112 tactics are still in planning or already in progress.



IOWA

2022-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN

FY2025 Report

November 2025

→ [STRATEGICPLAN.UIOWA.EDU](https://strategicplan.uiowa.edu)