



University of New York – Tirana

STRATEGIC PLAN
(2018-2022)

MISSION, OBJECTIVES, AND VALUES

Mission Statement

The mission of the University of New York - Tirana (UNYT) is to educate tomorrow's leaders. UNYT offers its students the opportunity to obtain a university degree at the Bachelor, Master and PhD level in a variety of academic disciplines and professional specializations, which will provide them the knowledge, skills and confidence necessary to succeed in a diverse and international work environment, and prepare them for life as contributing citizens of the global community. UNYT blends creatively liberal arts and applied, market-oriented education with an emphasis on continuous development as a research institution.

UNYT is committed to the intellectual, creative and personal development of its students. The university believes that the outcomes of student learning should include:

- Excellent command of effective oral and written communication skills in English;
- Development of analytical, synthetic and critical thinking skills;
- Understanding of basic research methods, including the ability to locate, evaluate and integrate information and data;
- Solid knowledge of Western and non-Western cultures and societies;
- Sensitivity to social issues and cultural and ethnic diversity;
- Understanding of international issues and a global perspective of important issues and events;
- Development of healthy interpersonal and social relationships;
- Understanding of the uses and limitations of modern technology;
- Awareness of professional opportunities and understanding of professional ethics and responsibility;
- Strengthening of the values of integrity, objectivity, and human understanding;
- Appreciation of Albanian heritage and culture through the use of Albanian case-studies, data and comparisons.
- Production of evidence-based research for policy making consideration.

Objectives

A. Offer a comprehensive cycle of General Education courses

The General Education program aims to encourage students to develop their academic skills, appreciate learning for its own sake, encourage a mature and broad understanding of our world today and to prepare them to be useful academic citizens of the Albanian and global society. General education is a key requirement of an American university Bachelor's degree. Global socio-political, economic and cultural developments form many of the issues that higher education addresses. In today's world, business, communication, economic and social change as well as individual and societal problems have acquired a global character. Global challenges cut across academic disciplines and require perspectives beyond the training and experience of a highly cross-disciplinary faculty team.

In line with the beliefs of the Association of American Colleges and Universities that

“liberal education has the strongest impact when students look beyond the classroom to the world’s major questions, asking students to apply the developing analytical skills and ethical judgments to significant problems in the world around them”, UNYT values global awareness as an overarching goal of its curriculum and particularly engages its students in a two-part General Education program consisting of *core* and *distribution* requirements.

Core requirements help students develop advanced communication, critical thinking, analytical, and synthetic skills: (English Composition, Mathematics, Analytical and Synthetic Skills).

Distribution requirements introduce students to the breadth of human inquiry in the liberal arts and sciences. Students are required to take one course from the following disciplines: Culture and Civilizations, American Experience, Cultural Diversity, Social Sciences and Modern Society, Physical and Biological Sciences, Humanities, Foreign Languages, Aesthetic Appreciation and Expression.

UNYT is dedicated to the spirit of learning, personal growth and the development of a community in which active participation and freedom of expression are encouraged and supported.

B. Employ a variety of innovative methods in teaching, learning, and research.

UNYT strives to promote innovative methods of student-centered teaching and learning. Along with the traditional lecture, various interactive methods enhance student understanding of the materials at hand. Instructors are encouraged to supplement lectures with debates, in-class discussion, group and individual work and off-campus activities. For students with special needs individualized teaching methods are implemented. The university commits itself to high standards of theoretical, empirical and hands-on teaching. Instructors apply different methods for checking the degree to which students assimilate course materials. Teaching standards are carefully monitored each semester. Students are given course evaluation questionnaires conducted with complete confidentiality and once a year all instructors are peer-evaluated by their department heads.

Research should be a critical component of the innovative methods adopted and applied by the University, as well as supported financially and with reduction of administrative and teaching load. Students shall also be engaged in institutional and individual research projects by Faculty.

C. Address to the individual needs of students as active and creative learners

UNYT deliberately keeps class sizes small to encourage as much individual time for each student in dealing with a faculty member as possible. Additionally, a system of tutorials enhances students’ potential by allocating individual time for one-to-one instruction with UNYT faculty. Each student is allocated a faculty advisor who is in charge of monitoring and facilitating smooth progression of a student towards graduation.

D. Closely observe developments in the European Higher Education Area

Since UNYT follows the American style of curriculum and teaching philosophy and therefore it has chosen not to adhere formally to the resolutions of the Bologna Magna Carta Universitatum of 1988 and those of the Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education (19.06.1999), this university however has considerable similarities with the desiderata of the Bologna Reform and, therefore, addresses all of its objectives: 1) The adoption of a system of readable and comparable degrees; 2) the establishment of a system of credits; 3) the promotion of mobility; 4) the promotion of European co-operation in the field of quality assurance; 5) the promotion of a European perspective in higher education; and 6) the adoption of a system essentially based on three main cycles, undergraduate, graduate and

post-graduate.

Values

UNYT's commitment to excellence is rooted in a number of values which are at the heart of this institution's operation. Such values include:

- *Supporting academic freedom* to conduct research, teach, publish, and speak according to the standards of scholarly activity without interference or penalty;
- *Adhering to the highest standards of quality* in learning, teaching, and research;
- *Promoting equality of opportunity and diversity for all*;
- *Nurturing innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship by rewarding talent*;
- *Providing educational services with a high impact on society and economy*.

STRATEGIC GOAL # 1

Expand and Support UNYT's Research Agenda and Output

OBJECTIVES

1. The bulk of all research activity should be focussed on several comprehensible research pillars tailored-cut for each of the three faculties.
2. All faculty members should be encouraged to publish their research in book form and in academic journals nationally and internationally recognized;
3. UNYT must continue organizing international conferences;
4. UNYT must further strengthen Research Centers as UNYT core research units and build capacities to participate in EU funded projects.
5. Participation of all faculty in international academic and professional conferences must be further encouraged and supported, by using the conference and small research fund in order to provide support for attending such activities or collecting primary data which require small financial expenditures.
6. Establishing a small projects office. This office should be staffed with a project coordinator and a research assistant. The office would then support the academic staff in project writing as well as coordinating project activities.
7. UNYT's journal <i>Global Outlook: A Journal of Global Affairs and Comparative International Development</i> must continue its publication on a regular bases increase its visibility nationally and internationally

ACTIONS FOR ACHIEVENING THIS GOAL

(1) The Research work will focus primarily on the following research pillars:

For the Faculty of Law and Social Science:

- *Democracy and Social and Cultural Change*
- *European Integration*
- *Globalization and Global Geopolitics*.

For the Faculty of Economics and Business:

- *Project Management and Leadership Styles*
- *Economic and Financial Development*
- *International Business, Tourism, and Knowledge Economy.*

For the Faculty of Informatics:

- *Science, Technology, and Society*
- *Software Engineering and Information Systems*
- *Theory of Computations*

(2) The implementation of UNYT's Academic Promotion Policy and its System of Measurement of the Quality/Quantity of Research Output (approved by the Senate on March 30, 2018) to further encourage publications by all faculty in book form or in major academic journals

(3) All three faculties of UNYT, jointly, separately or in collaboration with other institutions of higher education will be requested to organize one conference each of the next five years. In this process all three research centers must play an active role. The proceedings of all conferences will be published in separate volumes.

(4) UNYT must increase its financial support to an increased number of faculty members who are willing or requested to participate in international academic conferences.

(5) A Projects office should be staffed with a project coordinator and a research assistant. The office would then support the academic staff in project writing as well as coordinating project activities.

(6) The Publication of the journal *Global Outlook* must be assured.

(7) The foundation of a UNYT Press should not be further delayed.

STRATEGIC GOAL # 2

Continuous Infrastructure Development

OBJECTIVES

1. Acquiring a fit-for-purpose UNYT-owned campus
2. Upgrading IT facilities to represent the latest offerings in educational technology.
3. Enriching library resources to serve the academic needs of students and faculty.
4. Strengthening the services of Student's Career Office
5. Enhancing Alumni network and its active involvement in our UNYT's future development

ACTIONS FOR ACHIEVENING THIS GOAL

(1) UNYT Board of Administration should make all necessary budgetary planning for the

construction of its own university campus.

(2) Additional budget should be allocated to upgrade and improve UNYT's IT facilities so that its students and faculty are provided with the latest offerings in educational technology.

In order to achieve the following steps need to be taken:

- (a) Develop a technology plan (purchase, amortization and replacement plan).
- (b) Increase availability and use of technology for students.
- (c) Continue to transform classrooms into "smart classrooms" with mounted LCD projector and projection screens, laptop connectivity and sound system.
- (d) Improve the availability and use of wireless technology in all premises.
- (e) Improve and expand the operation and maintenance of appropriate telecommunications equipment and network, such as videoconference facilities in order to connect students and faculty with partner universities.

(3) In order to enrich the library resources to better serve the academic needs of all students and faculty, UNYT must:

- (a) Increase spending on library resources each year.
- (b) Increase access to electronic libraries, either by purchasing databases and/or by securing such access through collaborative agreements with other universities in our outside Albania;
- (c) Invite all faculty members to suggest updated bibliographical titles, which library must purchase.
- (d) Conduct library orientation sessions throughout the year, so that students become familiar with library resources, bibliography research activities and proper referencing.

STRATEGIC GOAL # 3

Recruit, retain and graduate a diverse student body who will make an impact on Albanian economy and society

OBJECTIVES

1. To improve PR strategies and techniques to assure increased student enrolment in all three cycles of study each academic year
2. To increase student retention rate.
3. To increase number of students who reach graduation each academic year
4. To develop the nation's talent

STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVENING THIS GOAL

(1) To improve PR strategies and techniques to assure increased student enrolment in all three cycles of study each academic year the following steps must be taken:

- (a) Improving the current policy and efforts of outreach to high school students in Tirana and throughout the country, through personal visits by all UNYT faculty and staff, both senior and new ones, as well as organized visits by high school students to UNYT premises and their participate in open lectures.
- (b) Implementing UNYT's Market Research Strategy approved by the Senate on

(c) Developing a competitive pricing policy in response to the regional economic environments and in alignment with the requested positioning of the organization.

(d) Continuing and improving promotion and sales strategy in order to maintain growth through the introduction of new programs as well as through enhancing UNYT's academic and public image and reputation for the benefit of its students and graduates.

(e) Encouraging life-long learning by improving the scheduling of classes to accommodate the needs of working students.

(f) Increasing sophisticated efforts to eventually attract and enrol a greater number of international students.

(g) Establish mutual agreements with business units or institutions for developing internships with our students.

(2) In order to increase student retention rate, all principle and basic units of the university must improve their efforts to:

(a) Collect and analyse retention rates, especially for at-risk students (Fall-to-Fall persistence);

(b) Develop and expand an advising report system, whereby results can be assessed on a regular bases;

(c) Introduce career advice workshops as early as the first days of first year students' arrival on campus;

(d) Increase students' and faculty's involvement in campus life through participation in sport, cultural and social activities, entertainment, departmental clubs and students' societies.

(e) Increase support to international students.

(3) To increase number of students who reach graduation each academic year the following measures should be taken:

(a) Developing a robust financial aid program, with the institution of scholarships for deserving students.

(b) Assigning faculty members with the responsibility of detecting and assessing students having personal problems and referring them to the Counseling Center to receive the help needed;

(c) Developing a program of tutorial assistance beyond the classroom relationship for students who encounter academic difficulties in the areas of math, language, research, writing and presentation skills, as well as creating an Academic Support Center.

(d) Considering viable options for providing e-learning to accommodate the needs of working students.

(4) Develop the nation's talent through:

(a) Programs aiming to train young professionals for making a contribution to their organization;

(b) "Internship" programs for students and graduates in order to gain self-assurance and a network of connections;

(c) Supporting the recruitment and retention of academically talented students and providing them with an intellectually demanding education which will prepare them for making a contribution to society at large;

(d) Providing opportunities for affordable—but meaningful—lifelong learning for the local and regional community.

(e) Supporting the nation's talented early career researchers with programs of financial assistance.

STRATEGIC GOAL # 4

Foster an international culture by recruiting international students and staff as well as through the expansion of the network of collaboration strategic alliances with other universities and research institutions around the world

OBJECTIVES

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| 1. To recruit and retain international students. Opportunities for current and future UNYT students and staff for international exchanges must be fully explored and taken advantage of. |
| 2. To recruit highly qualified faculty members from abroad. |
| 3. To build and continuously expand the network of collaboration with universities and research institutions throughout the world and develop student and staff exchange programs with partner universities |

STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVENING THIS GOAL

- (1) To recruit and retain international students UNYT should develop and implement a working strategy consisting of:
- (a) Constantly improving its official website to realistically presents this university's international character and its best features and achievements;
 - (b) Participating in regional and international Educational Fairs;
 - (c) Developing a network of trustworthy international recruiters;
 - (d) Providing UNYT's international students with specialized support services;
 - (e) Creating the UNYT International Alumni Association with the aim of motivating and encouraging students from other countries to consider this institution for their studies.
- (2) To recruit Albania's best qualified scholars and well-versed faculty from abroad through:
- (a) Placing public announcements in relevant media seeking applications from prospective members of the faculty in a variety of disciplines, especially among Albanians who have received their PhD degrees from U.S. UK or other European universities as well as foreign instructors;
 - (b) Boosting UNYT's faculty team by inviting visiting professors from the affiliated institutions abroad;
 - (c) Enhancing the work of the hiring committees in all three faculties in evaluating candidates beyond their curriculum vitae, with interviews and a demonstration of their teaching skills by offering a one-hour lecture in their field of expertise before employment agreements are signed;
 - (d) Employing Albanian faculty and staff with international qualifications, as well as on the basis of their expertise in foreign educational systems.
- (3) To build and continuously expand the network of collaboration with universities and research institutions throughout the world and develop student and staff exchange programs with partner universities. To achieve this, UNYT should:
- (a) Connect and collaborate with universities and research institutions in Europe and in other parts of the world one the bases of mutual academic interest expressed in documents
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signed bilaterally;

(b) Develop staff and student exchange programs using external fund to the greatest possible extent;

(c) Develop Summer Session programs for students of the affiliated foreign institutions;

(d) Encourage faculty and staff exchange between UNYT and its affiliated institutions in Athens, Thessaloniki, and Prague.

STRATEGIC GOAL # 5

Strive for academic excellence in teaching, scholarship and service.

OBJECTIVES

1. Assisting faculty members acquire a research culture that will be integrated in their teaching performance

2. Continuously developing of UNYT's academic curricula

3. Extension and further improvement of student support services with emphasis on their employability.
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STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVENING THIS GOAL

(1) Assisting faculty members acquire a research culture that will be integrated in their teaching performance through:

(a) Properly staffing and empowering all three research centers at the university;

(b) Better integration of research findings in teaching-related activities

(c) Enhancing the results already achieved by further exploring possibilities for EU-funded programs and projects available to academic institutions such as UNYT;

(d) Providing incentives (including financial rewards) to participating faculty members in EU-funded projects.

(2) Continuously developing of UNYT's academic curricula through:

(a) Constantly evaluating student and instructor feedback on course offerings;

(b) Proposing and designing new courses and programs based on students and faculty to feedback;

(c) Implementing necessary changes to already existing programs and courses.

(d) Training and assisting the faculty in designing course websites, updating course curricula with the latest scientific and pedagogical tools, and applying new methodologies in teaching and research.

(3) Extension and further improvement of student support services with emphasis on their employability through:

(a) Monitoring graduates with respect to their career destination;

(b) Formalizing and empowering the UNYT Alumni Association so that students and graduates develop networking opportunities and this university's reputation is further enhanced;

(c) Increasing contacts and collaboration with the corporate world, whereby potential employers may identify prospective employees from among UNYT graduates;

(d) Measuring employers' satisfaction of our graduates' performance with the development of qualitative and quantitative measurement systems (questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups).

(e) Assisting students in drafting appropriate job application documents, including CV-s and cover letter, to maximize their chances in applying and obtaining desirable positions in prestigious companies and organizations.

STRATEGIC GOAL # 6

Maintain and Enhance a Network of Partnerships and Relationships

OBJECTIVES

1. Maintaining long- and good-standing and mutually beneficial relationships with our sister institutions and current partners.
2. Developing new agreements on the basis of market demands and mutual interest
3. Developing professional training programs for business and industry

STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVENING THIS GOAL

(1) Maintaining long- and good-standing and mutually beneficial relationships with our sister institutions and current partners through:

- (a) Further expanding and strengthening collaboration with all partner institutions, especially with SUNY/ESC, UNYP, and NYC in Athens and Thessaloniki;
- (b) Increasing the number of faculty and student exchanges;
- (c) Peer reviewing of various practices, policies and procedures;
- (d) Collaborating in research activities and participation in international forums and organizations.

(2) Developing new collaboration agreements with various institutions on the basis of market demands and mutual interest

- (a) Fully employing UNYT's Office for International Relations established in 2017 to identify institutions and programs on the bases of which UNYT can further expand its collaboration with other partner institutions, including students and staff exchanges, joint programs and degrees when possible or desirable as well as research collaboration;
- (b) Remaining abreast of developments in the local and regional market environment so that any changes in social, economic and government activities can be anticipated and properly responded to.

(3) Developing professional training programs for business and industry via:

- (a) Providing tailor-made professional training programs to satisfy the specific needs of the employees of private sector key enterprises.
- (b) Inviting corporate executives and government officials to deliver lectures to UNYT undergraduate and graduate students so that they can be exposed to our academic community, and also have our students become visible to the job market.
- (c) Arranging agreements with private-sector companies whereby they will eventually assume the tuition cost of a number of their employees to study at UNYT graduate programs;

STRATEGIC GOAL #7

Maintain Financial Health for Institutional Sustainability

OBJECTIVES

1. The grow and diversification of UNYT's revenue
2. Efficient operation of the organization
3. Monitoring the external environment and assessing its impact on UNYT
4. Enhancing risk management

STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVENING THIS GOAL

- (1)** The grow and diversification of UNYT's revenue through:
- (a) Achieving annual enrolment targets for local and international students.
 - (b) Grow of training options that will generate income while contributing to the development of graduate talent;
 - (c) Successful application for EU-funded programs and other research activities that will enhance the reputation of the university and increase income.
- (2)** Efficient operation of the organization through:
- (a) Affective distribution of responsibilities and accountability based on the Law on Higher Education and UNYT's Statute
 - (b) Minimizing the cost of delivery by improving key processes.
 - (c) Introducing "smart" solutions for minimizing operational costs.
- (3)** Monitoring the external environment and assessing its impact on UNYT
- (a) To ensure continued sustainability through monitoring the local, regional and international external environment affecting Higher Education;
 - (b) To regularly assess social, technological, environmental, economic and political factors that could possibly present potential opportunities and risks to UNYT's operations.
- (4)** Enhancing risk management through:
- (a) Setting an Annual Risk Management Process for the University to
 - (b) Assessing levels of risk associated with any of the University's investments through rigorous risk analyses;
 - (c) Providing guidance for risk owners and other interested staff with regard to preparation for risk evaluation. Guidance must be updated on annual bases by an Office for Strategic Planning and Governance.
 - (d) Carefully monitoring the overall risk to UNYT of all growth and development activities.
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