



Truett McConnell
UNIVERSITY.

Truett McConnell University **Strategic Plan**

2024-2029

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Letter from the President

Dr. Emir Caner



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In a world that is rapidly changing around us, it is the responsibility of a Christian university to stand firm on the faith “once and for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). While many are confused and uncertain about the future and moral values are dramatically shifting, leaving us without the moorings of Christian faith that once steadied and guided previous generations, Truett McConnell remains steadfast, holding to the inerrant and sufficient Word of God (2 Timothy 3:15-17).

Like never before, our world needs institutions of higher learning that hold to the Truth and boldly declare the Truth (John 17:17). Truett McConnell University is that institution. We believe that Truth Matters to a Greater Degree. For us, this is not just a slogan, but a driving passion. We exist for that purpose. Our mission statement declares it: “The mission of TMU is to equip students with the Truth, through a Biblically-centered education, to fulfill the Great Commission.”

To accomplish that mission, we have established a five-year strategic plan to guide the University. You will see in the following information an action plan that will lead us to equip 3,000 students with the Truth each year. We believe this is what the Lord is calling us to accomplish. We believe growing our institution and equipping our students with the Truth will lead to a world finding hope in Jesus Christ (John 3:16). Therefore, our goal for the next generation is an eternal one, whether in the classroom, in our athletic competitions, or in our student life experience. We will prepare the students of Truett McConnell University to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) through the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-40).

As you review this plan, we hope that it will inspire you to partner in our work.

**Truth is Immortal,
Dr. Emir Caner**

University Leadership

Officers



Dr. Emir Caner
President



Dr. Maël Disseau
VP for Academic Services



Dr. Jason Graffagnino
VP for Finance and Operations, CFO



Mrs. Jenni Shepard
VP for Student Services & Athletics



Dr. Stacy Hall
VP for Advancement

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History of the University

Since the school's founding in 1946, Truett McConnell University has been an institution rich in a history of God's provision and dedication to provide students with a Biblically-centered education.

In 1887, Fernando McConnell and his cousin George W. Truett established a private Christian academy in Hiawassee, Georgia to educate "mountain preachers." Changing economic conditions forced the closing of the school. However, McConnell and Truett each went on to make major contributions in Southern Baptist life and in the world for the cause of Christ. When the Georgia Baptist Convention saw the need for a Baptist College in North Georgia, they chose Cleveland. Today, TMU stands on more than 200 acres in the beautiful foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Northeast Georgia.

Because of the school's distance from Southern Baptist seminaries, Truett McConnell's original intent included training for pastoral ministry. Although the same focus is true, the liberal arts university now offers 42 undergraduate programs of study, thus equipping graduates for religious and marketplace career paths that include: Christian Studies, Music, Nursing, Music Education, Exercise Science, Business Administration, Criminal Justice, History, Humanities, Psychology, Biology, Education, English, Global Studies and more. In 2014, we were granted accreditation to begin our first graduate degree program, and now, TMU has 12 graduate degree programs to choose from in the areas of: Christian Studies, Education, Business Administration, Global Studies, Divinity, and Counseling.

Initially accredited in 1966 to confer two-year degrees, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges approved the college to offer four year degrees in 2002. In December 2013, SACSCOC approved Truett McConnell to offer its first master's program with the Master of Arts in Theology degree.

The university's enrollment history reveals growth spurts and declines. However, in 2008, trustees named Dr. Emir Caner as president. Since his arrival, the enrollment of about 450 has rocketed consistently upward in double-digit percentage growth. Truett McConnell continues to expand to meet the needs of a growing student body and to equip each generation to meet the challenges of presuming their calling in the real world.



Core Values



Biblical Sufficiency

TMU values Scripture as its centerpiece (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Article 1 of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000). TMU emphasizes a Biblically-centered education because of its affirmation of Biblical Sufficiency, the belief that the Bible is the only inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word of God necessary to know God and understand His plan for mankind (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Personal Transformation

TMU values discovering and fulfilling God's call in one's life (Eph. 4:1; Articles 3 and 4 of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000). TMU believes that God has a unique and specific call for each person (Eph. 4:1). Being made alive because of His great love for us (Eph. 2:4), believers are subsequently commanded to live for Christ and to serve others through talents and gifts God bestows upon us.

TMU values equipping believers to fulfill the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Articles 4, 5, 6 and 11 of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000). TMU acknowledges that salvation is found only in the person and work of Jesus Christ (John 14:6). Knowing that God loves the world (John 3:16) and desires all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4), TMU strives to equip students to fulfill the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20).

Authentic Relationships

TMU values a Biblical model of family (Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5:21-6:4; and Article 18 of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000). Family is the foundational institution of society. Ordained by God, family is composed of persons related through marriage, blood, and adoption. Marriage is a covenant relationship between one man and one woman in a lifetime commitment (Gen. 2:24). TMU will maintain a family friendly environment by creating an atmosphere where families are welcome and where biblical families are modeled (Eph. 5:21-6:4). TMU views all staff and students, united through Christ, as family (Eph. 2:19).

TMU values relationships based on Christ's unconditional love (Eph. 4:2; Articles 3 and 14 of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000). TMU recognizes that authentic relationships will flow from living out a Christian worldview (Phil. 2:5). A true Christian worldview will exemplify Paul's admonition to walk "with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love" (Eph. 4:2).



Mission Statement

The mission of TMU is to equip students with the Truth, through a Biblically-centered education, to fulfill the Great Commission.

Five Year Vision Statement

Annually equipping 3,000 students to share the Truth of the Gospel through their calling.

Strategic Actions

The strategic plan for Truett McConnell University is organized around five strategic actions:



1. Improve Our Product

We will emphasize continuous improvement in every offering and activity in our institution, including academics, athletics, facilities, and student life.

2. Serve Our Customers

We will believe our students, alumni, and donors are the foundation of our institution and we will serve them generously and faithfully.



3. Enhance Our Image

We will build the brand and value proposition of education at TMU by executing our work with excellence and telling the stories of our success.

4. Build Our Culture

We will cultivate a Great Commandment and Great Commission environment among our employees and students.

5. Steward Our Resources

We will believe every dollar and every person is entrusted to us by God, we will be good stewards of our resources.

Departmental Strategic Goals

Academic Services

Develop Engineering Pathway with Partner Institution (Improve Our Product, Enhance Our Image, Steward Our Resources)

Create Cybersecurity Program (Improve Our Product, Enhance Our Image)

Construct Dedicated Student Success Center and Peer Tutoring (Improve Our Product, Serve Our Customers, Enhance Our Image)

Improve Online Experience (Improve Our Product, Serve Our Customers)

Implement Double Bear (4+1) Program (Improve Our Product, Serve Our Customers)

Pursue Doctoral Degree Programs (Improve Our Product, Enhance Our Image)

Launch Formalized Certificate/Endorsement Offerings (Improve Our Product, Steward Our Resources)

Expand Internship Opportunities (Serve Our Customers, Enhance Our Image)

Faculty Recruitment, Retention, Training (Improve Our Product, Enhance Our Image, Build Our Culture)

Increase Net Revenue through Schedule Efficiency (Steward Our Resources)

Enrollment

Meet/Exceed Recruitment Goals (Steward Our Resources)

Increase Exposure of TMU among Prospective Students (Enhance Our Image, Steward Our Resources)

Meet Weekly Contact Benchmarks among Prospective Students (Serve Our Customers, Steward Our Resources)

Athletics

Construct Golf Driving Range (Improve Our Product, Serve Our Customers)

Update and Improve Athletic Facilities and Fields (Improve Our Product, Serve Our Customers)

Evaluate and Research Opportunities for New Athletic and Life Sports (Improve Our Product, Serve Our Customers, Steward Our Resources)

Exceed Minimum Roster Goals (Steward Our Resources)

Emphasize Higher GPA Levels of Student Athletes (Serve Our Customers, Enhance Our Image, Build Our Culture)

Increase Winning Percentage and Championships among Athletic Programs (Improve Our Product, Enhance Our Image, Build Our Culture)

Finance and Operations

Implement New Financial Aid Model (Serve Our Customers, Steward Our Resources)

Improve Food Quality and Options (Improve Our Product, Serve Our Customers)

Complete Software Integration for Student Registration and Payment (Improve Our Product, Serve Our Customers)

Diversify Revenue (Steward Our Resources)

Upgrade Technology throughout Campus (Serve Our Customers)

Build Culture and Morale among Employees (Build Our Culture)

Advancement

Realize \$1mm in Annual General Fund Receipts (Steward our Resources)

Raise \$3mm for Construction of Apartment Style Housing (Improve Our Product, Serve Our Customers, Steward Our Resources)

Employ Alumni Director (Serve Our Customers, Enhance Our Image, Build Our Culture, Steward Our Resources)

Employ Advancement Officer (Steward Our Resources)

Student Life

Create New Student Community Spaces (Improve Our Product, Serve Our Customers, Build Our Culture)

Increase the Number of Student Activities (Improve Our Product, Serve Our Customers, Build Our Culture)

Expand Discipleship Opportunities (Serve Our Customers, Build Our Culture)

Construct Apartment Style Housing (Improve Our Product, Serve Our Customers)

Enhance Chapel for Spiritual Growth and Community (Improve Our Product, Serve Our Customers, Build Our Culture)

Counseling Center Expansion (Serve Our Customers, Build Our Culture)

Marketing

Implement Creative Marketing Promotions, Incentives, and Discounts to Drive Enrollment (Steward Our Resources)

Amplify Marketing to Commuters (Steward Our Resources)

Partner with Additional Organizations and Businesses to Enroll Adult Learners (Enhance Our Image, Enhance Our Image, Steward Our Resources)

Build Brand Awareness through Increased External Marketing (Enhance Our Image)

Collaborate and Integrate Advancement, Marketing, and Admissions (Improve Our Product, Build Our Culture, Steward Our Resources)

Progress Towards Equipping 3000: Measuring Student Achievement

Truett McConnell University is committed to achieving its strategic goals and objectives through a focused and data-driven approach. We believe these goals will strengthen our institution, enhance the student experience, and positively impact academic outcomes. TMU uses a variety of measures to assess student achievement, ensuring that progress is both meaningful and measurable. Thresholds and targets are set for each of these measures and evaluated annually to track institutional effectiveness and student success. The current 2024-2025 academic year thresholds, targets, and multiple-year averages are as follows:

Student Achievement Measure	Threshold	Target	Recent 5-Year Average (unless otherwise stated)
Key Student Completion Indicator: NSC 6-Yr. Completion Rate	55%	65%	59.4%
Retention Rate: First-year Degree-seeking Undergraduates	61%	75%	68.4%
Retention Rate: First-year Degree-seeking Undergraduates (online)	40%	60%	50.6%
Persistence Rate: First-year Degree-seeking Undergraduates	80%	87%	85.6%
Retention Rate: First-year Degree-seeking Graduate Students	70%	80%	74.0%
Graduate Student Completions by Year: July 1 through June 30	20	41	29.8
General Education Rubric Assessment Scores (0-4 Assessment Scale)	2.75	3.00	Written Communication - 2.96 Oral Communication - 3.26 Analytic Critical Thinking - 3.09 Quantitative Critical Thinking - 2.98 Christian Worldview - 3.14
Critical thinking Assessment Test (CAT) Scores: first-year undergraduates	12.50	15.55	13.24 (Last 4 years)
Critical thinking Assessment Test (CAT) Scores: graduating seniors	14.13	17.64	15.33 (Last 4 years)

Retention rate is measured by the percentage of students who enter TMU during a fall semester and are enrolled in the following fall semester. For graduate students, students who graduate within that first year are included in the percentage.

Persistence rate is measured by the percentage of students who return to college at any institution for their second year.

<https://nscresearchcenter.org/persistence-retention/>