

***Academic Affairs Strategic Plan***  
***9/14/09***  
***DRAFT 16.1***

**The Academic Purpose**

For more than a century, Western Michigan University has been known nationally in the community of higher learning for innovative curricula and dedicated teachers. Over the past decades, the university has successfully engaged the forefront of research and creative endeavor in a wide range of disciplines.

WMU is a public university that is accessible, student-centered, and research intensive. We advance learning and prepare students to succeed in a rapidly changing world. We build intellectual inquiry, investigation, and discovery into all undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. The University provides leadership in teaching and learning, research, and public service.

Our university is in the business of growing people. To educate our students and fulfill our broader responsibilities, we secure and nurture the finest minds to serve our academic community. Our outstanding faculty and staff are the foundation upon which we build our academic enterprise. We hire only the best faculty who are teachers, researchers and advisors and provide them with the support necessary to enrich our students' lives and improve society.

Our strategic plan guides us in developing and enhancing our distinctiveness---excellence and uniqueness---in undergraduate education, graduate education, research, scholarship, and creative endeavor.

Our goals are intertwined and we continually seek to enlist the multiple ways in which these goals can be achieved.

We believe that academics set the direction of the university, and that resource allocation should follow the academic enterprise.

This strategic planning document is a living document. To that end, it is a work in progress, informs planning activities through academic affairs, provides guidance in resource utilization, and is reviewed on an annual basis and revised as necessary.

**Academic Affairs Mission**

Michigan and the nation need more college-educated citizens to provide the intellectual capacity and workforce participants to lead society forward in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. WMU dedicates its resources to attract and support outstanding students and faculty. We offer distinctive

undergraduate and graduate experiences that build a passion for learning. Within this context the mission of Academic Affairs is to ensure:

- Student centrality in premier undergraduate and graduate education encompassing the arts, sciences, and professions
- Excellence in teaching and learning, research, professional practice, creative endeavor, and service to the University and external community
- Leadership that advances the University's mission and goals

## **Academic Affairs Values**

We value and affirm excellence in daily actions through the following:

- Learning and freedom of inquiry
- Scholarship and creative endeavor
- Civic and social responsibility
- Respectful, diverse, and inclusive community
- Productive student-faculty engagement
- Ethical behavior and integrity
- Shared governance
- Performance-based assessment

## **Goals and Strategies**

### **Baccalaureate Teaching, Learning and Research**

Our primary focus has been, and will remain, the education of undergraduate students. We continue to evolve the undergraduate learning experience in regards to the programs that we offer the content of those programs, and how we deliver those programs. To this end, all undergraduate students will be engaged in a quality general education studies curriculum that provides each student with a solid foundation for lifelong learning. WMU will further develop a more personalized undergraduate educational experience, particularly for its first-year students (both freshmen and transfers). The personalized education of more advanced undergraduates will be enhanced by further investments in existing programs that provide opportunities for individual or small-class instruction, such as undergraduate research, honors education, study abroad, and programming for experiential learning.

**Goal 1.** Offer distinctive baccalaureate programs that will provide graduates the opportunity to be highly successful in their lives and careers

**Strategy 1.1:** The faculty will reconfigure the curricula, including general education, to consider:

- Global literacy
- Competency in writing and communication skills
- Critical thinking
- Environmental sustainability
- Diversity and inclusion
- Civic and social responsibility
- Experiential learning
- Health and wellness

**Strategy 1.2:** Students will complete an original project, either individually or in a team, in science, scholarship, or creative expression in their major or minor

**Strategy 1.3:** Students will acquire familiarity with a language other than English

**Strategy 1.4:** Develop and increase the use of current and emerging technologies in curricula and co-curricula matters

**Strategy 1.5:** Assess student learning in terms of program objectives, using the knowledge gained for continuous improvement

**Strategy 1.6:** Use a consultative and integrated program review process for creating, sustaining, growing, and eliminating academic programs

**Strategy 1.7:** Provide access and support services to ensure success at WMU for special and nontraditional student populations

**Strategy 1.8:** Institute a comprehensive academic advising program, including improving staff-to-student ratios to maintain interactions with students from recruitment to graduation and throughout their careers

**Strategy 1.9:** Increase the number of professionally trained staff to assist students in their learning and personal development

**Strategy 1.10:** Explore additional pedagogical learning strategies appropriate to the learning outcomes desired including on-line and hybrid programs and courses

**Strategy 1.11:** Establish a robust enrollment management plan that defines, shapes, and retains the student body that is consistent with a student-centered, doctoral, research intensive university

**Strategy 1.12:** Determine the capacity of each program and manage enrollment to match that capacity, or as appropriate increase or decrease capacity, to ensure quality education and to maximize resource utilization

**Strategy 1.13:** Increase interdisciplinary teaching and interdisciplinary minors and majors to provide students with the knowledge to work in an ever-changing world

**Strategy 1.14:** Investigate, and if possible implement, differential tuition to better address the costs of offering programs and the demand for the programs

**Metric of Success 1.1:** Increase the first year student retention rate from X to Y

**Metric of Success 1.2:** Increase graduation rate from X to Y

**Metric of Success 1.3:** Reduce the time to degree completion from X to Y

**Metric of Success 1.4:** Demonstrate that curricular changes are based on assessment of program outcomes

**Goal 2.** Recruit outstanding students to our programs that reflect the diversity of our society

**Strategy 2.1:** Increase the number and value of endowed merit-based scholarships (Medallion, President, Provost, college, and unit)

**Strategy 2.2:** Increase and refine recruiting efforts to include regional, national, and international emphasis

**Strategy 2.3:** Increase alumni and current student involvement in recruiting

**Strategy 2.4:** Increase recruiting at the department and school level

**Strategy 2.5:** Increase the number of students coming to the university from community colleges, including using joint admittance programs

**Strategy 2.6:** Increase the enrollment of the Honors College by 10% per year until it reaches 10% of the total undergraduate student body

**Metric of Success 2.1:**<sup>1</sup> Improve the broad academic profile of entering high school students from X to Y

**Metric of Success 2.2:** Improve academic profile of entering transfer students from X to Y

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<sup>1</sup> Metrics are over five years with graduated change

## Graduate Teaching, Learning and Research

WMU is committed to excellence in our graduate programs. WMU offers a select set of master's and doctoral programs where there is a demand for the program and where the graduates of the program are nationally competitive. Having fidelity to our student-centered research mission, graduate and doctoral assistantships enhance the teaching and research functions of the institution.

**Goal 3.** Recruit to our programs outstanding graduate students that reflect the diversity of our society

**Strategy 3.1:** Ensure a synergistic, mutually beneficial relationship between graduate and undergraduate programs

**Strategy 3.2:** Increase external funding from grants and contracts as well as from gift funds to support graduate students through their entire program of study, including graduate assistantships, fellowships, project support, and attending conferences

**Strategy 3.3:** Develop an integrated recruiting effort that is regional, national and international, supports all graduate programs through quality web sites, publications, and advertisements, and involves faculty members

**Metric of Success 3.1:** Maintain a ratio of 1:4 of graduate to undergraduate students

**Metric of Success 3.2:** Improve the academic profile of entering graduate students

**Metric of Success 3.3:** Increase external funding for graduate students from X to Y

**Metric of Success 3.4:** Increase doctoral enrollment from X to Y

**Goal 4.** Offer distinctive graduate programs that prepare students to be successful in their lives and careers

**Strategy 4.1:** Pioneer new configurations of graduate certificate and degree programs

**Strategy 4.2:** Promote cross-college interdisciplinary programs supported by an effective governance and reward structure

**Strategy 4.3:** Ensure a firm foundation in established modes of inquiry

**Strategy 4.4:** Pursue additional professional degrees in the health sciences

**Strategy 4.5:** Assess student learning in terms of program objectives, using the knowledge gained for continuous improvement

**Strategy 4.6:** Use a consultative and integrated program review process for creating, sustaining, growing, and eliminating academic programs

**Strategy 4.7:** Provide access and support services to ensure success at WMU for special and nontraditional student populations

**Strategy 4.8:** Establish a robust enrollment management plan that defines, shapes and retains the student body that is consistent with a public, student-centered research university

**Strategy 4.9:** Determine the capacity of each program and manage enrollment to match that capacity to ensure quality education and to maximize resource utilization

**Strategy 4.10:** Explore additional pedagogical strategies appropriate to the learning outcomes including on-line and hybrid programs and courses

**Strategy 4.11:** Investigate, and if possible implement, differential tuition to better address the costs of offering programs and the demand for the programs

**Metric of Success 4.1:** Increase refereed publications authored or co-authored by graduate students from X to Y

**Metric of Success 4.2:** Increase the number of distinctive awards our graduate alumni receive

**Metric of Success 4.3:** Increase graduation rate from X to Y

**Metric of Success 4.4:** Reduce the time to degree completion from X to Y

## **Research and Creative Endeavor**

Research, creative endeavor, and scholarship are products of inquiry and creativity and are expected from all traditionally ranked faculty members. To enhance regional and national competitiveness, traditionally ranked faculty members are expected to compete successfully for external funding.

**Goal 5.** Produce outstanding research and creative works that enhance society

**Strategy 5.1:** Provide leadership for initiating regional, national, and international research partnerships

**Strategy 5.2:** Increase library collections to support existing programs, new ventures in research, and new academic programs

**Strategy 5.3:** Recognize, publicize, and reward the scholarly works and creative accomplishments of our faculty and students

**Strategy 5.4:** Establish an electronic repository for research and scholarly communication

**Strategy 5.5:** Develop a business plan to establish a WMU E-press to publish scholarly and creative work

**Strategy 5.6:** Develop an information technology business plan to support research and creative activities

**Metric of Success 5.1:** Increase number of intellectual property disclosures

**Metric of Success 5.2:** Increase the number and quality of refereed publications and creative works

**Goal 6.** Support our students, faculty, and research enterprise with external grants and contracts

**Strategy 6.1:** Create college-based research offices, integrated with OVPR and other university services that build sufficient capacity and infrastructure to assist faculty in securing and executing state, regional, and national grants and contracts

**Strategy 6.2:** Triple the investment in internal competitive "seed funds" to increase the number of principal investigators

**Strategy 6.3:** Increase the number of nationally-recognized, externally-funded research centers and institutes

**Strategy 6.4:** Hire faculty in research clusters

**Strategy 6.5:** Increase funding for research infrastructure by collecting a higher percentage of the allowable F&A and investing directly in research infrastructure

**Strategy 6.6:** Have differential teaching, research, and advising assignments to recognize those faculty members with large externally-funded research

**Metric of Success 6.1:** Increase the number of interdisciplinary grants and contracts

**Metric of Success 6.2:** Increase the number of PI/Co-PI groups with \$500,000 or more from X to Y

**Metric of Success 6.3:** Increase the number of first-time PIs

**Metric of Success 6.4:** Increase the amount of research expenditures by X% per year

**Penultimate Metric of Success:** Increase the total extramural research funding annually to \$60M

## **The Academic Community**

One of WMU's strengths is its academic community of scholars. We strive to enhance that community with the understanding that the next generation of faculty should be better than the current generation and the current generation will strive to meet level of quality of the next generation. As an academic community we expect certain things of our colleagues including adhering to the academic affairs mission and values. We also expect that they will dedicate themselves to excellence in teaching, learning, research, scholarship, creative endeavor, and service. Each member of the academic community will strengthen her or his own capabilities and therefore elevate the stature of the university.

**Goal 7.** Flourish as an academic community that shares common purpose and pride in accomplishing our goals

**Strategy 7.1:** Promote cultural change across the university so that every individual promotes student success

**Strategy 7.2:** Through the accomplishment of the first six goals, build an academic community comprised of faculty who are esteemed as both teachers and scholars at a public, student-centered research university

**Strategy 7.3:** Increase diversity and inclusivity within the student body, faculty, and staff through the recruitment, advancement, and retention of a pluralistic community

**Strategy 7.4:** Increase the number of tenure and tenure-track faculty by 25 per year to strategically support expanded funded research in specific areas, transform pedagogy, work with students on research projects, and improve faculty to student ratios

**Strategy 7.5:** Mentor new faculty members and provide them with the support needed to ensure promotion and tenure

**Strategy 7.6:** Increase the staff as necessary to support the academic affairs strategic plan

**Strategy 7.7:** Enhance investment in the professional development of our outstanding faculty and staff

**Metric of Success 7.1:** Improve the ratio of students to faculty from X to Y

**Metric of Success 7.2:** Regularly assess institutional culture and measure positive change

**Metric of Success 7.3:** Increase the number of faculty and staff participating in professional development

## **The Greater Community**

WMU exists in a greater community that is regional, national, and international. The greater community includes the greater society needs that the world faces today. Besides educating students and performing our research, we are dedicated to enriching and improving the greater society through the knowledge and efforts of the faculty, staff, and students. WMU has been a global university for over half a century, taking pride in how we have effected change from Africa to the United States. With Extended University Programs both instate and worldwide we place a special importance on supporting the greater community.

**Goal 8.** Enhance the greater community and society by applying our university's knowledge, talents, and energies through service and outreach

**Strategy 8.1:** In partnership with the WMU Alumni Association, create meaningful relationships with our alumni that celebrate our legacy, inspire our future, and engage them in the life of the University

**Strategy 8.2:** Enhance service learning to foster student citizenship and learning as well as to benefit the greater community

**Strategy 8.3:** Provide volunteer service to assist the greater community

**Strategy 8.4:** Assist the greater community in creating jobs and economic development

**Strategy 8.5:** Partner with the community to enhance the university's mission of research, instruction and service where the partnerships are mutually beneficial

**Strategy 8.6:** Increase the number of undergraduate and graduate programs taught by departments through Extended University Programs online and at the regional sites

**Metric of Success 8.1:** Increase the number of students involved in service learning

**Metric of Success 8.2:** Increase the number and variety of programs, partnerships, and collaborations in the service of the community

*We offer this text as a prudent course of action that builds on the long tradition of this university. We as a university are at a crossroad, requiring that we as a community rise to the occasion and seize opportunities for excellence. We all are WMU. We control our common destiny and we are commonly accountable. By taking this bold action now, we ensure our place as leaders in higher learning in the public domain.*

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