GOLD STANDARD 2020

A report on our
strategic plan progress

Prepared by: Ciji A. Heiser, Ph.D; Adriana Cardoso Reyes, MSW; Cathe Springsteen, MPA; Karen Stokes Chapo, MA; Tonya Dean

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

GOLD STANDARD 2020 GOALS

WMU's Gold Standard 2020 strategic plan consisted of five goals, each with its own set of objectives and strategies, which resulted in a total of 24 objectives and 107 strategies.

01

LEARNER SUCCESS

Ensure a distinctive and supportive learning experience that fosters success.

02

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Promote innovative learning, discovery, and service.

03

DIVERSITY & COLLABORATION

Progress as a Carnegie-classified higher research doctoral university that advances new knowledge and value-added discovery.

04

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE & EQUITY

Promote a diverse, equitable, and inclusive University culture to ensure social sustainability and accessibility.

05

SUSTAINABLE STEWARDSHIP

Advance economic and environmental sustainability practices and policies.

STRATEGY PROGRESS

PARTIAL TO STRONG EVIDENCE OF COMPLETION

70%

LITTLE TO NO EVIDENCE OF COMPLETION

30%

The Gold Standard 2020 ended its tenure in fall 2020 and was sunset. During spring 2021, a content analysis was performed on evidence toward completion of the plan's goals. Strategy-level evidence was provided by WMU's cabinet-level divisions covering the fiscal-year periods between 2016 and 2020.

Analysis of the qualitative data followed a four-step process: establishing a rating scale based on the amount of evidence provided; a review and cleaning of the data to remove duplicate entries; individual and group review of the data to determine the amount of progress made toward completion of the strategy; individual and group placement of evidentiary items into rating categories where "3=strong evidence of completion," "2=partial evidence of completion," "1=little to no evidence of completion"; and, group-averaging of strategy progress ratings.

At sunset of the Gold Standard 2020, reviews found that 28 percent of strategies had strong evidence of completion, 42 percent of strategies had partial evidence of completion, and 30 percent of strategies had little to no evidence of completion.

This report highlights institution-wide initiatives reported through annual strategic plan reporting and the University's reaffirmation process.
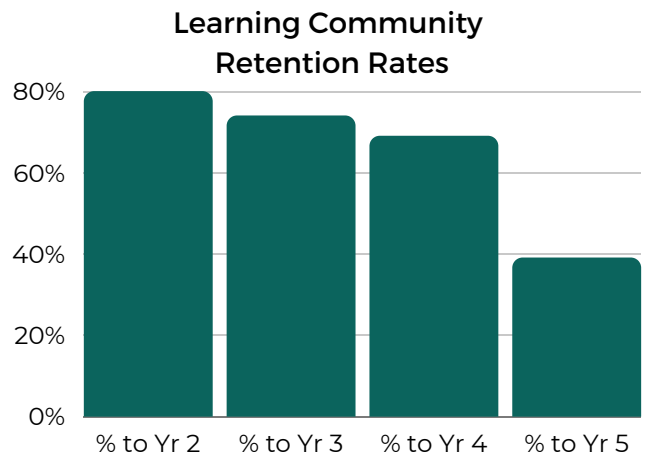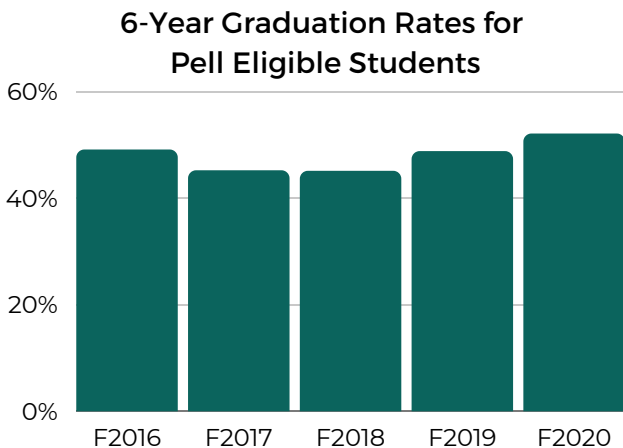
GOAL 1: LEARNER SUCCESS

To meet the goal of ensuring a distinctive and supportive learning experience that fosters student success, the WMU community focused on student retention and degree completion, the student learning experience, innovative and responsive co-curricular learning opportunities, preparing students for a globalized world, sustaining a healthy and safe campus, and investing in the student living-learning environment.

Student Retention and Graduation
- In the College of Arts and Sciences, more than 4,000 undergraduate students received personal calls, texts, and emails from nearly two dozen CAS staff members. The team checked with students during COVID-19 and offered support, connection to resources, and advice to students.
- Students who engaged in co-curricular learning experiences (e.g., employment, learning communities, social events, events, services related to their well-being, etc.) retained from year one to two (85%), two to three (77%), and three to four (74%) at substantially higher rates than their peers who did not. The same was true for students living on campus (6-year graduation rate averaged over four years, 71%) compared to off campus (62%).

Student Learning Experiences
- Approximately 6,600 students were employed on campus each year across 150 different WMU departments. Students who were employed maintained higher GPAs, retained, and graduated at higher rates than their peers. In their resumes, more than 80% of students demonstrated competencies in critical thinking, communication, teamwork, leadership, and professionalism.
- In 2020, the Office for Sustainability awarded the maximum amount of $100,000 across more than 15 student projects. Each student project was overseen by a faculty advisor.
- Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, and Transgender Student Services offered a variety of workshops including Safe on Campus and workshops under the LBGT Advocate Program that are open to staff, faculty, and students.

6-Year Graduation Rates for Pell Eligible Students

Learning Community Retention Rates

GOAL 1: LEARNER SUCCESS

Innovative & Responsive Co-Curricular Learning Opportunities
- Over 14,916 students attended a WMU Signature Designated experience between 2016 and 2020 with 197,812 total event attendance at WMU Signature Designated Events and 2,198 experiences designed for WMU Signature across 180 unique areas representing divisions, colleges, and registered student organizations.

Preparing Students for a Globalized World
- Between 2016 and 2020, the MLK Academy was instrumental in promoting Real Talk Diversity programming, as well as courses and workshops offered by the Walker Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnic Relations. In addition, WMU CAMP FYE included curricular learning on diversity, and conversations on diversity and identity informally through peer leaders.

Sustaining a Healthy and Safe Campus
- The Office of Student Affairs, with extensive support from the Student Financial Aid Office, administered the Student Emergency Relief Fund (SERF). During FY20, the average request was $1,172.57 with an average award of $561.51. Total dollars awarded for FY20 was $161,439.22.
- During 2020, Institutional Equity and the We Choose campaign posted safety and reporting information on the university's social media accounts. The Fall Welcome in-person presentation on sexual misconduct reporting was converted to an online format. New online Sexual Assault Prevention training was implemented for first-year undergraduate and graduate students, and a new Preventing Harassment & Discrimination Title IX online training for employees was launched.

Investing in the Student Living-Learning Environment
- The Institutional Diversity and Multiculturalism (IDM) Committee, established fall 2018, has worked to intentionally plan a new student center that will be "a unifying force that honors each individual and values diversity." In addition, Arcadia Flats, the newest student housing facility, will hold 197 apartment style units to house between 341-353 students.

Student Event Attendance
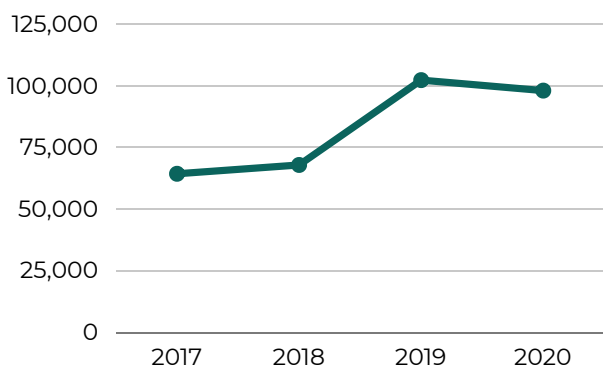
Western Wellness Participants
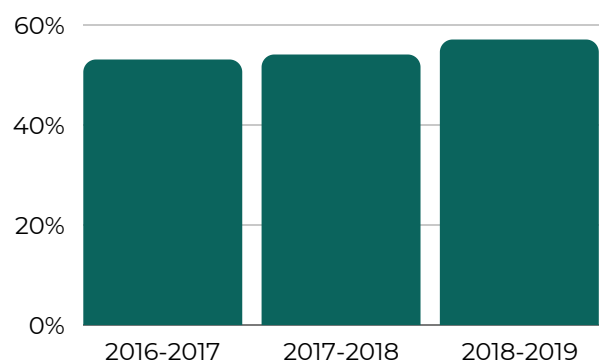
GOAL 2: ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Western continues to pursue academic excellence through innovative and collaborative approaches to learning, discovery, and service in both academic and co-curricular programs. Highlights shared below provide a glimpse into the numerous ways we continue to work toward improving how students obtain knowledge, develop skills, and participate in experiences that will help them to achieve their academic goals and pursue their passions.

FALL 2020 WES COURSES

321

FY 2020 TENURED FACULTY

68%

MLK SCHOLARS PROGRAM RETENTION RATE

80%

Academic Programs and Innovative, High-Quality Curricula

- WMU completed the launch of its new undergraduate curriculum program, Western Essential Studies (WES), in fall 2020. A total of 321 courses were approved, and student learning outcomes were assessed via rubrics created by faculty.
- The Student Affairs Learning Outcomes Framework was implemented. This complements and expands beyond WES and provides opportunities for students to demonstrate learning related to critical thinking, integrative learning, well-being, leadership, and career readiness.
- Diversity and Education collaborated with FYE to offer classes in diversity and inclusivity, and with the Office of Faculty Development to share the Teaching Inclusivity Seminar. Collaboration has also begun with the College of Fine Arts to bring in artists and promote inclusive and diverse learning opportunities in the arts.

Hiring and Retention of Distinguished Faculty and Staff

- During fiscal year 2020, 58 percent of WMU's 1,427 instructional faculty held doctorate or other terminal degrees, 25 percent held masters degrees, and 68 percent were tenured.
- WMU staff held 53 local, regional, or national positions in professional organizations.

GOAL 2: ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Quality Graduate Education
- In 2020, a policy change was made to allow graduate certificate credits to be used toward the completion of a graduate degree. This policy revised the Graduate Catalog and facilitated student attainment of stackable credentials, and created new graduate certificate programs including Data Science; Climate Change Policy and Management; School Improvement; Public Administration: Public Policy; School Counseling; Counseling Psychology; Evaluation; Mixed Methods Research; Qualitative Research; and, History: Public History.

Academic Excellence
- During fall 2020, University College was formed to improve the student experience by connecting academic counseling, career guidance, and other existing student success programs, and to centralize all undergraduate student academic advising.
- Culture of Assessment reports were collected from academic and learner support programs to determine assessment maturity and extent of data use for continuous improvement. Reports were evaluated using a 4-point scale and the benchmark of 3.0 was nearly met or exceeded in all areas. Focused efforts are underway to help to improve education around data-informed decision-making, which scored below the benchmark at 2.82.
- During the 2019-20 academic year, WMU began a three-year Excellence in Academic Advising initiative organized by the National Academic Advising Association and the Gardner Institute to improve and evaluate academic advising.

Supportive Learning Platforms
- 3D printing services were added to the University Computing Center lab to support the investigation, experimentation, and application of 3D printed objects within an academic, research, and personal context.
- WMU was the 2020 recipient of the Barefoot & Gardner Award for Equitable Higher Education Outcomes due to its work on the Gateways to Completion project focused on improving DFWI rates in six gateway courses.
- Academic Affairs invested in Ally, software that assists faculty and students to convert and consume course materials in a variety of accessible formats.
- WMU Martin Luther King Jr. Student Scholars Academy maintained an 80 percent retention rate for all scholars by implementing effective strategies and supportive services.

Evaluation Results for a Culture of Assessment at WMU using a 4-point Rubric
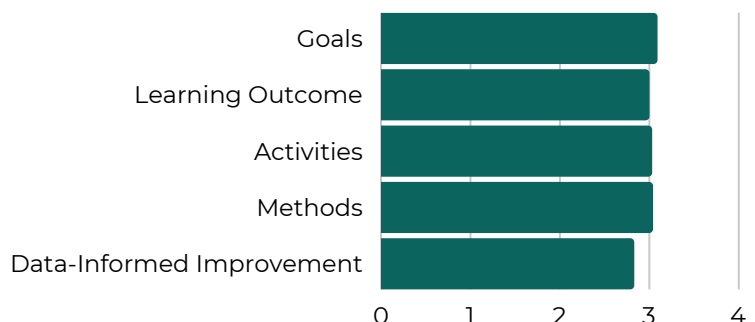
GOAL 3: DISCOVERY & COLLABORATION

WMU strives to be a responsive institution to meet the needs of our evolving society and global communities. Through a focus on discovery and collaboration that strengthens our standing as a Carnegie-classified higher research doctoral university, we engage in mutually beneficial partnerships that significantly influence scientific, economic, and societal outcomes.

% INCREASE IN RESEARCH AWARDS

21.7

GRANT FOR BTR PARK

2.1M

FACULTY & STUDENT RESEARCH PROPOSALS

356

Carnegie Classification

- During fiscal year 2019, University-wide award dollars increased by 46 percent, while the number of research awards increased by 21.7 percent, and University-wide expenditures rose to $29,101,805.
- A total of $444,804 was awarded for faculty research in Fiscal Year 2019 in the form of grants, travel awards, and funds for the dissemination of discoveries via publication and performance.
- The new Presidential Innovation Professorships offer three years of awards funding for exceptional faculty to freely pursue research or educational innovations without concern for risk.
- Thanks to a $2.1 million grant from the Economic Development Administration for Business Technology and Research (BTR) Park 2.0, a 55-acre complex was secured by the Office of Community Outreach, which facilitates a broad range of opportunities for industry professionals with university faculty and researchers.
- In the 2018-2019 fiscal year, ORI helped staff and students obtain $37.7 million in external grants and contracts. During that time, faculty and students submitted 356 research proposals.
- ORI and the Office of the President co-sponsored the "Bronco Big Idea," tied to the NSF Idea Machine competition. This internal program awarded two undergraduate students and one faculty member $6,000 each in research grants.
- The AMP LAB (Advanced Manufacturing Partnership Laboratory), a state-of-the-art manufacturing lab built West Michigan manufacturers opened at WMU-Grand Rapids. It supports training to address critical shortages in engineering technology and manufacturing and offers resources to test new technologies.

GOAL 3: DISCOVERY & COLLABORATION

CREDIT-BEARING COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING COURSES

333

- The College of Engineering and Applied Sciences (CEAS) Masters in Medical Engineering was created as a collaborative project between CEAS and WMU Homer Stryker, M.D. School of Medicine.
- Between 2019 and 2020, 32 students received Undergraduate Research Excellence Awards totaling over $22,562. A total of 20 mentors, some with multiple students, participated in this program.

Partnerships through Research and Scholarship

- The Office of Community Outreach executed several strategies of the Shared Gold Civic Action plan that resulted in a Memorandum of Understanding with Downtown Kalamazoo Incorporated, Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo, and the City of Kalamazoo's Arcadia neighborhood resulting in student engagement with community stakeholders.
- In 2020, WMU received the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification.

Attentive Outreach

- The Global Expertise Database, a service of the Haenicke Institute for Global Education (HIGE), connects faculty, staff, students, and community members to the immense knowledge of faculty members and professional staff at WMU.
- The Data Management Plan (DMP) tool provides a click-through wizard for creating data management plans that comply with sponsor requirements.

EDUCATIONAL EVENTS OVER 10 YEARS FOCUSED ON CLIMATE CHANGE

100+

GOAL 4: EXCELLENCE IN EQUITY

WMU cultivates a diverse and inclusive community that recognizes the value of each individual, and helps ensure civility and respect for all people. In doing so, WMU embraces diversity as a community value in which all stakeholders are prepared to understand the complexity of issues and perspectives needed to offer solutions to world challenges.

Fostering Shared Understanding
- Disability Services for Students (DSS) staff assisted with First-Year Experience courses discussing services offered through DSS and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. During academic year 2019-20, MLK Scholars were exposed and required to report their attendance at any cultural program, including the Multicultural Review, Real Talk Diversity series, Fall Fab Fest, and the Excellence in Diversity Award. Although most WMU CAMP programming was targeted to first-year CAMP students to comply with grant guidelines, WMU provided some activities throughout the year that were open to continuing WMU CAMP students (those who completed 24 credit hours).

Safe Reporting Avenues
- In August 2020, the Office of Institutional Equity held its first annual Professional Development Institute (PDI) on Building Cultural Competencies with 15 participants. The PDI is a train-the-trainers initiative focused on working with employees (faculty, staff/administrators) to develop/increase intercultural communication skills, cultural competencies, and understanding by providing participants with tools and resources to effectively work cross-culturally. The PDI also supports the planning and implementation of equity-, diversity-, and inclusion-related professional development and training opportunities for colleagues and students in various contexts and groups campus-wide. The goal of the PDI is to expand capacity through a growing cadre of professionals with the knowledge and abilities to provide training.

Improving Accountability
- In 2020, WMU created the Racial Justice Advisory Committee in response to longstanding disparities in health, education, income, and myriad other social and economic indicators created by systemic racism. In developing the RJAC, WMU demonstrated its commitment to beginning the process of change by identifying and prioritizing issues of systemic racism and racial inequities to address on campus, and developing action plans for change.

Student Perceptions from the 2020 Campus Climate Study (Strongly agree or agree)
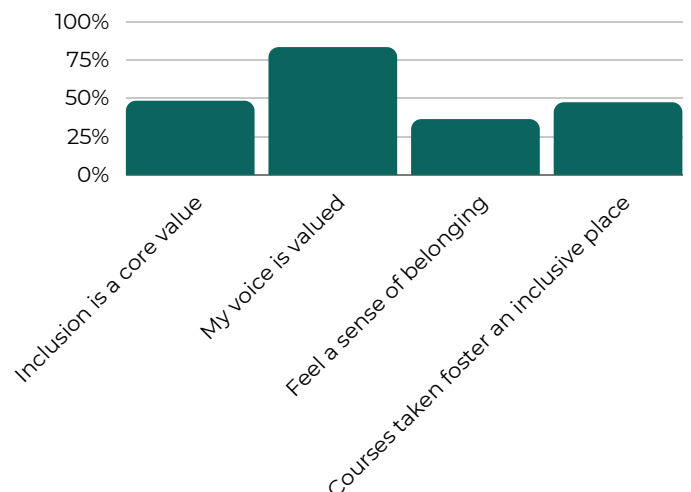
GOAL 5: SUSTAINABLE STEWARDSHIP

The future enthusiasm of the University rests on our collective assurance to factor in our resources: the environment on which we all depend; subsequent resources for our needs and goals; and, the faculty, staff, and student relationships that form the essentials of our informative model. Advanced economic and environmental sustainability practices and policies allow sustainable stewardship that will improve and support our academic goals. In response to emerging environmental and financial questions, WMU envisions and executes new methods to our work that uphold the sustainability of our mission.

 # VISITS TO THE INVISIBLE NEED PROJECT FOOD PANTRY

7931

POUNDS OF FOOD GROWN AND DONATED TO THE FOOD PANTRY BY THE GIBBS HOUSE

216

POUNDS OF FOOD DONATED TO THE FOOD PANTRY

111K

Achieving Environmental Sustainability

- The Student Emergency Relief Fund (SERF), administered by The Division of Student Affairs with extensive support from the Student Financial Aid Office, continues to administer, teamed up with the Invisible Need Project working towards a sustainable model. Between fall 2014 and June 30, 2020, a total of 1,719 students accessed and 7, 931 visited the Food Pantry, with half of the total use occurring in fiscal years 2019 and 2020.
- Members of the WMU and Kalamazoo communities have donated almost 111,141 pounds of food to the Food Pantry.
- Thanks to an invaluable partnership with the Office for Sustainability, The Gibbs House grew nearly 216 pounds of food to donate to the Food Pantry.
- The Office for Sustainability initiated one- to five-year objectives to further build effective environmentally friendly stewardship into the structure of the University.
- The Office for Sustainability offered a range of programs/projects developed and led by students, faculty and staff including an annual Student Sustainability Survey, events, bike and pedestrian friendly campus research, and the EcoEssentials program.
- WMU's Solid Waste Reduction program, in the Office for Sustainability, cooperates with departments on campus as the WMU community moves toward a zero-waste policy.

GOAL 5: SUSTAINABLE STEWARDSHIP

Financial and Human Resource Management
- In fiscal year 2020, WMU began implementation of its Strategic Resource Management (SRM) model to align WMU's budget decisions and financial resources with the University's strategic priorities. SRM is guided by 14 principles intended to support behavior, strategies, and initiatives, and will allow flexibility of funds to meet emerging needs, increase accountability for decisions, enhance transparency, and incentivize revenue growth and cost containment practices across the University.
- WMU initiated developing programs that address the mission of the current higher education financial model to achieve commitment to a vibrant university-wide faculty sustainability research and curriculum group.

Financial Strategies
- WMU has invested resources into a multi-year contract with the services of Education Advisory Board (EAB), a best practice consulting firm for search and recruitment financial aid optimization.

Community Support and Philanthropy
- The WMU Climate Change Working Group, a collaboration between campus constituents and Kalamazoo community members, has resulted in over 100 educational events in the past 10 years. The group's work culminated in a restart of City of Kalamazoo climate action planning, a recent Cabinet-level pledge to sign on to the Paris Climate Agreement, and a fresh WMU Carbon Neutrality effort launched in February 2021.

Marketing and Communication
- The Think Big initiative resulted in the "Rethink Smart" organization strategy to help students actualize purpose, well-being, and career success. The strategy uses four connections: University College for helping students to find their purpose; Solution Squad to help students navigate WMU and find resources; YOU at Western and WellTrack, assistive technology resources for student well-being; and, Strategic Resource Management for effective stewardship of WMU resources.

LOOKING FORWARD

Consider using the SMARTIE method of developing future goal-oriented objectives. SMARTIE builds on the "specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic, and time-bound" considerations by adding "inclusive" and "equitable" dimensions.

"Measurable" aspects of future strategic plan objectives should be grounded in the use of metrics, and include thresholds and benchmarks or targets.

Institutional planning objectives should be collaborative across divisions and units.

Strategic planning efforts should include a clear, cascading timeline for evaluating/reporting progress toward completion of the plan's goals and objectives.

Accountability for strategic planning efforts should be tied to performance management and resource allocation.

Develop a Marketing and Communication Plan that prioritizes (a) the development of data visuals to support the communication progression of plan metrics and targets, and (b) campus-wide communication on plan priorities and progress through website, newsletters, dashboards, and data days.