

## ACADEMIC AFFAIRS STRATEGIC PLAN 2010

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# THE ACADEMIC PURPOSE

Since its founding in 1903, Western Michigan University has steadily grown in national and international stature, being known for innovative curricula and teaching professionals. Over the past decades, the university has distinguished itself in research and creative endeavor. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching designates WMU as a “research university with high research activity” and as such WMU is one of only 76 public institutions in the nation achieving this distinction.

While research is a hallmark of WMU, we also pride ourselves on being a student-centered institution. We promote learning and the personal development of students to succeed in a rapidly changing world. We advocate intellectual inquiry, investigation, and discovery in all undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. The University provides and models leadership in teaching and learning, human development, research and scholarly works, and public service.

Our University is centered on the individual person. To educate our students and fulfill our broader responsibilities to prepare them for a life of learning, we secure and nurture the finest minds to serve our academic community. Our outstanding faculty and professional staff are the foundation on which we build our academic enterprise. We hire exemplary 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 will guide us in developing and enhancing our distinctiveness in undergraduate education, graduate education, research, and scholarship. Seeking new understanding and applying knowledge in practical circumstances are the honor and the responsibility of graduate studies, but this focus extends more widely by emphasizing public demonstration of clinical, experimental, analytical, and inspirational projects. The goals set forth in this strategic plan are interdependent, and we will continually seek the most propitious ways to implement them. The academic purpose is preeminent and consequently resource allocation supports the academic mission.

The Academic Affairs Strategic Plan is a continually evolving plan. As such, it guides the forward direction of academic affairs in planning activities, resource allocation, program assessment, and the implementation of the goals stated herein. It is subject to periodic review and revision that will involve consultation with a broad range of constituents including the appropriate bodies within the Faculty Senate. The Academic Affairs Strategic Plan is one of a suite of university plans including the Division of Student Affairs Strategic Plan, the Business and Finance Strategic Plan, Office of Information technology Strategic Plan, the WMU Diversity and Multicultural Action Plan as well as others.

## ACADEMIC AFFAIRS MISSION

Michigan and the nation need more college-educated citizens to provide intellectual capacity and leadership. WMU dedicates its resources to attract and support outstanding students and faculty. We offer distinctive undergraduate and graduate experiences that inspire a passion for learning. Within this context and recognizing the University’s Mission and Goals, the mission of Academic Affairs is to ensure:

- Student centrality in premier undergraduate and graduate education encompassing the arts, humanities, 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, social, and cultural responsibility
- Respectful, diverse, and inclusive community
- Productive student-faculty engagement
- Ethical behavior and integrity
- Shared governance
- Performance-based assessment

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# GOALS AND STRATEGIES

## UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING, LEARNING, RESEARCH, AND SCHOLARSHIP

Our primary focus has been, and will remain, the education of undergraduate students. We continue to evolve the undergraduate learning experience in regard to the programs, their content, and their delivery. 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 and to be effective and engaged citizens. WMU will further develop a more personalized undergraduate educational experience, particularly for its first-year students (both freshmen and transfers). The personalized education of 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 experiential learning. The humanities have been and will continue to be central to undergraduate education.

### **Goal 1. Offer undergraduate programs that will provide graduates with the distinction necessary to be highly successful in their lives and careers**

**Strategy 1.1:** The faculty will continually examine curricula and course content, including general education, to ensure that the following skills, knowledge, and attitudes are integrated into undergraduate education:

- Global understanding and sensitivity
- Communication skills
- Critical thinking
- Environmental sustainability

- Diversity and inclusion
- Civic and social responsibility
- Health and wellness
- Quantitative and reasoning skills
- Artistic literacy
- Information literacy

**Strategy 1.2:** Graduate undergraduate students who have completed an original project, either individually or in a team, in science, scholarship, or creative expression in their major or minor

**Strategy 1.3:** Graduate undergraduate students who have acquired a 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 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 pedagogical learning strategies appropriate to the learning outcomes, including on-line and hybrid programs and courses

**Strategy 1.11:** Increase interdisciplinary teaching and interdisciplinary minors and majors to provide students with the knowledge to work in the world

❖ **Indicator 1A:** Assess the value that WMU is providing to alumni

❖ **Indicator 1B:** Curricular changes based on assessment of learning outcomes

**Goal 2. Establish a robust enrollment management plan that recruits and retains a diverse, outstanding student body consistent with a student-centered, high research activity university**

**Strategy 2.1:** Manage enrollment capacity by determining the capacity of each program, matching enrollment to capacity, or as appropriate, increasing or decreasing capacity to ensure quality education and maximize resource utilization

**Strategy 2.2:** Investigate, and if possible implement, differential tuition to address the demand for and/or the cost of offering the programs

**Strategy 2.3:** Increase the number and value of endowed merit-based scholarships (Medallion, President, Provost, college, unit, etc.)

**Strategy 2.4:** Increase and refine recruiting efforts to include regional, national, and international emphases

**Strategy 2.5:** Increase alumni and current student involvement in recruiting

**Strategy 2.6:** Increase recruiting at the department/school level

**Strategy 2.7:** Increase the number of students transferring from community colleges, especially through the development and use of joint admittance programs

- ❖ **Indicator 2A:** Enrollment of the Lee Honors College as a percentage of the total undergraduate student body
- ❖ **Indicator 2B:** Academic profile of entering first-year and transfer students
- ❖ **Indicator 2C:** First-year student retention rate
- ❖ **Indicator 2D:** Four-year and six-year graduation rates
- ❖ **Indicator 2E:** Time-to-degree completion for freshmen and transfer students

## GRADUATE TEACHING, LEARNING, RESEARCH, AND SCHOLARSHIP

WMU is committed to excellence in 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. Offer distinctive graduate programs that prepare students to be successful in their lives and careers**

**Strategy 3.1:** Pioneer new configurations of graduate certificate and degree programs

**Strategy 3.2:** Promote cross-college interdisciplinary programs supported by an effective governance and reward structure

**Strategy 3.3:** Ensure a firm foundation in established modes of inquiry

**Strategy 3.4:** Pursue additional professional degree offerings in the health sciences

**Strategy 3.5:** Assess student learning in terms of program objectives, using the knowledge gained for continuous improvement

**Strategy 3.6:** Use a consultative and integrated program review process for creating, sustaining, growing, and eliminating academic programs

**Strategy 3.7:** Provide support services to ensure success at WMU for special and nontraditional student populations

**Strategy 3.8:** Explore additional pedagogical strategies appropriate to the learning outcomes including on-line and hybrid programs and courses

- ❖ **Indicator 3A:** Refereed publications and other equivalent scholarly works produced or co-produced by graduate students
- ❖ **Indicator 3B:** Distinctive awards received by alumni
- ❖ **Indicator 3C:** Graduation rate
- ❖ **Indicator 3D:** Time-to-degree completion
- ❖ **Indicator 3E:** Assess the value that WMU is providing to alumni
- ❖ **Indicator 3F:** Curricular changes based on assessment of learning outcomes
- ❖ **Indicator 3G:** Alumni profiles

#### **Goal 4. Recruit and retain outstanding graduate students that reflect the diversity of our society**

**Strategy 4.1:** Ensure a synergistic, mutually beneficial relationship between graduate and undergraduate programs

**Strategy 4.2:** Increase external funding from grants and contracts, as well as from gift funds, to support graduate students during their entire program of study, including graduate assistantships, fellowships, project support, and conference attendance

**Strategy 4.3:** Develop an integrated recruiting effort that is (a) regional, national and international, (b) supports all graduate programs through quality Web sites, publications, and advertisements, and (c) involves faculty members

**Strategy 4.4:** Establish a robust enrollment management plan that defines, shapes and retains the student body and is consistent with a public, student-centered research university

**Strategy 4.5:** Manage enrollment capacity by determining the capacity of each program, matching enrollment to capacity or, as appropriate, increasing or decreasing capacity to ensure quality education and to maximize resource utilization

**Strategy 4.6:** Investigate, and if possible implement, differential tuition to address the demand for and/or the cost of offering the programs

- ❖ **Indicator 4A:** Ratio of graduate to undergraduate students
- ❖ **Indicator 4B:** Academic profile of entering graduate students
- ❖ **Indicator 4C:** External funding for graduate students
- ❖ **Indicator 4D:** Graduate enrollment
- ❖ **Indicator 4E:** Student diversity

## RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ENDEAVORS

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, where appropriate, are expected to compete successfully for external funding.

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

**Strategy 5.1:** Provide sufficient time and resources for faculty to pursue research and creative endeavors

**Strategy 5.2:** Provide leadership for initiating and developing regional, national, and international research partnerships

**Strategy 5.3:** Increase library collections to support existing programs, new ventures in research, and new academic programs

**Strategy 5.4:** Recognize, publicize, and reward the scholarly works and creative accomplishments of our faculty and students

**Strategy 5.5:** Establish an electronic repository for research and scholarly communication

**Strategy 5.6:** Consider establishing an Institute for the Humanities to facilitate interdisciplinary humanities scholarly activities

**Strategy 5.7:** Develop an information technology business plan to support research and creative activities

- ❖ **Indicator 5A:** Intellectual property disclosures
- ❖ **Indicator 5B:** Scholarly and creative works, including those disseminated through refereed publications, performances, exhibits, and nationally recognized presentations

### **Goal 6. Obtain external funding to increase the visibility of and support the research and creative endeavors of students, faculty, and professional staff**

**Strategy 6.1:** Create and expand research offices and support 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 visibility and expand the number of internationally-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 indirect costs

- ❖ **Indicator 6A:** Total external funding including grants, contracts, and gifts
- ❖ **Indicator 6B:** Interdisciplinary external funding

- ❖ **Indicator 6C:** Number of PI/Co-PI groups with \$500,000 or more external funding
- ❖ **Indicator 6D:** Number of first-time PIs
- ❖ **Indicator 6E:** Research expenditures
- ❖ **Indicator 6F:** Extramural research funding totaling \$60M annually

## THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

One of WMU's strengths is its academic community. As an academic community we expect our colleagues to adhere to the academic affairs mission and values. We also expect that they will dedicate themselves to excellence in teaching, learning, research, scholarship, creative and artistic endeavor, professional practice, and service. As faculty we are known by many titles: teacher, researcher, clinician, artist, scholar, scientist as well as many other appropriate descriptors. Each member of the academic community will strengthen her or his own capabilities and mentor and respect one another thereby elevating 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 tenured and tenure-track faculty by 25 per year

- expanded funded research in specific areas
- work with students on scholarly activities and research projects, and
- improve faculty to student ratios to enhance the quality of the educational experience

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

**Strategy 7.6:** Increase and train staff as necessary to support the Academic Affairs Strategic Plan

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

**Strategy 7.8:** Collaborate with the leadership and faculty at community colleges to strengthen articulation

- ❖ **Indicator 7A:** Ratio of students to faculty
- ❖ **Indicator 7B:** External national assessments such as FSSE and NSSE, D-MAP assessment, and *US News and World Report* rankings
- ❖ **Indicator 7C:** Faculty and staff participation in professional development

## THE GREATER COMMUNITY

WMU exists in a greater community that is regional, national, and international. Besides educating students and engaging in research, we are dedicated to enriching and improving the greater society through the knowledge and efforts of our 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. Through Extended University Programs (EUP), both in-state and world-wide, 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 University Development and the WMU Alumni Association, create meaningful, lifelong relationships with alumni and donors that celebrate our legacy, inspire our future, and engage them in the life of the University

**Strategy 8.2:** Integrate experiential learning into academic programs

**Strategy 8.3:** Enhance service learning to foster student citizenship and learning as well as to benefit the greater community

**Strategy 8.4:** Provide volunteer services to assist the greater community

**Strategy 8.5:** Assist the greater community in creating jobs and economic development

**Strategy 8.6:** Partner with the community to enhance the University's mission of research, instruction, and service where the partnerships are mutually beneficial

**Strategy 8.7:** Working collaboratively, academic colleges and Extended University Programs will offer off-campus and on-line programs

- ❖ **Indicator 8A:** Number of undergraduate and graduate programs taught by departments on-line and at regional sites through EUP
- ❖ **Indicator 8B:** Number of students involved in service learning
- ❖ **Indicator 8C:** Programs, partnerships, and collaborations serving the community
- ❖ **Indicator 8D:** Alumni engagement

*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.*