



Advancing Excellence: CMU's Strategic Plan, 2017-2022

Since its founding in 1892, Central Michigan University has enhanced the economy and quality of life in our state. This update of our strategic plan, "Advancing Excellence," continues that long tradition and focuses on three imperatives: *Nurturing Student Success*, *Fostering Scholarly Activity*, and *Strengthening Partnerships in Michigan and Beyond*. Each imperative includes strategies for meeting specific targets over the next five years.

The three imperatives are interdependent and require critical elements of a thriving university: outstanding faculty, students and staff; a supportive environment; and an attitude of achievement and persistence. The imperatives reflect the reasons Central Michigan University exists: the strategies enable us to succeed.

Each imperative also requires us to foster shared governance, diversity and inclusion, and fiscal and environmental sustainability.

Imperative I: Nurturing Student Success

CMU provides a transformative education to prepare students for successful careers and fulfilling lives. Successful students complete their programs of study in a reasonable amount of time and are well prepared for careers and/or postgraduate study. Alumni perceive their CMU education as a sound investment.

Strategies

1. Review and modify all undergraduate degree programs so that they require no more than 120 credits (unless more are required by external accreditors), which would allow most students to graduate in four years. Evaluate the curriculum for enhancing efficiency.
2. Provide the following:
 - a. Faculty and staff who possess the necessary disciplinary and teaching expertise to help students meet learning outcomes.
 - b. Courses, programs, cocurricular and extracurricular experiences — whether face to face, online or hybrid — for the diverse range and geographical locations of our students as well as their current and continuing educational and professional development needs.
 - c. Appropriate, adequate and proactive student services (e.g., advising, mentoring, career services, degree audit).
3. Enhance infrastructure to support teaching and learning and to help undergraduate students develop college-going identities (e.g., curricular policies and procedures, classrooms and laboratories, instructional technologies and other resources, writing and math centers, first-year gateway courses and experiences).

4. Examine the organizational structure of the academic and administrative divisions for ways to increase efficiency and effectiveness that will enhance student success.
5. Support strategic enrollment-management practices and merit-based financial aid to recruit exceptional undergraduate and graduate students.
6. Conduct and review the results of program assessments, the National Survey of Student Engagement, and exit and alumni surveys to ensure that courses, programs, and cocurricular and extracurricular experiences prepare students for their lives, careers and/or career advancement.
7. Implement multiyear course schedules and multise­mester registration.
8. Make a more robust effort to prepare students for careers and career advancement (e.g., internships, job placement assistance, etc.) and to identify and follow the employment of our graduates.

Targets	Date	Metrics
The first-to-second-year undergraduate retention rate will increase from 77% to 80%.	By 2022	Data from CMU's Office of Institutional Research (OIR) and from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)
The four-year graduation rate for first-time-in- any-college students (FTIACs) will increase from 27% to 33%.	By 2022	OIR and IPEDS data
The six-year graduation rate for first-time-in-any-college students (FTIACs) will increase from 57% to 60%.	By 2022	OIR and IPEDS data
The number of first-to-second year students who accrue 30 credits per year, regardless of where the credits are obtained, will increase from 72% to 78%.	By 2022	OIR
The mean number of credits at graduation for FTIACs will decline annually with a goal of being below 130.	By 2022	OIR
The rates of postgraduation employment, graduate education and professional education will meet or exceed the national average; salaries also will be comparable.	By 2022	OIR data, six-month postgraduation survey, aligned with the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)

Imperative II: Fostering Scholarly Activity

CMU encourages a scholarly environment that attracts and fosters talented and diverse students, faculty and staff. Scholarship is essential to the intellectual life of a university and its accreditation. We embrace a broad view of scholarship, recognizing the value of theoretical and applied research, field-specific and interdisciplinary research, creative efforts, artistic performances, and pedagogical inquiry.

The types and purposes of scholarship at CMU vary [1]:

- Scholarship of discovery advances and expands knowledge within the disciplines and professions.
- Scholarship of integration combines information across disciplines, professions, topics, and time for sharing with our peers and stakeholders.
- Scholarship of application (also known as scholarship of engagement) applies expertise in ways that can be shared with and evaluated by peers and partners, including corporations, government agencies, tribal nations and community organizations. (See Imperative III: Strengthening Partnerships in Michigan and Beyond.)

- Scholarship of teaching and learning studies teaching and learning processes and/or outcomes in ways that can be shared publicly so others can evaluate and apply the results.

Strategies

1. Recruit and retain talented, diverse faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, and staff.
2. Support merit-based financial aid to recruit exceptional students.
3. Provide effective infrastructure to support scholarly activity among faculty, students and staff (e.g., information technology and networks, appropriate laboratory space, library and information resources, performance venues).
4. Provide effective resources and professional development to support scholarship (such as sabbaticals and assistance with grant writing, compliance and sponsored programs).
5. Celebrate and advertise in our press releases, marketing materials and other venues the scholarly activities of our faculty, students and staff.

Targets	Date	Metrics
The amount of federal expenditures for scholarship will increase by \$1.2 million.	By 2022	Data from the National Science Foundation (NSF) obtained by the Office of Research and Graduate Studies (ORGS)
In relevant fields (e.g., science, engineering and medicine), the average citation impact of scholarship will be greater than 1.0.	Annually	Web of Science
The number of research-active faculty who have at least one top-level publication, presentation and/or performance (as defined by department bylaws) will increase annually.	Annually	Department bylaws, annual college reports
A systematic approach for tracking undergraduate and graduate student publications and presentations will be developed.	By Fall 2019	An operational tracking system

Imperative III: Strengthening Partnerships in Michigan and Beyond

CMU values community partnerships. We will emphasize partnerships with alumni, communities, corporations, government agencies and nonprofit organizations that lead to mutual growth and enhancement, starting with those in Michigan and going beyond to our country and the world.

One of the hallmarks of a public university is its impact on various community stakeholders. Some of ours are defined by geography (e.g., Mount Pleasant, the Great Lakes Bay Region, the state of Michigan). Others are defined by category (e.g., higher education institutions and subject-matter expertise). For example, our College of Education and Human Services helped develop an Ag-STEM curriculum for the teachers in a rural Michigan school district, students in our College of Medicine and College of Health Professions help foster the well-being of Michiganders through their hands-on expertise, and our College of Business Administration trains SAP technical experts for major corporations in Michigan and elsewhere.

The Carnegie Foundation defines “community engagement” in terms of collaboration between the university and its partners to enrich scholarship, research and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good. [2]

The Carnegie Foundation also provides criteria for deciding whether universities merit receiving Community Engagement Classification, and we will use those as strategies for strengthening our partnerships.

Strengthening our partnerships relies heavily on the other two imperatives: nurturing student success and fostering scholarly activity. Partnerships demonstrate our excellence and the value of a CMU degree. The partnerships we have already established and those we seek to establish are intended to benefit in tangible ways not only our partners but also our students, faculty and staff. The benefits to our partners include, for example, economic development, public health and wellness, technical assistance, and problem solving. Benefits to students, faculty and staff include, for example, opportunities for scholarly activity (broadly defined), community service, and real-world teaching and learning.

Strategies

- 1.** Increase the number, scope and quality of our community partnerships, especially those that create jobs and provide public service.
- 2.** Identify results for each community partnership that benefit them and us.
- 3.** Survey our various community partners about how they perceive the benefits to them of partnering with CMU.
- 4.** Promote community partnerships as a priority, especially by CMU’s executive leadership.
- 5.** Prioritize programs of distinction (e.g., our United Way campaign, Special Olympics, Mary Ellen Brandell Volunteer Center, New Venture Competition, CMU Research Corporation).
- 6.** Recognize our community, corporate and civic partners through universitywide awards and celebrations.
- 7.** Emphasize our community, corporate and civic partners in our marketing materials.
- 8.** Implement sufficient infrastructure and resources to collect curricular and cocurricular information to apply for Community Engagement Carnegie Classification.
- 9.** Establish an Office of Community Engagement to coordinate and implement the above strategies and submit a proposal to the Carnegie Foundation.

Targets	Date	Metrics
The number of our current partnerships will be determined as a baseline for future annual comparison.	2017	To be determined
The number of courses with service-learning (SL) designations will increase from 18 to 30.	By 2022	Data from the Registrar
Employers who hire CMU graduates will perceive them as “better” or “equally” prepared as graduates from other schools, and most will “probably” or “definitely” hire other CMU graduates.	By 2022	Employer survey
The annual alumni giving rate will increase from 5% to 10%.	By 2022	Alumni giving report
The number of faculty and staff serving on international, national, regional, state or local organizations related to their fields and/or on the boards of corporations and nonprofits will be determined as a baseline for future comparison.	Annually	To be determined
CMU will apply for Community Engagement Carnegie Classification. Achieving this classification would be external validation of the excellence we know exists.	By Spring 2019	Carnegie approval announced in 2020

End Notes

- [1] Adapted in part from Boyer, E.L. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*. Special report for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- [2] Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. (2015). *Elective community engagement classification: First-time classification documentation framework*. Retrieved from http://nerche.org/images/stories/projects/Carnegie/2015/2015_first-time_framework.pdf.