

## Methodist University 2020 *Building on a Culture of Excellence*



### Introduction

Methodist University 2020 is a bold initiative to move the University forward by building on the culture of excellence established by previous strategic plans. This Plan is grounded in our spiritual and moral heritage as a church-related liberal arts college while embracing and celebrating our growth into a comprehensive university.

The goal of the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan is to provide a student-centered education that nurtures values and ethical decision-making through innovative and nationally recognized undergraduate and graduate academic programs. As an institution we are committed to creating a model for community-focused education that cultivates the development of the whole person through programs and initiatives that engage, enrich, and empower the communities we serve. Through this process we will produce successful graduates who are dedicated to achievement and committed to making scholarly positive contributions to a global society.

This Strategic Plan has five primary pillars of emphasis: (1) Academic Excellence and Teaching Innovation; (2) Community and Global Engagement; (3) Enrollment Growth and Student Success; (4) Quality Facilities and Infrastructure, and (5) Financial Resources and Advancing the University.

### Pillar One: Academic Excellence And Teaching Innovation

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: Develop new programs, enhance current programs, and maintain a liberal arts tradition.**

- a. By 2016 develop an academic program-wide senior capstone experience.
- b. By 2016 establish a “collaborative writing across the curriculum” program.
- c. By 2020 double the number of students participating in the Honors Program.
- d. By 2016-2017 develop or improve a minimum of six academic programs targeted for undergraduate enrollment growth.
- e. By 2016-2017, develop or improve a minimum of three academic programs targeted for graduate enrollment growth including the first accelerated undergraduate degree program and combined 5-year Bachelor’s/Master’s degree program.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: Invest in highly motivated, qualified, and technologically proficient faculty and staff who have strong communication skills, are dedicated to creating an engaging, enriching, and empowering learning experience, are passionate about student success, and are prepared to assume future University leadership opportunities.**

- a. By 2020 increase the percentage of faculty who are full-time to 80% and reduce the percentage of

- faculty who are part time (including overloads by full-time faculty) to 20%.
- b. By 2016 develop first-year faculty seminars on pedagogy, technology, research, and campus engagement.
  - c. By 2020, increase number of funded endowed professorships to 20.
  - d. By 2020 increase the number of faculty attending regional or national conferences and making presentations to 50 per year.
  - e. By 2016 increase funding for faculty development, travel associated with research and professional conferences, and faculty-led or -sponsored MU Journey experiences.
  - f. By 2020 increase the number of peer reviewed publications from faculty to 25 per year.
  - g. By 2016 create program for the identification and engagement of selected faculty and staff into University leadership positions.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: Invest in innovative technology to improve learning experiences and be responsive to new methods and best practice pedagogy, including an expanded focus on online learning in targeted undergraduate and graduate degree programs.**

- a. By 2020 develop four new niche hybrid/blended online degree programs.
- b. By 2020 expand use of online courses throughout University during all academic terms and offer online courses in all academic departments, where feasible.
- c. By 2016-17 utilize technology to maximize students' success and the University's capacity to offer a broad availability of online opportunities that will allow for greater flexibility of coursework for full-time students, enhance the residential experience, and provide better accessibility for non-traditional students.
- d. By 2017 create Center for Teaching and Learning that facilitates use of the latest pedagogy, is responsive to trends and innovation in higher education, and implements new tools to maximize educational outcomes.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: Enhance academic culture of the University through focusing on excellence, supporting innovation and research initiatives, and expanding academic advising.**

- a. By 2020 increase number of nationally-recognized programs to five.
- b. By 2020 five additional academic programs will achieve national accreditation where appropriate.
- c. By 2020 Expand visiting scholars and academic speakers programs, bringing four nationally-recognized individuals to campus annually.
- d. By 2020 every academic department will have faculty participating in research or creative work.
- e. By 2020 establish office to identify, promote, and help secure national fellowships and awards available to students and faculty with five individuals receiving awards per year.
- f. By 2020 expand library special collections to 10 special collections to facilitate research opportunities.
- g. By 2016 assess faculty-driven academic advising system and incorporate national best practices.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5: Maximize student participation in the MU Journey initiatives, including Leadership, Community Engagement, Global Education, Undergraduate Research and Creativity, and in experiential learning.**

- a. By 2016 examine the effectiveness of the current calendar and class schedule, including consideration of an intrasession or May term, and review utilization of common hour on MWF.
- b. By 2016 expand awards programs recognizing faculty and student scholarly research and achievements.

- c. By 2020 achieve 90% student participation in one or more of the MU Journey initiatives, including Leadership, Community Engagement, Globalization, and Undergraduate Research and Creativity, and establish student fellows and speakers program in each Center.
- d. By 2020 develop an effective student stipend/grant program to increase participation in the MU Journey, in internship/clinical experiences, and in the proposed Maymester/January Term.

## PILLAR TWO: COMMUNITY AND GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

### **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: Develop holistic approach to broadening and deepening students' spiritual, social, cultural and intellectual horizons through transdisciplinary interfaith dialogue, academic programs, service projects and study abroad.**

- a. By 2018 enhance spiritual life and the University's faith community through the Matthews World Ministry Center and the proposed Center for Global Peace and Ethics with emphasis on the theme of peace and reconciliation.
- b. By 2016 expand student-driven campus ministry programs, including the number of students participating in mission trips, the number of spiritually-rooted social programs, training for students leading organizations, two funded retreats each year, and a speaker series.
- c. By 2016 create a formal connection between Athletic Programs and Fellowship of Christian Athletes.
- d. By 2016 continue annual First Year community engagement project/Day of Service and expand to University wide experience.
- e. By 2017 establish English as a Second Language (ESL) Institute to minimize language barriers for members of MU community.
- f. By 2020 increase the number of program-related study abroad experiences to five annually, particularly professional management programs, performing groups, and athletic teams.
- g. By 2020 establish three University study abroad sites.

### **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: Emphasize continued relevance of a place-based education as part of the University's distinctiveness while addressing the needs of non-traditional and commuting students.**

- a. By 2020 create more campus-wide programs to enhance face-to-face relationships among members of MU community.
- b. By 2020 increase programming for activities among faculty and staff members.
- c. By 2020 increase faculty, staff, and student attendance at University events.
- d. By 2020 create a national model for community engagement that prepares students to be civic and globally minded citizens.
- e. By 2020 create more opportunities for nontraditional students to be involved in University life.

### **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: Expand partnership with the local and regional community as a resource through facilities, programs, and events. Attract community members to campus to attend cultural, academic, and athletic events.**

- a. By 2020 stress the quality of the arts at the University, e.g., increasing number of nationally recognized art exhibitions annually.
- b. By 2020 expand Presidential Speaker Series to two per year to bring visitors to campus and strengthen MU experience.

- c. By 2020 develop five exclusive signature partnerships with community/national/global organizations and institutions.

## PILLAR THREE: ENROLLMENT GROWTH AND STUDENT SUCCESS

### **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: Continue to develop and support the University's student-centered culture, including all elements of the Center for Student Success, providing increased academic and non-academic support for students.**

- a. By 2020 improve the academic advising program through additional training and integration with the University's professional tutoring staff and supplemental instruction programs.
- b. By 2016 create process for the redesign and review of prerequisites for courses with high drop/fail/withdraw rates.
- c. By 2017 expand the First Year Experience into the development of a Sophomore Experience.
- d. By 2016 expand support for international students, including first year orientation, language institute, off-campus travel, financial advising, and assistance with post-graduation plans.
- e. By 2016 expand opportunities for students to participate in signature performing groups and regional and national competitions.

### **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: Increase overall enrollment through expanding traditional student recruitment, extended learning programs, graduate programs and improved student retention.**

- a. By 2020 grow enrollment to 3,000 students through undergraduate full time new student recruitment and retention, extended learning programs, and graduate programs.
- b. By 2020 expand recruitment emphasis to attract additional pipelines, markets, and geographic areas.
- c. By 2020 improve the academic profile in terms of high school GPA, SAT/ACT test scores, and first semester GPA.
- d. By 2020 increase percentage of academic scholarship recipients in first year class, particularly in the top scholars programs.
- e. By 2020 achieve a freshman to sophomore retention rate of 70%.
- f. By 2016 maintain athletic enrollment (new and returning student athletes) by maximizing roster sizes, introducing new sports, and developing Institute for Sport.
- g. By 2016 redesign non-traditional educational programs into Division of Extended Learning to include MU@Night, Ft. Bragg offerings, and online learning programs and by 2020 increase enrollment by 25%.
- h. By 2020 increase the number of international students to 250, with special emphasis in expanding efforts in India and China, promoting niche programs, and establishing signature partnerships with international organizations and institutions interested in study abroad opportunities.
- i. By 2020 double graduate student enrollment and develop increased opportunities for Graduate Assistantships in academic and administrative areas.

### **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: Maximize the success of students in securing a University degree and securing graduate school or job placement.**

- a. By 2020 achieve a 55% six-year graduation rate.
- b. By 2020 achieve and sustain a 90% job and graduate school placement rate within six months of graduation, while continuing to improve the overall survey response rate of respondents.

- c. By 2016 create Senior Seminar Series to facilitate successful transition upon graduation.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: Expand partnerships, programs, facilities, and services to all military related students and their family members.**

- a. Through 2020 sustain the current percentage (20%) of students affiliated with the military through development of focused and niche degree programs, including online/hybrid degree programs.
- b. By 2020 expand the number of partnerships with military-related programs.
- c. Continue to address issues related to military families to improve pathways for a successful MU experience.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5: Increase the number of student internship opportunities through academic programs and the MU Advantage Internship Program.**

- a. By 2020 all qualified full-time day students will have the opportunity to participate in an internship or clinical experience with 75% of students having gained some kind of education-related work experience by graduation.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 6: Maintain student costs at an affordable level to help maximize students' opportunities to earn a Methodist University degree.**

- a. By 2016 conduct complete analysis of financial aid structure to facilitate development of viable funding packages for students and families and review financial aid policies to ensure they support student access, enrollment, and success.
- b. By 2016 conduct price sensitivity study for all undergraduate and graduate fees and expenses, including implementation of student financial literacy program to help address student debt.
- c. By 2016 begin to examine annually university fee structure and mechanism for addressing/funding new needs, e.g., study abroad, laboratory fees, and technology.

## PILLAR FOUR: QUALITY FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: Create one of the most attractive and well-maintained campuses in the Southeastern United States.**

- a. By 2017 in accordance with the Master Plan improve entrance and streetscape to serve as a welcome gateway to the campus.
- b. Through 2020 provide additional campus landscaping and enhancement, including a campus lake.
- c. By 2020 develop a design for a campus loop that provides access to the entire 617 acres, including further development of nature trails and creation of a cross country course.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: Move forward with the implementation of the next phase of the Campus Master Plan as a continued commitment to a place-based education. Assess University needs and invest in new and enhanced facilities that reflect institutional priorities.**

- a. By late 2015 complete construction of McLean Health Sciences Building.
- b. By 2017 complete construction/renovation of Reeves Fine Arts Building and Matthews World Ministry Center to create an arts and cultural complex and expanded conference capabilities, including the Bethune Arts Building
- c. By 2020 complete renovation and expansion of Berns Student Center/Student Union and Main Quad



landscaping project.

- d. By 2020 complete current planned improvements to athletic facilities.
- e. By 2020 identify other projects for the next phase of the campus Master Plan that may include academic space, residence halls, pool, athletic facilities, health clinic, Jordan Soccer Complex, retreat center, and administrative offices to be designed and/or constructed.
- f. By 2016 analyze use and capacity of current academic spaces, e.g., Clark, Trustees, Hendricks in order to accommodate the needs of current programs and align with future plans for program expansion, including addressing and lowering amount of any deferred maintenance issues, and create additional academic spaces/buildings as needed.
- g. By Fall of 2016 assess and improve existing residential spaces and develop additional residence hall space, including competitively-priced apartments for undergraduates, graduates, employees, Greek housing, and other special interest housing.
- h. By 2016-17 construct a 100 student residence hall.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: Support infrastructure for existing facilities, traffic flow, and parking.**

- a. By 2017 develop parking contingency plan in association with Master Plan, and begin implementation with transformation of parking lot between Berns and Riddle into a campus green space.
- b. By 2020 develop additional student gathering areas within new and existing buildings.
- c. By 2017 develop a defined directive of the campus map, regarding the implications of traffic flow and parking, e.g., Ramsey Street intersection, University entrance (including Welcome Center), and directional signs and street paving.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: Invest in a strong technology infrastructure that will meet the needs of the modern student, facilitate enhanced learning, strengthen educational delivery, and create better educational pathways.**

- a. By 2020 using resources that include Title III funding, upgrade existing software platforms for instructional technologies and equip the library with the infrastructure needed to be the main hub for student access to institutional provided technology.
- b. By 2020 develop appropriate and systematic replacement cycle for University computers.
- c. By 2020 develop modern learning spaces to maximize use of technology, accommodate different learning environments, and support integrated learning and communication.
- d. By 2020 increase bandwidth by a factor of four and increase wireless accessibility to 100% in public areas and buildings on the campus.
- e. By 2016 while continuing initiatives funded under Title III, centralize IT functions and implement an overall information security strategic plan.
- f. By 2016 provide better accessibility of distance learning for non-traditional students.
- g. By 2017 develop and enhance signature facilities across the campus to showcase and develop our use of technology, including Library, Human Performance Lab, Nursing Simulation Hospital, PA Anatomy Lab, PGM labs, science laboratories, Communications Studio, and Huff Concert Hall.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5: Develop a culture of environmental sustainability and stewardship for campus programs and the University's 617 acres.**

- a. Through 2020 provide environmental stewardship of the University's 617 acres and decrease the

- impact of developments on the surrounding ecological systems.
- b. By 2020 expand campus recycling program and incorporate best practices in environmental sustainability initiatives and incorporate initiatives into the University academic curriculum, operations, outreach and community service.
  - c. By 2017 conduct an energy audit and evaluate feasibility of implementing those findings to maximize energy and resource efficiencies in buildings.
  - d. By 2020 expand alternative transportation options, including campus bicycle and Zipcar programs.

## PILLAR FIVE: FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND ADVANCING THE UNIVERSITY

### **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: Improve the financial stability of the University and ensure sufficient resources to fund the strategic priorities of the University through strategic finance initiatives, successful stewardship of resources, and revenue enhancement.**

- a. Through 2020 continue Strategic Finance initiative and take appropriate action based on a thorough annual review and evaluation of revenues and expenses associated with individual programs.
- b. Through 2020 create more efficiency in lower-performing programs at the University to include elimination of any program that are deemed ineffective.
- c. Through 2020 balance the budget, support cash reserves, maintain bond ratings, and stay within debt ratios while staying within the historic average of tuition and fee increases.
- d. By 2016 develop policies and processes for the allocation of resources and personnel based on strategic priorities and revenue generated.
- e. By 2016 improve business systems to include a transparent 3-year budget model that provides sufficient resources for strategic priorities.
- f. Through 2020, review Risk Management Plan annually, including practices, policies, and facilities, and consequently implement procedures and communication tools to address and mitigate current and potential risks.
- g. Through 2020, update comprehensive University leadership succession plan annually.
- h. By 2016 continue to allocate resources to fund the current Title III efforts.

### **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: Further develop an employee compensation strategy that appropriately and competitively compensates faculty and staff for their contributions, provides funding for continued professional development, and strives to build loyalty and job satisfaction.**

- a. By 2016 continue to enhance human resource strategy that is employee centered in providing adequate compensation, effective communications, professional development, employee recognition and job satisfaction.
- b. By 2016 review and improve employee performance evaluation system which values and rewards exceptional performance while considering a cost of living model and ways to reward long-term employees as well as non-financial compensation.
- c. Through 2020 continue to address compensation levels and manage the cost of employee benefits, including an evaluation of health insurance funding model.
- d. By 2016 create more opportunities for employee training and professional development, e.g., technology, Jenzabar systems, professional conferences, leadership opportunities, and customer service.

- e. Implement a program to make better use of undergraduate and graduate student work force, including development of student corps in proficient areas, e.g., technology and graduate assistantships.
- f. Through 2016 conduct assessment of staffing needs in order to meet the needs of the campus and to service current and planned facilities.
- g. By 2016 develop campus wellness program through collaboration with Human Resources, School of Health Sciences, Division of Student Affairs, Department of Physical Education and Exercise Science, and proposed Institute for Sport.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: Build a culture of philanthropy by securing support for facilities, scholarships, and endowment, and developing a national volunteer network and signature partnerships.**

- a. By 2020, complete the \$35 million “Building Excellence Campaign” and set goal for additional capital, endowment, and annual resources to help fund University strategic priorities, including Master Plan priorities and emerging academic and campus programs.
- b. By 2020 increase the endowment from \$24 million to \$46 million or 50% of operating budget to provide stronger financial position and greater resources for strategic priorities.
- c. By 2020 increase number of endowed scholarships from 142 to 200.
- d. By 2020 double the number of recorded planned gift commitments from 100 to 200.
- e. By 2020 increase annual alumni participation from 9% to 15%.
- f. By 2020 increase engagement by alumni and recognized experts through participation in advisory boards and serving as guest speakers/executives in residence.
- g. By 2016 create active Parents Council.
- h. By 2020 increase funding and resources through new grant opportunities and renewed grants from government sources and private foundations.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: Maintain successful and effective marketing and communications to promote the University to include new and emerging programs and to keep alumni engaged, and to respond quickly and effectively to changes in higher education in communications delivery methods, and changes within the University.**

- a. By 2020 promote a distinctive and unified Methodist University brand.
- b. By 2020 expand marketing of MU to targeted cities in order to improve recruitment, internships/ clinical experiences, alumni engagement, and University visibility.
- c. By 2020 enhance communications to internal and external audiences to be personalized, meaningful, and timely.
- d. By 2020 develop customized marketing strategies for key academic and emerging programs to maximize advertising effectiveness.
- e. By 2020 continue to effectively utilize social media and improve our web presence.
- f. By 2020 promote achievements by faculty, staff, alumni, and students to increase the name recognition and prestige of the university.



## CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

Building upon the “Culture of Excellence” achieved in the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan and the bold objectives established in the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, a number of “Centers of Excellence” will be established or enhanced as a part of the implementation of the new Plan. They will serve as focal points to maximize this implementation. They include:

1. Center for Entrepreneurship
2. Honors Program
3. Center for Teaching and Learning
4. Center for Global Peace and Ethics
5. Center for Student Success
6. Lura Talley Center for Leadership
7. Center for Global Education
8. Center for Community Engagement
9. Center for Undergraduate Research and Creativity
10. Center for the Arts and Culture
11. Institute for Sport
12. English as a Second Language (ESL) Institute

## 2015-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN TASK FORCES

Task forces will be established for each Pillar to meet at least quarterly with assigned responsibility for targeted goals and monitoring of programs and progress. In addition, the following task forces will also function in order to maximize the implementation of the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan:

1. Master Plan
2. Health Sciences
3. University Housing
4. Technology
5. Compensation
6. Center for Teaching and Learning
7. Pricing Study
8. Strategic Finance