



UNIVERSITY RISING STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2024

The University Rising strategic plan is being developed and implemented during a challenging and intense time of global and national change. Together, we are working to fulfill our institutional mission in the midst of a worldwide pandemic. The past academic year (2020-2021) has taught our community many important lessons about resilience, relevancy and adaptive change. With courage, confidence and creativity we plan to move the University forward in the upcoming three years united by our common Christian faith, commitment to excellence in all our endeavors and our desire to serve and mentor our students.

As a community of educators, we believe the world needs Messiah graduates who incarnate our institutional values and model our communication campaign statement of sharpening intellect, deepening Christian faith and inspiring action. We seek to educate our students to be a faithful, gracious presence in a society that is increasingly divided, polarized and also, skeptical of the proper role of religious faith in the public square.

As a community of educators, we value and embrace innovation. Throughout our 111-year history, Messiah has invented and reinvented itself as a Bible school, a junior college, a four-year liberal arts college which later added strong programs in the applied arts and sciences, and in 2010 a graduate school was added leading to the current status. Messiah has earned a well-deserved reputation for faith-based quality academics, athletics, the arts, and co-curricular programming, which combine to produce graduates who are critical thinkers, ethical decision makers and servant leaders. The University Rising strategic plan will enable us to build upon our history and nurture our key distinctives which are:

- A commitment to a gracious Christian approach to faith formation expressed in love of God and neighbor
- A commitment to educational excellence for all programs across all levels
- Commitment to inclusive excellence rooted in the intersection of our missional outcomes of service, leadership and reconciliation

Our shared vision for Messiah University is as follows:

Messiah University will expand its influence as an institution of educational excellence committed to Christ-centered learning for life where students are mentored toward deeper intellect, personal integrity and mature faith expressed in love of God and neighbor.

I. THEME TEAM 1 – DISTINCTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Focus

With teaching and learning at the heart of our educational mission, we seek to leverage the distinctives of a Messiah education to reinvent or revitalize compelling teaching and learning practices for learners from high school age to elder years. In particular, we seek to attract, enroll and retain new students from outside of our current student demographic.

- **Goal 1:** Messiah University will reflect Messiah distinctives across educational programs, support structures and staffing.

1. Revise the undergraduate general education program to be flexible, compelling, relevant and reflective of Messiah's core mission, values and distinctives.
 2. Clearly articulate Messiah's distinctives to all employees, providing professional development toward increasing awareness, understanding, and integration of those distinctives into the life of the University and equipping employees to effectively tell the Messiah story.
 3. Ensure that our mission, values and distinctives are appropriately embedded in emerging educational programming.
- **Goal 2:** Messiah University will strategically use technology and campus spaces to increase educational access and student success across the learning experience.
 1. Assess curriculum to identify and clearly articulate the role of digital citizenship competencies in different learning environments (grad, undergrad, and co-curriculum).
 2. Assess students' current access to technology resources and services to identify and work toward addressing gaps in equitable access and inclusion.
 3. Expand computer/software programming support to maximize educator and administrator efficiency by minimizing time spent on automated tasks.
 4. Assess campus space to strategically align technology, room capacities, room utilization, and course/section capacities with teaching & learning priorities.
 - **Goal 3:** Messiah University will cultivate a community of thriving educators by coordinating a comprehensive, dynamic and responsive set of professional development programs centered on institutional priorities and distinctives.
 1. Enhance our professional development programming to serve the full range of teaching and learning modalities (F2F, hybrid, online).
 2. Reduce 'educator overwhelm' by creating a centralized information hub regarding educator development resources and requirements.
 3. Design and implement educator development programs that incentivize participation around strategic priorities, including a robust offering of mentoring communities devoted to areas of interest (examples: scholarship, advising, inclusive excellence).
 4. Provide a series of professional development programs that enable educators at Messiah and other institutions to fulfill Continuing Education Unit (CEU) requirements for certification and re-certification in fields such as Athletic Training, Counseling, Nursing, and Social Work.

II. THEME TEAM 2 – SEE MESSIAH ANEW

Focus

It is vital to leverage our historic transition to Messiah University, and its related educational program expansion, to communicate our brand in new ways, using emerging technology and strategies, and to strengthen our ability to recruit and retain a diverse student population and engage other stakeholders across the full learning-for-life spectrum.

- **Goal 1:** Develop and implement strategies to effectively expand, recruit and retain a more diverse undergraduate and graduate student body.
 1. Expand Dual Enrollment (DE) online undergraduate (UG) courses in fall, spring, and summer and develop an enhanced DE enrollment plan, branded web presence, and outreach to partner schools (public and private), homeschool organizations, cyber and charter schools.
 2. Establish and formalize an annual comprehensive UG pipeline program strategy for our top 3-5 programs capable of achieving enrollment growth.

3. Develop strategies for achieving next-level excellence in attracting and retaining students of color and international students, bringing our overall enrollment no less than 25 percent of the combined undergraduate and graduate student population.
- **Goal 2:** Research, deepen and apply our understanding of the educational goals, motivations and obstacles of our key educational stakeholders to strengthen our institutional recruitment, marketing and brand.
 1. Develop and implement a new systemic annual cycle of primary and secondary market research that will analyze target audiences across Messiah's expanded Learning for Life educational programs, including quantitative survey research and qualitative focus groups that will guide the expansion of competitor analyses and detailed learner profiles for each audience segment.
 - **Goal 3:** Expand awareness of Messiah's brand and distinctives as a nationally recognized comprehensive Christian university—both in our surrounding region—and in potential new geographic markets as guided by strategic partnerships and research.
 1. Create and launch a strategic multimedia campaign for Messiah University designed to share the story and generate awareness of our educational brand, value and distinctives—both in our region—and in new geographic markets where research and strategic partnerships indicate there are prospective target audiences who reflect Messiah's consumer profiles and synergy with Messiah's Christian educational mission.
 2. Assess Messiah's current campus site marketing and develop and implement a site marketing plan, including the exploration of emerging technology, with a particular focus on new indoor and outdoor areas including the Kim S. Phipps Admissions and Welcome Center, campus green and proposed campus entrance.
 - **Goal 4:** Advance digital recruitment and enrollment strategies as an essential priority to generate awareness and engagement throughout the student's full lifecycle of attendance.
 1. Develop critical digital recruitment assets and strategies designed to generate awareness about Messiah University while engaging users with meaningful and creative content.
 2. Improve marketing automation capabilities and communication flows for prospective students and their families.
 3. Develop real-time reporting tools that will help equip key stakeholders with the information they need to make data-driven decisions by improving integration between Messiah's Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) and digital marketing platforms to allow full-funnel analytics to better determine return on investment for digital recruitment strategies.
 - **Goal 5:** Enhance strategic communication with alumni, parents and donors as key stakeholders in support of institutional fundraising, engagement and learning for life educational initiatives.
 1. Implement a new advancement-focused customer relationship management (CRM) platform that will integrate with Messiah's alumni, parent and donor data, to facilitate a strategic communication flow that will connect and engage these important audiences with key institutional programs, priorities and initiatives.

III. THEME TEAM 3 – SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Focus

Thriving institutions have a dynamic mission accompanied by financial vitality. Without an adequate financial foundation, our mission cannot be effectively fulfilled. A sustainable future

requires increasing new enrollment revenue through creative, innovative and timely program development that addresses learning for life as well as careful stewardship of institutional assets.

- **Goal 1:** Messiah University will successfully expand and support new academic programs to increase net revenue through increased student enrollment.
 1. Develop programs, services and infrastructure leading to designation as a National Security Agency Center for Academic Excellence – Cybersecurity Defense Education (CAE-CDE) institution to support existing and new traditional UG, ADP, graduate and professional cybersecurity programming.
 2. Complete the feasibility study for the DNP Nurse Anesthetist Track which is designed to prepare graduates as certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNA) by the National Board on Certification and Recertification of Nurse Anesthetists (NBCRNA).
 3. Leverage faculty expertise and meet clinician needs by developing graduate level, post-licensure certificates in Occupational Therapy.
 4. Expand current graduate-level program options in counseling to build on the program's strong enrollment and track record (addiction, trauma).
 5. Expand Adult Degree Program (ADP) and enrichment learning education options by offering micro-credentials (certificates, badges, CE). Examples include: Cyber Defense and Information Security, Data Analytics, Business Analytics, Family and Consumer Sciences Education and Geriatric Care.
 6. Design internal and external accelerated programs in high demand degree programs (for example, internal degree in BS/DPT and external agreements in BS/MS Physician Assistant).
 7. Create online Associate's Degree to incentivize student recruitment and retention in dual enrollment and ADP programs.
 8. Identify and implement opportunities for offering select "traditional" undergraduate degree programs, and courses via online or hybrid delivery methods.

- **Goal 2:** Messiah University will steward institutional assets to enhance financial margins derived from non-tuition sources.
 1. Launch the public and final phase of the current \$75M comprehensive campaign – *Learning for Life, Transforming the World: The Campaign for Messiah University* – to be completed in June 2023.
 2. Increase the institutional endowment to \$145 million (increase of \$7-8 million).
 3. Raise \$4 million per year or \$12 million over three years in annual restricted funds for capital and/or program support, i.e., building projects and/or gifts restricted to a specific program for "over and above" expenses.
 4. Raise \$3.9 million (\$1.3 million per year) for the Messiah Fund to provide much needed unrestricted support for University operations.
 5. Expand use of meeting spaces and catering services for an increased number of external constituents.

IV. THEME TEAM 4 – TRANSFORMATIVE CONNECTIONS

Focus

Transformative Connections are strategic partnerships and formal relationships with organizations that have the potential for "game-changing" benefit to the University while simultaneously assisting the partner organization in meeting their goals. While these transformative connections may result in opportunities for new student internships, experiential education, and donor relations, they are not simply community engagement as currently defined. Transformative connections must be mission driven, market sensitive and net revenue positive for the University; generating significant new tuition and non-tuition revenues that support the mission and goals of Messiah University.

- **Goal:** Messiah University will establish a new initiative (led by a senior level administrator) that focuses on identifying and developing new strategic partnerships. This initiative will serve as a resource to the entire campus community in evaluating and securing potential new partners – with five primary outcomes:
 - a. Generate new non-tuition revenue
 - b. Increase enrollment across all programs
 - c. Meet the needs of partner organizations
 - d. Serve workforce development needs
 - e. Serve enrichment-learning opportunities
1. Establish a Workforce and Professional Development Program. Messiah University will develop new programs or reshape current ones to address the needs of the rapidly changing workforce and the demand for enrichment learning. This program will be separate from the academic governance structure as it assists partners in developing and delivering customized programming (certificates, micro-credentials, training, etc.).
 2. Establish International Student Recruitment partners to collaborate with the Division of Enrollment Management to expand our international partners -- leveraging ACSI International schools, alumni and parent connections, ministry contacts and corporate connections.
 3. Establish New Domestic Student Recruitment Partners in Areas of Stable and Growing Populations - collaborate with the Division of Enrollment Management to establish new partners in regions of the United States where there is a stable high school graduation-rate and/or the overall population is growing. These partners will include:
 - a. Growth population centers in the United States where we have alumni, parent, ministry, school, and church connections.
 - b. Higher education institutions interested in accelerated programs, partnerships, and creative new programming models (ADP, Graduate and non-degree).
 - c. Formalizing a relationship(s) with a Gap-Year Program for high school students that leads to enrollment at Messiah University.
 4. Identify and/or invest in new business partnerships where a percentage of the net profits can contribute to the annual operating budget of the University.
 5. Create a revenue generating health and fitness initiative through the Messiah University Fitness Center that serves the general population and partners with medical professionals to serve targeted populations. The initiative will also provide robust experiential learning opportunities for Health, Nutrition and Exercise Science students.
 6. Establish a President's Executive Leadership Roundtable, consisting of regional and national senior executives, to identify partnership opportunities and explore ideas related to innovation and emerging trends.