



UNIVERSITY RISING STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2024

The University Rising strategic plan was developed and will be implemented during a challenging and intense time of global and national change. Together, the Messiah community is 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, 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 the University values and model our communication tagline of sharpening intellect, deepening Christian faith and inspiring action. We seek to educate and inspire our students to be a faithful, gracious presence in a society that is increasingly divided, polarized and also, skeptical of the vital 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
- A 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, professional competence, 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 strategically use technology and campus spaces to increase educational access and student success across the learning experience. (President)

1. Assess curriculum to identify and clearly articulate the role of digital citizenship competencies (skills and ethics) in different learning environments (grad, undergrad, and co-curriculum). (FY22) (Provost Cabinet)
 2. Assess students' current access to technology resources and services to identify and work toward addressing gaps in equitable access and inclusion. (FY22) (Director of Student Success; VP for Diversity Affairs; Director of the Academic Success Center)
 3. Assess campus space to strategically align technology, room capacities, room utilization, and course/section capacities with teaching & learning priorities. (FY 22) (Associate Provost; VP for Operations)
- **Goal 2:** Messiah University will reflect Messiah distinctives across educational programs, support structures and staffing. (President)
 1. Revise the undergraduate general education program to be flexible, compelling, relevant and reflective of Messiah's core mission, values and distinctives. (FY23) (Provost)
 2. Provide professional development for all employees toward increasing awareness, understanding, and integration of those distinctives into all aspects of the Messiah experience and equipping employees to effectively tell the Messiah story. (FY23) (VP for Human Resources and Compliance; Executive Director of Marketing and Communications)
 - **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. (Provost)
 1. Enhance our professional development programming to serve the full range of teaching and learning modalities (F2F, hybrid, online). (FY22) (Associate Provost; Director of Faculty Development)
 2. Design and implement educator development programs that promote participation around strategic priorities, including a robust offering of mentoring communities devoted to areas of interest (examples: scholarship, advising, inclusive excellence). (FY23) (Vice Provost for Student Success and Engagement; Associate Provost; Director of Faculty Development)

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. (VP for Enrollment Management; Dean of the School of Graduate Studies)
 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. (FY22-23) (VP for Enrollment Management; Executive Director of Marketing and Communications; Associate Provost)
 2. Establish and formalize an annual comprehensive UG pipeline program multiyear strategy for our top 3-5 programs capable of achieving enrollment growth. (FY22) (VP for Enrollment Management; Associate Provost; Executive Director of Marketing and Communications)
 3. Develop strategies for achieving next-level excellence in attracting and retaining students of color and international students, bringing our overall enrollment to no less than 25 percent of

the undergraduate and graduate student population by 2024. (FY22) (VP for Enrollment Management; VP for Diversity Affairs)

- **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. (President)
 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. (FY23) (Executive Director of Marketing and Communications)

- **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. (President)
 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. (FY22) (President; Executive Director of Marketing and Communications; Dean of the School of Graduate Studies)
 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. (FY22) (President; Executive Director of Marketing and Communications; VP for Operations)

- **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. (Executive Director of Marketing and Communications)
 1. Develop critical digital recruitment assets and strategies designed to generate awareness about Messiah University while engaging users with meaningful and creative content. Leverage real-time reporting to continuously optimize and evolve campaigns to improve the return on investment for advertising dollars. (FY23) (Director of Web and Digital Marketing)
 2. Improve marketing automation capabilities and communication flows for prospective students and their families. (FY23) (Director of Web and Digital Marketing)

- **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. (VP for Advancement)
 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. (FY22) (VP for Advancement; Executive Director of Development; Director of Alumni and Parent Relations)

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. (Provost)
 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. (FY22) (Provost; Dean of the School of Graduate Studies; Dean of the School of Science, Engineering and Health)
 2. Leverage faculty expertise and meet clinician needs by developing graduate level, post-licensure certificates in Occupational Therapy. (FY22) (Dean of the School of Graduate Studies)
 3. Expand current graduate-level program options in counseling to build on the program’s strong enrollment and track record. (FY22) (Dean of the School of Graduate Studies)
 4. Expand Adult Degree Program (ADP) and enrichment learning education options by offering micro-credentials (certificates, badges, CE). (FY22) (Special Assistant to the President and Provost for Program Development; Dean of the School of Graduate Studies)
 5. 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). (FY23) (Dean of the School of Graduate Studies; Dean of the School of Science, Engineering and Health)
 6. Expand current graduate-level program options in music to build on the program’s strong enrollment and track record. (FY22) (Dean of the School of Graduate Studies)
 7. Identify and implement opportunities for offering select “traditional” undergraduate degree programs, and courses via online or hybrid delivery methods. (FY23) (Provost Cabinet)

- **Goal 2:** Messiah University will steward institutional assets to increase revenue derived from non-tuition sources. (VP for Finance & Planning)
 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. (FY22) (VP for Advancement)
 2. Increase the institutional endowment to \$145 million (increase of \$8 million with \$4 million coming from new gifts). (FY24) (VP for Advancement; VP for Finance and Planning)
 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. (FY22-24) (VP for Advancement; Executive Director of Development)
 4. Raise \$3.9 million (\$1.3 million per year) for the Messiah Fund to provide much needed unrestricted support for University operations. (FY22-24) (VP for Advancement; Executive Director of Development)
 5. Expand use of campus facilities and catering services for an increased number of external constituents. (FY22) (VP for Operations)

IV. THEME TEAM 4 – TRANSFORMATIVE CONNECTIONS

Focus

Transformative Connections are strategic partnerships and formal relationships with organizations that have the potential for “game-changing” benefits 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 presidentially-appointed 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. (President)
 1. Establish a Workforce 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 assist partners in developing and delivering customized programming (certificates, micro-credentials, training, etc.) that exists apart from the traditional educational programming. (FY22) (New Appointee; Special Assistant to the President and Provost for Program Development)
 2. Establish International Student Recruitment partners by collaborating with the Division of Enrollment Management to leverage connections with ACSI International schools, alumni and parent networks, ministry contacts and corporate networks resulting in new recruitment partners. (FY23) (New Appointee; VP for Enrollment Management; VP for Diversity Affairs)
 3. Establish New Domestic Student Recruitment Partners by collaborating 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 Messiah has alumni, parent, ministry, school, and church connections. (FY22) (New Appointee; VP for Enrollment Management; VP for Diversity Affairs)
 - b. Higher education institutions who express interest in accelerated programs, partnerships, and creative new programming models (ADP, Graduate and non-degree). (FY23) (New Appointee and Dean of the School of Graduate Studies)
 - c. Formalizing a relationship(s) with a Gap-Year Program for high school students that leads to enrollment at Messiah University. (FY22) (VP for Enrollment Management and Associate Provost)
 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. (FY23) (New Appointee; VP for Finance and Planning)
 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. (FY23) (VP for Student Success and Engagement; Director of Wellness and Recreation; Dean of Science, Engineering and Health)

*Referred to as New Appointee

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. (FY22) (President; VP for Advancement)