

The University of Akron Strategic Plan

DRAFT

Mission

The University of Akron is a public urban research university that builds on historic strengths in business, the arts and the STEM fields to have a transformative impact on its region and the nation, by providing opportunities for all learners, engaging in partnerships that advance commerce, create knowledge and nurture innovation.

Values

TBD

1. We promise to provide education to and share knowledge with those who seek it.

The University of Akron is affirming its promise to remain true to the liberal arts tradition of developing holistic thinkers, the paradigm upon which this University was founded 150 years ago. We will provide students with the opportunity to gain knowledge, skills, and insight that will enable them to make an impact on a rapidly changing world. We will provide a transformative growth experience to all learners and will help them to approach problems critically, collaboratively, and creatively. Our graduates will emerge with the ability to lead lives of significance.

1.1 The University of Akron affirms its promise to produce the highly skilled graduates who are needed to power the local economy and who possess the intellectual capacity to tackle complex problems.

Initiatives

1.1.1 We will provide a greater number of students in our region the opportunity to earn a college degree by meeting learners where they are in their lives.

1.1.2 We will invest in high-demand degree options.

1.1.3 We will expand the options for efficient degree completion.

1.1.4 We will increase the number of experiential learning opportunities for students to include activities both inside and outside of the classroom.

1.1.5 We will support growth in the number of interdisciplinary degrees, certificates, activities, and collaborative initiatives across campus.

*1.2 The University of Akron is rising to meet the challenges of excellence in virtual education by developing **Akron Online**, a virtual campus that is focused on the flexible needs of lifelong learners.*

Initiatives

- 1.2.1 We will build upon our robust infrastructure to create a supportive and encouraging environment for students who take courses via *Akron Online*.
- 1.2.2 We will develop online programs that serve non-traditional students, professionals, executives, corporations, military personnel, international students, and many others who are unable to attend classes on our physical campuses.
- 1.2.3 We will deliver top-tier online programs and courses that offer students access to expert faculty who are invested in their success—and provide support from day one.
- 1.2.4 We will encourage and support faculty in the development and delivery of high-quality online courses and programs.

1.3 The University of Akron will increase flexibility in order to empower students as they pursue their passions.

Initiatives

- 1.3.1 We will develop and expand scholarship opportunities to help our students achieve their educational goals.
- 1.3.2 We will institute a one-stop office where students can find answers to their questions—whether they be personal, academic, career, or financial.
- 1.3.3 We will create “academic path forgiveness” policies that are supportive for students who decide to change their majors.
- 1.3.4 We will offer stackable certificate programs that provide opportunities for degree-seeking students and non-degree-seeking learners to develop unique combinations of skills and knowledge relevant to market needs.
- 1.3.5 We will establish clear pathways for students to more easily move between programs and to engage in joint programs.

1.4 The University of Akron will ensure that our graduates are prepared to be well-rounded global citizens

Initiatives

- 1.4.1 We will provide opportunities for students to become more immersed in intellectual and recreational communities that ensure educational growth and social development.
- 1.4.2 We will encourage the development of greater artistic expression, an appreciation for the humanities in order to help students understand the human condition, a sensitivity to other cultures, and a mindful perspective related to the social fabrics that contribute to well-being.
- 1.4.3 We will enhance course modules, classes, and programs that help students to improve their ability to be creative problem solvers and innovators in their fields.
- 1.4.4 We will expand the opportunities for all students to participate in service learning, volunteering, and study abroad experiences.

2. We promise to connect to and serve our community.

The University of Akron affirms its promise to be the region's most influential public research university, to facilitate resurgence of the local economy, and to engage with the citizens of Akron and the surrounding communities.

2.1 The University of Akron will enhance its collaborations with local leadership in Akron, Summit County, and surrounding areas.

Initiatives

- 2.1.1 We will expand partnerships with community leaders in order to involve students, faculty, and staff in addressing issues of importance.
- 2.1.2 We will engage with local businesses, not-for-profit organizations, and the public sector to help solve problems and promote entrepreneurial partnerships that benefit all.
- 2.1.3 We will increase the number of internships and cooperative learning opportunities for students to interact with regional organizations.
- 2.1.4 We will involve more students in solving problems that address critical needs through experiential learning exercises, capstone projects, and applied class activities.
- 2.1.5 We will become the first choice for organizations seeking workforce training and development.
- 2.1.6 We will enhance the reputation and competitiveness of businesses in the Akron region to compete in the global marketplace.

2.2 The University of Akron will work with community partners to address the issues that affect global sustainability

Initiatives

- 2.2.1 We will ensure that our graduates will have an appreciation for the importance of community and global stewardship and their role in shaping the future of the earth.
- 2.2.2 We will increase student involvement with projects related to environmental sustainability and ecosystems.
- 2.2.3 We will model environmentally sustainable design and behaviors for the region.

2.3 The University of Akron resolves to create a welcoming environment for the local community as they enjoy the benefits afforded by our cultural corridor.

Initiatives

- 2.3.1 We will increase the level of partnerships with local organizations to support art, athletics, special events, and other cultural activities
- 2.3.2 We will provide convenient opportunities for organizations and individuals to make appropriate use of our facilities and expertise.
- 2.3.3 We will become a destination for alumni and retirees who seek the benefits of living near a thriving university and all that it has to offer.

2.4 The University of Akron will engage our alumni as full partners with the university.

- 2.4.1 We will provide continual life-long learning opportunities for our alumni.

2.4.2 We will include alumni in decision-making at multiple levels to ensure that their needs and aspirations are considered.

3. We promise to increase our commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity.

The University of Akron attracts a unique blend of extraordinarily talented faculty, learners of all types, and visionary community partners who are seeking understanding and truth. We aim to increase the blend of diverse individuals in order to increase our strength as a leading urban university.

3.1 The University of Akron resolves to foster an environment of invigorating multiculturalism, diversity, and inclusion.

Initiatives

3.1.1 We will engage in new efforts to increase all elements of diversity among the university administration, faculty, contract professionals, staff, and student body.

3.1.2 We will create an inclusive campus where each individual feels valued and included in multiple groups, and in which all can interact, learn, and thrive.

3.1.3 We will develop programs to engage the campus and region in dialogue related to current race relationships and other diversity issues.

3.1.4 We will increase the numbers of students representing different countries and states with special efforts to recruit them to campus.

3.1.5 We will expand the production of relevant scholarship and demonstrate its application to equity, inclusion, and diversity.

3.1.6 We will strive to improve the University's recruitment of first generation and underrepresented students.

3.1.7 We will advance training opportunities for UA employees to further our understanding and awareness of diversity, inclusion, and equity issues.

4. We promise to nurture research and innovation.

The University of Akron's innovations create tangible solutions that advance the region and the world. Our global prominence stems from the creation of new knowledge that benefits all people.

4.1 We will provide support for top research faculty to produce key insights that advance science and lead to benefits for people.

Initiatives

4.1.1 We will continue producing innovative breakthroughs for our stakeholders, including businesses, government, and educational institutions.

4.1.2 We will include students in the process of discovery in order to develop the next generation of leading researchers.

4.2 We will enhance the interdisciplinary collaboration and processes that support cutting-edge research developments across multiple disciplines.

Initiatives

4.2.1 We will increase the level of external research funding awarded to the University.

4.2.2 We will fund additional research assistantships for students.

4.2.3 We will build upon the reputation to further enhance patent application, technology transfer, and the development of emerging technologies.

4.2.4 We will develop systems to help increase the ability for faculty to collaborate across disciplines.

4.3 *We will provide research services to partners that desire access to specialized instruments, products, and services.*

Initiatives

4.3.1 We will provide the community with a central point of contact to help direct customers to UA faculty or staff with the appropriate expertise.

4.3.2 We will expand the role of institutes and centers at UA to ensure support for regional needs.

5. We promise to ensure the long-term viability of the University.

The University of Akron will position itself to meet the current fiscal realities inherent to higher education. We recognize the need to invest in high-demand areas while maintaining other critical support functions required for the success of students, faculty, and staff.

5.1 *We will broaden our revenue streams.*

Initiatives

5.1.1 We will focus on initiatives that increase enrollment and retention.

5.1.2 We will develop clarity of purpose to increase the culture of philanthropy throughout the university community.

5.1.3 We will diversify and enhance sources of revenue by linking our strengths with the needs of the region.

5.1.4 We will increase our connection to and interaction with alumni.

5.2 *We will ensure operational excellence.*

Initiatives

5.2.1 We will invest in physical facilities and campus infrastructure as needed.

5.2.2 We will invest in our employees by provide support for continual development, learning, and growth at all levels.

5.2.3 We will facilitate programs that encourage healthy lifestyles and wellbeing for all employees and students.

Leading from Strength

Examples TBD