

The background of the cover is a photograph of a modern university building. The building features red brick walls and large, multi-paned glass windows. A dark metal pergola-like structure is attached to the building. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The text is overlaid on this image.

NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

STRATEGIC PLAN

Investing in Innovation

THE VISION AND COURAGE TO LEAD
TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

Post-Pandemic Phase, 2021: New Priority Initiatives

Planning for the post-pandemic world and higher education landscape has further emphasized the need to invest in innovation, which is the focus of Northern's strategic plan. The plan's challenge to have "the vision and courage to lead transformational change," has become even more meaningful as our campus emerges from the pandemic to face new realities, challenges and opportunities.

The Strategic Plan Framework

Northern's strategic plan framework is designed to be easy to understand, easy to remember, and easy to apply to decision-making across campus. It consists of two components: **strategic focus areas** and **strategic outcomes**. The original four strategic focus areas and outcomes were selected through campus-wide discussions with all stakeholder groups and continues to be supported by the University community. All University initiatives must support one or more of the focus areas and result in one or more of the strategic outcomes.

In the post-pandemic phase of the strategic plan, two additional focus areas and outcomes have been added, having emerged as university priorities as a result of NMU's ongoing strategic planning work and rising to the top as a result of the pandemic. The two new focus areas are equity and mind/body wellness. The two new strategic outcomes involve advancing the rural agenda and moving Northern toward carbon neutrality.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

Northern Michigan University's six strategic focus areas are:

- academic excellence
- student retention and success
- domestic and global outreach and engagement
- investment in innovation
- equity in systems and processes
- mind and body wellness

STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

The strategic outcomes clearly define Northern's path for the present and the future. They are what drive the University's decision-making and action-taking. The strategic outcomes are:

- **Advancing prestige and distinction** in ways that ensure Northern is known for its teaching, experiential learning, scholarship, mentoring and service.
 - **Measurements include:**
 - Use of National Survey of Student Engagement metrics and results
 - Higher academic credential averages (GPA, graduate rate, time to graduation placement rates, etc.), using metrics from the Assessment of Learning and General Education assessment process
 - Increased enrollment, especially from new student populations and student recruitment areas
 - International, national and regional designations and rankings
 - Receipt of recognition, media attention, honors and awards for the University or members of the NMU campus community
 - Accreditation status
- **Establishing new and responsive approaches** for programs, services, technology and our ways of teaching and doing university business.
 - **Measurements include:**
 - Number of new or adaptive projects developed and implemented
 - Time-to-implementation for new project development
 - New revenues generated and/or financial cost savings/cost avoidance
 - Other resource savings (staff needed, production hours, etc.)
 - Increased academic and non-academic grant funding for both existing and new programs and initiatives
 - Recognition from external sources (awards, designations, etc.)
 - Percent of degree-seeking student population where predictive analytics have been applied

- **Expanding partnerships** with alumni, friends, communities, businesses, government agencies, schools, college and universities, in and across academic disciplines and with people here and around the world.
 - **Measurements include:**
 - New partnerships and new partners
 - Demonstrated benefits to NMU from new or expanding partnerships (increased placement of graduates, increased internships, cost savings for partners, new/enhanced services for university and/or region, etc.)
 - Total new resources generated from partnerships
 - Recognition from external sources (awards, rankings, etc.)
- **Enhancing and managing enrollment** by strengthening our on-campus student body while increasing efforts, including new resources and improved recruitment/retention tools (predictive analytics, etc.), regarding new student populations such as online, off-campus, underrepresented, international and nontraditional.
 - **Measurements include:**
 - Changes in overall enrollment compared to demographics
 - Changes in overall retention
 - Program or student type changes in enrollment and/or retention
 - Changes in targeted student types, new recruiting areas
 - Comparing NMU to national, regional and state peer institutions
 - Use of predictive analytics
- **Leading the rural agenda** by discovering the ways that rural and urban environments are similar and dissimilar, developing creative ways to support rural economies, communities and people, and actively addressing the rural issues.
 - **Measurements include:**
 - Number of new and existing courses and programs that address rural issues
 - Number of students enrolled in rural-focused programs
 - Number of existing programs that add a rural studies/economies credential. These could include majors, minors, certifications, badges and other micro-credentials.

- Level of activities that address rural issues, for instance ways to respond to a recent study on the lack of transportation of U.P. residents to access health care
 - Increases in the number of collaborators and partnerships involved with Northern to advance the Upper Peninsula's rural agenda
- **Supporting carbon neutrality** by establishing sustainability as a priority for decisions and actions taken by the University.
 - ***Measurements include:***
 - Completion of a study to determine Northern's ability to achieve carbon neutrality no later than 2050
 - Accomplishment of priority goals within the plan
 - Lower levels of carbon emission factors on campus
 - Increased levels of transition to sustainably friendly resources, for instance converting the motor vehicle fleet from combustion to electric and use of solar energy
 - Increase in the number of projects that involve next-generation energy and sustainability technology and methods

NEW FOCUS AREAS AND OUTCOMES

Northern has added two new strategic focus areas and two new strategic outcomes to this updated “Investing in Innovation” strategic plan. The new focus areas are: 1) equity in systems and processes and 2) mind and body wellness. The new strategic outcomes are: 1) leading the rural agenda and 2) supporting carbon neutrality.

In all university-wide and departmental-specific decision-making and project development, these additions to Northern’s strategic plan should now be considerations.

Below is an outline of current and developing university initiatives that support these additions to the strategic plan. New initiatives are outlined in more detail in the back of the strategic plan; see Post-Pandemic Phase: The New Strategic Initiatives.

STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

Leading the rural agenda – this strategic outcome is or will be part of the following initiatives:

Ongoing initiatives

- Development of the Center for Rural Health, in particular diabetes education, U.P. wide EMT recruitment and training, COVID-19 response and K-12/college health education (health and wellness)
- Expansion of Educational Access Network (EAN) across Upper Peninsula and in northern Lower Peninsula (technology)
- Growing the U.P.’s Cybersecurity Ecosystem -- K-12, college, adult and business learning opportunities through the U.P. Cybersecurity Institute (education, workforce development, business support)
- Northern Promise and Middle College – concurrent high school/college enrollment to save time and money to degree completion (education and workforce development)
- Invent@NMU – business start-up support (entrepreneurship)

New initiatives

- Career-Tech and Engineering Support
- College of Business Transformation with a Rural Economies Focus
- Collaborative Sustainability
- Expanding Online and Developing New Academic Programs
- Integrated Health and Counseling Service

Other University efforts that support this strategic outcome

- Finlandia-NMU Collaboration Agreement
- Preliminary discussions with 2 MTU faculty about a collaboration on their grant project assessing U.P.-wide transportation systems
- Serving as the site for county-wide COVID-19 mass vaccination clinics
- BEAR Center supporting children on the autism spectrum and their families across the U.P.
- Speech and Hearing Clinic supporting U.P. children and their families

Supporting Carbon Neutrality – this strategic outcome is or will be part of the following initiatives:

Ongoing initiatives

- President's Sustainability Advisory Council and its annual work, including the STARS rating process
- EcoReps student group and its work to identify projects and educational opportunities for the green fee

New initiatives

- Collaborative Sustainability
- Career-Tech and Engineering Support
- College of Business Transformation with a Rural Economies Focus
- Expanding Online and Developing New Academic Programs

Other University efforts that support this strategic outcome

- Have started university vehicle replacement program with first hybrid police vehicle
- Plans to increase number of electric car charging stations on campus
- Long-time university sustainability efforts continue (See Northern 2030: Planning for Collaborative Sustainability, May 2021”

FOCUS AREAS

- **Equity in systems and processes** – this will be primarily addressed in the strategic priority initiative “Reimagining Inclusion and Equity at NMU”.

Other ways the University plans to support this focus area are:

- Review of University policies and procedures for systematic inequities
- Departmental review of bylaws and policies for systematic inequities
- Hold focus groups and forums to discuss barriers to student and employee success
- Create student, faculty and staff training opportunities in diversity, inclusion and equity areas
- Incorporate diversity/inclusion/equity study, learning and research into NMU courses
- Identify diversity/inclusion/equity needs, issues and opportunities in community surrounding NMU

- **Mind and body wellness** – this will be primarily addressed in the strategic priority initiative “Integrated Health and Counseling Services”.

Other ways the University plans to support this focus area are:

- Expand university-community indoor/outdoor recreational partnerships
- Expand mind and body educational opportunities to students and employees
- Increase awareness of NMU provided mind and body wellness services available to students and employees
- Work to increase usage of NMU-provided mind and body wellness services available to students and employees

SUCCESSSES AND PLANNING STAGES

Since creating the *Investing in Innovation* strategic plan, the Northern campus community has successfully completed several strategic planning steps (Appendix A – Foundational Elements), including selecting its [seven core values](#), revising the [mission and vision statements](#) to reflect the 21st century institution NMU is and desires to become, and developing a new [Campus Master Plan](#) that envisions the possible physical campus 10-15 years into the future. In addition, Northern has completed or is in various implementation phases of nearly all of the original Investing in Innovation initiatives, the campus transformation initiatives of the Strategic Resource Allocation project, and the Board-supported recruitment and retention initiatives (Appendix B – Past Initiatives).

Recently, Northern began to prepare for an upcoming comprehensive fundraising campaign and, as part of that, held an internal university effort to collect strategic initiatives called The Big Idea Campaign. The primary goal of this campaign was to identify potential future projects that would define Northern's role as a leader in higher education's 21st transformation at such a level as to draw the interest of potential donors to invest in Northern's next achievements.

In 2020, Northern launched a series of recruitment and retention initiatives as part of its strategic efforts with the support of the NMU Board of Trustees. As Northern moves into the post-pandemic phase of the strategic plan with a new set of initiatives, completion of six of the recruitment and retention initiatives (initiative details in Appendix B) remains a priority:

- Career Services expansion
- Cyber Program expansion and enhancement
- Embedded student success advisers
- Predictive analytics
- Center for Rural Health
- SISU innovation Institute and Performance Incentive Fund (PIF)
- Women's varsity wrestling program

POST-PANDEMIC PHASE: THE NEW STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The post-pandemic strategic initiatives are a series of engaging proposals that will add another layer of success to the "Investing in Innovation" strategic plan. These initiatives have emerged from the SRA project, new campus master plan, and Big Idea campaign, and have strong potential to achieve the strategic outcomes of advancing the institution's reputation, developing new ways of operating, expanding partnerships, leading the rural agenda, moving NMU toward a higher level of sustainability, and enhancing and managing enrollment despite the existing demographic challenges and unknown impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Several of the initiatives involve facilities conceptualized in the 2019 campus master plan, along with 2020 site planning updates. Northern will work to identify opportunities to implement these strategic ideas through assertive pursuit of state and federal, private business and donor investment funding, as well as P3 opportunities and city/county collaborations. Within these new facilities will be reimaged existing and new academic programs, support programs and business services with the common goals of innovation.

The post- pandemic world presents challenges for universities, but it also presents opportunities. Moving forward with these select strategic initiatives create a bold plan for Northern that allows the University to simultaneously and strategically consider new programs; recruit top-caliber students, faculty and staff; and develop innovative responses to local, regional and state issues and needs.

ENGAGED PLANNING PROCESS

As project and funding opportunities are identified, key stakeholders will be included in the planning process to ensure alignment with University and program goals. This process will include core and advisory committees and departments that are impacted to ensure strategic outcomes and program needs are met. For initiatives that don't fit into Northern's already established planning procedures, task forces will be created and presented with a specific charge to best explore the initiative.

It will be the assigned project groups, whether they be existing advisory committees or created project task forces, who develop the initiatives' implementation phases, tentative timeline, and goals. This document, "Investing in Innovation," does not include at this time all of the details of each initiative, allowing the assigned project groups the space to create the more detailed plan. These detailed plans for each of the priority initiatives will be shared with the NMU campus and general community during the 2021-22 academic year, most in fall 2021.

As initiatives are planned and then implemented, new initiatives will move into the priority level. This form of ongoing strategic planning supports an engaged planning process that is part of NMU's Higher Learning Commission accreditation responsibilities and is included as part of the accreditation's Continuous Quality Initiative.

POST-PANDEMIC PHASE ONE INITIATIVE GROUPINGS

What follows are the preliminary initiative details that have emerged from the strategic planning discussions that have taken or are taking place at Northern Michigan University. These initiatives could be divided into the following category groupings, but ongoing campus discussions and identified funding opportunities will help create a specific project priority order.

Priority Facilities	Addressing Current Issues	Elevating the Student Experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Career-Tech & Engineering• College of Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reimagining Inclusion & Equity at NMU• Collaborative Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expanding Online & Developing New Academic Programs• Integrated Health and Counseling Services

POST-PANDEMIC PHASE TWO PROJECTS

Northern has also identified several potential post-pandemic “phase two” initiatives and projects that would be added to the strategic plan as phase one initiatives are completed, including:

Academic & Student Experience	New Facilities	Facility Renovations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Graduate & Honors Colleges• Career Services and Internships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research Center addition to Seaborg Complex• Centrally located student union• Fine and performing arts center & amphitheater	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Harden Hall• Athletics and Recreation district

Strategic Initiative - Career-Tech and Engineering Support

As the nation's population ages and retires, there is a growing demand in the workforce for skilled professionals in career-technical fields. Northern is one of only three Michigan universities to also serve a community college function, offering vocational diplomas, certificates and associate degrees since 1972. In 2020, Northern received capital outlay approval from the State of Michigan to support state-of-the-art career-tech and engineering programs. This will provide the University an opportunity to bring its CTE programs to the next-generation level.

Featured Components: This will be a vibrant, high-tech teaching facility that features a manufacturing design center and transformative working laboratories. The labs will be flexible for skilled trades learning, as well as for business-industry product and equipment testing and training. There will also be production development resources for Invent@NMU.

How this will add to NMU's prestige and distinction: The venue and academic programs will use next-generation equipment and technology, such as virtual reality training gear and simulations to prepare the best industrial, engineering and service-related workforce to meet the Upper Peninsula and State of Michigan high-demand talent needs in these career fields. There will be unique campus-community collaborations opportunities.

Thinking even bigger: Central to this initiative is the development of a mechanism for hyper-changeable space so that programs could be offered in a series format. For example, an auto series with degree programs for general auto technicians (general mechanics) offered for three years; then use the same space to offer an auto body technicians program for three years; then diesel technicians (large motors) programs for three years – all in the same space. The rotation would begin again.

Strategic Initiative - College of Business Transformation with a Rural Economies Focus

While there have been some notable changes in the College of Business, it is clear that the time is right to rethink the direction, focus and identity of the college. Business and industry have undergone dramatic changes, in part due to new technologies, over the past quarter century. Combine this with the opportunities that specifically exist in the Upper Peninsula, it is now time for Northern to reimagine what knowledge and skill set a graduate of one of NMU's business programs will need to be successful in the fast-changing 21st century marketplace. Where once having business programs that resembled other successful business programs was the preferred strategy, today's competitive higher education market demands that Northern find a way to distinguish our business academic programs from the masses. That distinction could be a focus on rural economies. This transformation proposal is already in discussion and planning phases.

Featured Components: In order to accomplish this transformation, the College of Business will create a dynamic strategic plan, designed around the concept of a new COB-designated facility. The new facility will be located closer to the Academic Mall and include faculty and administrative offices, high-tech laboratories for the Cyber Security program and enhanced student study areas. Today's technology enable us to research and trade on mobile devices. Business decisions are transacted quickly using various technologies to communicate, inform and influence. Our business education and experience will focus on critical thinking, problem solving while introducing students to new and innovative business practices. We will continue to offer a quality business education that focuses on 21st century skills. Having a high-tech space that allows students to practice and refine business expertise will enhance the student experience and prepare them for meaningful careers. Providing space for retail and catering activities will provide a "laboratory" rich with exercises in customer service, inventory management, human resource management, staffing, etc. The College will also explore offering a "Main-Street Academy" or "READI" Rural Economies Academic Delivery Institute or Initiative to support rural economic development and business. This will create a bridge between the rural economy of the UP and academics that will train and educate existing entrepreneurs and those up and coming.

How this will add to NMU's prestige and distinction: The vital element of this big idea will be a focus on rural economies that will make Northern's business programs nationally unique and will support the University's future Rural Leadership doctoral program.

Thinking even bigger: A focus on rural economies offers the opportunity for distinction in a number of ways including a focus on cybersecurity unique to a rural environment. Doing so has an opportunity to make Northern a national leader not only around rural economies but on cybersecurity related to rural communities.

Strategic Initiative - Collaborative Sustainability

Northern will begin more extensive exploration on its ability to achieve carbon neutrality, creating a task force to work on a new energy master plan, as well as develop an overall strategic sustainability plan. However, this initiative will focus on more than energy conservation and on-campus recycling as it develops sustainability efforts that reach across all departments and support one of NMU's core values and the way of the Anishinaabe to plan for sustainability seven generations into the future.

The University will focus its initial strategic sustainability planning around five areas: carbon neutrality, improved waste and recycling, protection of fresh water, promoting education and awareness and building local partnerships.

Featured Components: The University will embark on a comprehensive energy study to evaluate its current carbon footprint in any areas not already having been evaluated during the STARS rating process Northern has engaged in over the past three years. This initiative will also look to launch sustainability projects that help resolve local sustainability and environmental issues, explore micro-credential and certificate programs, and secure grant funding to increase support for sustainability/environmental proposals and projects. The initiative will develop ways to help facilitate collaboration between departments to integrate sustainability planning, curriculum and community-based research projects. Unique learning environments on campus will be considered as space and funding are identified, such as a learning lab for reclaimed materials for recycling and upcycling experiments and areas for aeroponics and hydroponic infrastructure for indoor food growing and sustainable food production research.

How this will add to NMU's prestige and distinction: Students, faculty, staff and partners would become involved in developing and supporting innovations in renewable energy, sustainable food production, ecotourism, and social entrepreneurship. The goal would be for Northern to emerge as a regional, possibly national, leader in preparing students for 21st century careers, providing practical, technical and entrepreneurial skills to build an innovative and sustainable future while the University works to decrease its carbon footprint.

Thinking even bigger: During the Big Idea campaign, a proposal was made to create SHINE (**S**ustainability **H**ub for **I**Nnovation and **E**ntrepreneurship), an interdisciplinary hub to improve Northern's research, action and reputation as a regional leader in sustainability. SHINE would be a physical space for learning and collaborating on sustainability fronts. Donor investment would be needed to help build SHINE and fund its ongoing operations, but this innovative learning environment could be a recruiting attraction for students, faculty and staff.

Strategic Initiative - Reimagining Inclusion and Equity at NMU

With recent changes in the Office of the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer it is clearly time to review the role and mission of all of the diversity and inclusion efforts on campus. This includes an opportunity to expand on the newly created Student Equity and Engagement Center, including a redesign of a physical space, tentatively in Hedgcock, that creates a welcoming and supportive environment for all faculty, staff and students. Northern will also create a plan centered on issues of diversity and inclusion, equity and social justice.

Featured Components: A clearly identified and prominent space on campus devoted to diversity, inclusion and equity and investing in dynamic activities of engagement will be critical to the success of Northern's goals to broaden social justice efforts. Strategically developing a comprehensive initiative in direct partnership with the President's Council on Diversity will be vital.

Like having designated space, it will be important to have a clear set of definitions of what the terms diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice mean to the Northern Michigan University community, and the actions and policies those definitions require. Among the actions and policies will be a more definitive process that the University and all University departments and units will be expected to take to work toward attracting an increasing student and employee populations that are currently underrepresented at Northern.

This new strategic plan for diversity, inclusion and equity will identify systems and processes that root out systemic racism (intentional and unintentional, overt and covert) at the University. It will support departmental committees and programming related to diversity, equity, inclusion and justice.

How this will add to NMU's prestige and distinction: Northern has long struggled with attracting and retaining a full range of diverse faculty, staff and students. Too often our cultural and demographic history have limited our thinking and actions. Demonstrating that Northern can be a place that is truly supportive and attractive to diverse populations will serve to enhance the reputation of the university along with the community.

Thinking even bigger: Developing expanded partnerships with a variety of communities, both local and from across the region, would provide an opportunity to bring real distinction to Northern. As just one example, this effort could include targeting partnerships with tribal colleges not only in Michigan but throughout the region and beyond.

Strategic Initiative - Expanding Online and Developing New Academic Programs

Northern has a proven track record of successfully taking risks to develop innovative academic programs, such as the recent programs in medicinal plant chemistry, indoor agriculture, CDL truck driving and digital media – to name just a few. The pandemic has emphasized the opportunities to use new technologies to delivery courses and course materials. The review of every academic program through the Strategic Resource Allocation process has energized new discussions about how to revise current programs and create new ones that will make Northern graduates the in-demand candidates for the 21st century workforce, as well for local and global leadership positions.

In addition to innovative on-campus programs, a key priority of this initiative would be expanding distinctive online programs through Northern's Global Campus. Key to this is helping academic departments develop adult-friendly curricular formats (stackable credentials, accelerated courses, flexible degree completion programs, etc.). This initiative will work through the new SISU Innovation Institute, using a system for rapid ideation, viability assessment, development and launch of new experimental online programs. The goal will be to increase academic opportunities for specific student populations, in particular: NMU returning students, degree completers in partnership with community colleges, high school dual enrollment, U.P. and Wisconsin, regional with specific programs, national and international with niche programs.

For both new online and on-campus academic programs, Northern will use design-thinking and innovation to build on the 60-year curriculum model. The SISU Institute will help drive design thinking and innovation in academic program development, particularly through the lens of the strategic focus areas and outcomes.

Featured Components: For both new online and on-campus academic programs, there will be an investment in new learning technology and faculty training to use it. An example would be an expansion of Studio 102, the faculty's technology sandbox. The initiative will also significantly expand Northern's alternative/micro-credential system, articulations between credit and non-credit credentials, and an enhanced credit for prior learning/prior learning assessment system that serve the post-traditional learners well.

How this will add to NMU's prestige and distinction: Higher education will be facing new challenges in the post-pandemic world that will paralyze many institutions. By being willing to take calculated risks with bold new academic program ideas and innovative ways of delivering curricula and the student experience, Northern will create the opportunity to stand out in the crowded field competing for students. Niche programs and those that address local, regional, state and rural issues and opportunities will be given the highest investment priority.

Thinking even bigger: If each NMU academic department proposes a new online or other innovative academic program, from those nearly 30 ideas there is the potential for

several to be first in nation, first in state or first in region. Northern should set a target to have at least 3 of the 30 at this level. These ideas will also be expected to push the envelope on Northern's best effort to date in each of the strategic focus areas and the strategic outcomes.

Strategic Initiative - Integrated Health and Counseling Services

During the Campus Master Plan revision process, Northern explored the idea of merging its existing health and counseling centers into one facility, possibly located with the residence halls. The discussion of a more seamless integration of NMU's health and wellness programs and services is seen as having great potential for creating improvement in serving students and others on campus regarding their wellbeing. This idea would benefit Northern in providing seamless physical and mental health services in a united space. Supporting members of the campus community – students, in particular – to “be strong in mind and body” is a component of Northern's vision statement. Northern holds the belief that a strong mind and body leads students to greater academic and personal development success.

Featured Components: A center that integrates the health and wellness programs and services would allow for a more modernized physical space of the NMU Health Center. It would also allow for the sharing of front-line service staff and would potentially decrease the stigma that is sometimes present in seeking out counseling services. It would enable expanded hours. It also offers the potential for greater collaboration and hands-on learning for students in NMU's health-related academic programs. Such a center is also envisioned to make health and wellness a focus for students, employees and the U.P. community.

How this will add to NMU's prestige and distinction: Even before the pandemic, mental health needs were at an all-time high on college and university campuses across the globe. Those needs increased during the pandemic and are projected to continue into the post-pandemic era. Northern would strive to design the type of integrated program and facility that would better serve current students and be a recruitment factor for prospective students. There is also potential to find new ways to incorporate the U.P.'s great outdoors into the daily health practices of the NMU community through an integrated health center. Additionally, collaboration opportunities exist for this new center with Northern's Center for Rural Health.

Thinking even bigger: Northern can explore how to integrate its nationally recognized exercise science, medicinal plant chemistry, and art and design programs into the University's existing physical and mental health services to create new holistic and therapeutic opportunities that support the strong mind and body vision the University has for its community members.

ADVANCING THE POST-PANDEMIC STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Because the new strategic initiatives are outcomes of the SRA project, Big Idea internal campaign or new campus master plan, they have been vetted by numerous Northern committees and groups, and have been included in campus-wide and public discussions on the future direction of the institution. Many individuals who are part of the internal campus community, as well as some who are external to the campus community, have offered their varying perspectives on these ideas. From these ongoing discussions, the strategic initiatives presented in this document have emerged as ideas that have significant campus support. They also address Northern's strategic focus areas and will result in one or more of the strategic outcomes.

From campus discussions about the new strategic initiatives, Northern will grow ideas that improve and elevate the University and the trajectory of its distinction on a regional and national level. At a point in history where higher education has no choice but to transform, likewise, institutions that intend to survive and thrive in this time of change must be bold and responsive and manage well calculated risk. With its recent success in strategic implementation of goals and initiatives, Northern Michigan University has proven it is this kind of institution. It is with a focus on its six strategic outcomes that Northern begins to tackle this next set of strategic initiatives.

Appendix A — Foundational Elements

Northern's mission and vision, along with the institution's strong diversity agenda and the commitment to our core values, are the foundation on which NMU students, faculty and staff can apply the focus areas and strategic goals.

Mission Statement: Northern Michigan University's distinctive academic and career programs are nurtured by exceptional teaching and extensive opportunities for scholarship, creativity and engagement. Our supportive, connected community empowers students, graduates, faculty and staff to contribute to a diverse and sustainable world.

Vision Statement: Northern Michigan University promotes an active environment to foster strong minds and bodies, inspires innovation and inclusion through community engagement, and develops leaders capable of local and global impact.

Diversity Statement: Northern Michigan University strives to be an inclusive community where differences are recognized as assets of the institution, respected attributes of the person and a valuable part of the university.

Core Values: Community, Opportunity, Rigor, Environment, Inclusion, Connections and Innovation.

Appendix B - Past “Investing in Innovation” Initiatives

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM THE ORIGINAL INVESTING IN INNOVATION INITIATIVES (2015-19)

- Developed the award-winning Educational Access Network – one of the largest LTE networks in the United States and one of only a few built and operated by a university. Currently the EAN serves 115 U.P. cities, townships and tribes and more than 15,000 households.
- Completed a review of more than 600 programs as part of the Strategic Resource Allocation project.
- Launched the Global Campus, Northern’s online academic division, which has seen strong growth.
- Significantly increased its annual gift commitments and developed a Giving Day program to coincide with National Giving Day.
- Re-established a Retention Committee whose work has helped the University increase retention overall, within programs, and high-level D/F/W courses.
- Hired NMU’s first chief diversity and inclusion officer and established the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, as well as created the President’s Committee on Diversity and the President’s Committee on Gender and Sexuality.
- Created the President’s Sustainability Advisory Council, whose work garnered NMU first a bronze and then silver designation on the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS).
- Implemented a CRM system that resulted in the redesign of 1 ½ admission staff positions to accommodate increased and targeted student recruitment communications and strategic communication processes.
- Formalized the process for faculty and departmental research, resulting in a significantly higher rate of participation and grant funding dollars.
- Stayed true-to-course on launching new and innovative programs that meet local, regional, state and national needs: Master’s of Social Work, medicinal plant chemistry, and forensic anthropology in cold climate CDL truck driving, indoor agriculture.

- Created the Behavioral Education, Assessment and Research (BEAR) Center to address the U.P.'s critical need for services for families with children on the autism spectrum while also providing invaluable hands-on learning for behavioral professionals in training.
- Graduate Studies and Research Office reviewed and revamped its admissions process and application form, resulting in increased graduate program applications and enrollment.
- Created the University's first university mobile app, which has since been revised to add more services at NMU stakeholders' fingertips.
- Underwent the process of creating a new Campus Master Plan.
- Revised its mission and vision statements.
- Completed the renovation of Jamrich Hall and the University Center, which is now known as the Northern Center.
- Demolished three of the four residence halls of Quad I and built the new six building residence hall complex named The Woods. Built The Lodge as the student gathering area for The Woods.
- Created Invent@NMU as a student-operated product development center.
- Among NMU's community outreach goals came the Forest Roberts Theatre's sensory-friendly "theater for all" initiative that modified performances to accommodate children and adults either on the autism spectrum or with sensory issues.
- Added four varsity athletic teams: men's soccer and swimming/diving; women's golf and lacrosse.
- Successfully moved more than 11,000 university email accounts to Google cloud in the summer of 2017.
- Revamped the University's employee recognition program.

To see the full list, go to nmu.edu/strategicplan and to [Strategic Plan Update 2019](#).

STRATEGIC RESOURCE ALLOCATION PROJECT, CAMPUS TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVES (2017-19)

Academic Focused Initiatives

Diversifying the academic experience: fewer credit hour requirements for majors and bachelor's degrees; discontinue a minor as a graduation requirement – fully implemented; deep review and discussion about credit hours, academic programs reviewed program credit requirements, some changes made, University decided that unilateral campus-wide change was not to the benefit of all students at this time.

Merge General University Studies into two degrees – Fully implemented.

Review all secondary education programs and determine demand/need/alignment – Fully implemented.

Create two new colleges: Honors College and College of Graduate Studies and Research – Selected as a priority project in the Big Idea campaign. Moved to priority position on **2021 Post-Pandemic Strategic Initiatives Plan**.

Restructure Northern's academic organizational structure – Task force reviewed, explored different college models, piloted one new model in the College of Health Sciences and Professional Studies, Academic Affairs determined the new model did not work as well as the previous model and return to the traditional structure.

Support Service Focused Initiatives

Combine the Beaumier U.P. Heritage Center, the Center for U.P. Studies, including Sonderegger Symposium, and the oversight of the Beaumier Alumni Welcome Center under one director – fully implemented.

Redefine the role of the Multicultural Education and Resource Center in supporting Northern's university-wide diversity and inclusion efforts – Moved to priority position on **2021 Post-Pandemic Strategic Initiatives Plan**.

Develop an enhanced advising and student-faculty mentoring model – in process with hiring of embedded student success advisors. See Board 2020 Initiatives below.

Remodel the First-Year Experience program, including Freshman Seminar – fully implemented.

Expand Career Services role in internships, corporate and alumni relations, and use of next-generation technology in career planning and placement – being implemented. See Board 2020 Initiatives below.

Restructure Northern's international student services, recruitment and activities, as well as internationally related faculty activities – some work on this completed, discussions continue.

Re-envision the model for the Center for Student Enrichment to ensure success for our students – Implemented the Pick One Program. See Board 2020 Initiatives below. More discussion on new opportunities and models to continue. Suggestion for a centrally located Student Union in the Academic Mall was one of the priority projects of the Big Ideas campaign. See Big Ideas below.

Develop an academic/service accelerator program to create opportunity for launching experimental academic programs and student services – SISU Innovation Institute created. See Board 2020 Initiatives below.

Create more collaboration between custodial and maintenance service units – fully implemented. New models of operation in continuous discussion.

To see more details about the SRA campus transformation initiatives, go to nmu.edu/strategicplan and to [SRA Implementation Plan](#).

BIG IDEA INTERNAL CAMPAIGN – PRIORITY IDEAS (2019)

Innovation Design Center – This may become part of the SISU Innovation Center in the future. Currently there is no timeline for this facility to be built.

SHINE: Sustainability Hub for Innovation and Entrepreneurship – Moved to priority position on **2021 Post-Pandemic Strategic Initiatives Plan**.

Centrally located Student Union – This idea is included in the new Campus Master Plan, but there is no timeline currently in place for the building of this facility.

Career Tech and Engineering Technology Center – Moved to priority position on **2021 Post-Pandemic Strategic Initiatives Plan**.

Immersive Technology Innovation Center – Moved to priority position on **2021 Post-Pandemic Strategic Initiatives Plan**.

Upper Peninsula Cyber and Technology Ecosystem – Moved to priority position on **2021 Post-Pandemic Strategic Initiatives Plan**.

Electronic (eSports) Program – fully implemented. See Board 2020 Initiatives below.

Debt-free, Debt-reduction for students through Income Sharing Finance Program – Extensively explored, including on-campus demonstrations by service providers. Too steep of a price tag for NMU to cover at this time.

Center for Rural Health as a Model for Rural America -- being implemented. See Board 2020 Initiatives below.

Integrated Health & Counseling Center – Moved to priority position on **2021 Post-Pandemic Strategic Initiatives**.

Wildcat Academy (on-campus childcare) – The University is currently working with an external company to try to expand available childcare services in the Marquette County area. At this time, there are no plans to reestablish on-site campus childcare.

Northern Research and Scholarship Institute – A new research area is part of the Campus Master Plan. If built, the Northern Research and Scholarship Institute idea will be revisited.

Endowed Professorships – NMU Foundation has begun actively working to endow more professorships at Northern and plans to make this a focus of the upcoming comprehensive fundraising campaign.

Two New Colleges: Honors College and College of Graduate Studies -- Moved to priority position on **2021 Post-Pandemic Strategic Initiatives Plan**.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION INVESTMENT INITIATIVES (2020-21)

Predictive Analytics – fully implemented, software obtained, staff hired, staff trained, analytic criteria being refined and data collection started.

Centralized Advising Expansion – Phase 1 completed, 5 student success advisers hired and embedded in departments; Phase 2 will hire 5 more SSA's and will include examination of success measures from first full year.

Pick One Program – fully implemented, software obtained, staff trained, program launched; Phase 2 will measure success of first year.

Career Services Expansion – Phase 1 completed, director's position expanded from 10 months to 12 months; new assistant director hired. Phase 2 will be hiring second assistant director and expanding programs and services.

Graduate Enrollment Additions: Director of Graduate Enrollment Management and Marketing and the Finlandia University Early Social Work Assurance Program – both implemented. Director of graduate enrollment management and marketing is hired and has developed marketing recruitment efforts; Graduate social work program has admitted the first class of Finlandia baccalaureate social work graduates.

Aim North Program Expansion – mostly implemented. New sites had to be implemented virtually due to pandemic, but new recruitment areas used in 2020 summer for increased student opportunities.

Rural Health Center – being implemented, Center created, director hired, strategic plan in development, advisory board being created, major grant garnered, some programs offered in 2020-21.

SISU Innovation Institute/Performance Incentive Fund (PIF) – in implementation process; SISU Innovation Institute created, director hired, strategic plan being developed. Phase 2 – PIF program.

Cyber Defense Academic Enhancement and U.P. Cybersecurity Institute – being implemented. U.P. Cyber Security Institute up and running, director hired, badge program and classes developed for K-12, several unique courses and programs offered to K12, college-level and/or area businesses during 2020-21; College of Business

advancing in quest for Center for Academic Excellence designation, developing new cyber-related student opportunities.

Varsity eSports Team – implemented. Program created, coach hired, schedule developed, and competition facility completed. Team began competing in 2020-21 and has been competitive on a national level.

Varsity Alpine Ski Teams – implemented. Program created, coach hired, some students recruited. Team began practicing and will have had limited competition for 2021 due to travel limitation related to COVID-19 pandemic.

Women's Varsity Wrestling Team – being implemented. Program created, coach hired, student recruitment taking place for scheduled start of competition in fall 2021.

To learn more about the recruitment and retention initiatives, go to nmu.edu/strategicplan and to [Board Investment 2020 Implementation Plan](#).