



NMU Strategic Planning Update Executive Summary

Overview: Northern Michigan University is in the midst of a multi-year, comprehensive strategic planning process, one that challenges all NMU stakeholders to contribute to the strategic plan of “Investing in Innovation: Having the vision and courage to lead transformational change.”

This year’s strategic planning initiative is the Strategic Resource Allocation project. Last year’s was the development of the Strategic Implementation Plan, which the NMU Board of Trustees approved in February 2017. The plan has been revised to indicate the progress made in the year since approval. The updated document highlights some actions taken and accomplishments achieved within each “Action Steps” area. These will be discussed during the board retreat presentation.

The updated document also indicates a progression level for every goal included in the plan, from completed to actively working on to no action yet. How much strategic work is currently in play at Northern and our accomplishments is clearly evident in the updated document. The progress indicators, in some cases, represent a compilation of multiple areas derived from the departmental/unit update reports for the Strategic Implementation Plan provided to the division leaders.

Among the greatest accomplishments from the Strategic Implementation Plan have been the development of innovative new academic programs, increased recruitment of new student populations, more research grant submissions and awards, marked increases in private giving and alumni connections, the NMU sustainability initiative and steps taken to renovate aging facilities. There is still much work to be done, but the university is certainly beginning to realize its transformative capabilities by what has been already achieved.

Timeline: The timeline of NMU strategic planning accomplishments and remaining tasks–

- 2012-13 - Strategic planning discussion started by Interim President David Haynes and vice presidents
- July 2014 – Dr. Fritz Erickson hired as NMU president.
- 2014-15 – Stakeholder-wide development of core values – “Distinctly Northern”
 - community, opportunity, rigor, environment, connection, inclusion and innovation
- 2015-16 – Stakeholder-wide development of strategic plan
 - “Investing in Innovation: The vision and courage to lead transformational change.”
 - Four strategic focus areas –
 - Four strategic outcomes –
- 2016-17, Fall 2017 – Revision and adoption of new mission and vision statements
- 2016-17 – Development and adoption of Strategic Implementation Plan (Feb. 2017)
- 2017-18 – Strategic Resource Allocation Project
- Winter 2018 – Strategic Implementation Plan One-Year Update
- 2017-18 – Implementation of adopted SRA recommendations
- 2017-18 – Development of unit strategic plans
- 2018-19 – Celebration of Accomplishment
- 2018-20 – Preparation work for comprehensive capital campaign
- 2019-20 – Campus-wide review of “Investing in Innovation” -- focus areas, outcomes and goals
- 2020-21 – Potential start of comprehensive capital campaign

Key components: The most critical component to the success of Northern’s strategic planning to date has been taking the time to be extraordinarily inclusive, involving as many NMU stakeholders as possible. Northern received high praise from the Higher Education Learning Commission on-site evaluation team for this. The evaluators were impressed with the knowledge of and buy in for the core values and strategic plan from

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students to employees to alumni to community members. The 2017 employee satisfaction survey results again highlighted this campus-wide buy-in. In a question about awareness of the new mission and vision statement, core values strategic plan and diversity statement, there was a strong indication that the majority of those responding (70% and higher) were aware of the strategic endeavors and most indicated they knew where to find resources related to each.

A second critical component to the success of Northern's strategic planning has been the willingness to be distinctive. The narrative of NMU's core values does not sound similar to other universities, but the voice is uniquely that of the Northern family. The strategic plan is actually a strategic framework that allows each area of the university to be distinctive in its goals for moving NMU strategically forward, but with greater accountability for contributing to the institution's transformation. Many university strategic plans have 4-5 goals that a unit may or may not be able to play an active role in accomplishing. Northern's strategic plan has four strategic outcomes in four areas, and every unit can find a way to participate in our transformational success.

Next Steps: Currently, Northern is completing the program and service review portion of the Strategic Resource Allocation project. Recommendations from the two task forces – academic program review and support service programs – will be completed by spring 2018. Once forwarded, the Executive Council will review and announce preliminary decisions toward the end of the winter 2018 semester. The campus will have the latter portion of the semester to give input on the decisions. Decisions will begin implementation with the start of the new fiscal year on July 1. Once the SRA process is completed, each unit on campus (departments, offices, colleges, schools, centers) will be charged with developing unit strategic goals that tie directly to NMU's new mission and/or vision statements, core values, strategic focus areas and strategic outcomes. These unit strategic plans, combined with the work done for the SRA program/service reviews and the university's overall strategic plan, will be critical to developing the goals and messaging of Northern's upcoming capital campaign.