

Central Michigan University

2045 Academic Vision and Plan: Elevating the Human Condition

Years 2024-2029



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2045 Academic Vision

CMU will be sought after as an inclusive and adaptive community of learners who utilize their enhanced talents to purposefully address real-world problems and elevate the human condition.

CMU Academic Strategic Agenda

Developing Engaged and Adaptive Learners and Leaders

Strategy 1: Designing for lifelong learning paths and platforms

Strategy 2: Transforming curriculum, scholarship and research

Strategy 3: Expanding transformative experiences

Revitalizing the CMU Community

Strategy 4: Leveraging “place” as a flexible learning and cultural resource hub

Strategy 5: Building an inclusive and accessible support system and resources for all learners and talent

Enabling Technology for the Future Vision

Strategy 6: Investing in technology for learner-driven, seamless, lifelong learning for sustained revitalization of the CMU Community

Developing Engaged and Adaptive Learners and Leaders

A fundamental aspect of fostering engaged and adaptive learners and leaders lies in recognizing that CMU must shift its focus from instructing students through prescribed pedagogical methods to empowering active and involved learners who steer their academic journeys toward desired outcomes. The following three strategies converge to facilitate the cultivation of engaged and adaptive leaders and learners who are accountable for their own successes.

Strategy 1: Designing for lifelong learning paths and platforms

CMU will support individuals at any stage of their learning journey by offering a seamless and accessible learning platform, enriching learning experiences, and a flexible array of offerings. PK-12 is the starting point for developing lifelong learners. CMU will partner with and support PK-12 programs throughout the state, including CMU-authorized charter schools. Additionally, lifelong learning means CMU moves beyond a 4-year institution by offering an expanding and flexible array of learning opportunities to support the evolving needs of alumni and adult learners. Learning at CMU becomes a continuum with on-ramps and off-ramps throughout the lifecycle.

SMART Goal 1: Enact lifelong learning into the fabric of Central Michigan University, ensuring that all learners, alumni, faculty, and staff are continually engaged in personal and professional growth.

SMART Goal 2: CMU will increase partnerships with PK-12 schools, community colleges, other universities in Michigan, businesses, and organizations to develop pathway programs leading to degrees, credentials, and other learning experiences.

SMART Goal 3: CMU will develop the processes and incentives to increase credit and non-credit pathways for program completion and upskilling.

Strategy 2: Transforming curriculum, scholarship and research

The future curriculum and research opportunities at CMU must provide flexible, interdisciplinary, and collaborative opportunities; develop transferable and problem-solving skills; increase understanding of the complexity of world problems; and have a positive and measurable impact on communities. This innovative approach will empower learners to shape their educational journey based on personal interests and preferences. Furthermore, the integration of artificial intelligence will enhance research and learning endeavors.

CMU is poised to transition from a conventional structure of programs and departments to a comprehensive exploration of the human condition, anchored by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as its organizational framework. Utilizing the SDGs ensures CMU's relevance by aligning with evolving societal and environmental needs. Encompassing diverse aspects such as humanities, healthcare, well-being, mental health, environmental concerns, and societal challenges, the human condition forms the bedrock of a purposeful personal and academic journey for learners.

CMU will forge partnerships and collaborations with the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, healthcare providers, military entities, federal and state legislatures, business and industry, employers, and other institutions to create immersive, experiential learning opportunities and innovative curricula. Collaborative curriculum development with, for example, the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, will yield culturally significant content rooted in indigenous wisdom and alternative knowledge systems.

SMART Goal 1: Develop unifying interdisciplinary themes to engage the academic enterprise.

SMART Goal 2: Reimagine the landscape of research, creative endeavors, discovery, and learning at CMU, aiming to revolutionize these enterprises.

SMART Goal 3: Reimagine resource allocation and investment in support of scholarship, research and curricular transformation that align with and advance interdisciplinary themes and priorities.

Strategy 3: Expanding transformative experiences

Transformational learning focuses on profound shifts in an individual's beliefs, perspectives, and behaviors because of their learning experiences. It goes beyond mere acquisition of knowledge or skills, aiming to deeply impact learners' identities, values, and worldviews. Transformational learning typically involves critical reflection, challenging assumptions, and questioning established paradigms, leading to personal growth, increased self-awareness, and a broader understanding of oneself and the world.

Expanding learning opportunities and fostering deeper connections between students and faculty, transformational learning experiences are integral to CMU's vision. Ensuring accessibility for all, CMU commits to offering transformational experiential learning as an intentional component of the educational journey. With a focus on interdisciplinary problem-solving and effective communication skills, these experiences facilitate impactful dialogue, especially in polarized settings. Transferable skills such as critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, leadership, and interpersonal communication (e.g., dialogue) can enhance emotional intelligence and strengthen interpersonal relationships. Strategic partnerships with employers provide real-world exposure to develop these skills. Aligning with the human condition and SDGs, CMU strives to provide transformational experiences, fostering meaningful civic engagement for all learners.

SMART Goal 1: Ensure equitable access to courses, transformational learning experiences, and robust support systems that are fundamental for the development of transferable skills.

SMART Goal 2: Ensure that every CMU graduate participates in at least one significant, immersive transformational experience.

Revitalizing the CMU Community

CMU has the imperative to revitalize its sense of community across both its physical and virtual campuses. The COVID pandemic adversely affected the feeling of belonging at CMU, as learners, faculty, and staff had to adapt to virtual and distance learning and interactions. Now, with robust virtual and in-person communities emerging at CMU, the University must ensure a cohesive sense of community, regardless of how or where learners engage with CMU.

Strategy 4: Leveraging “place” as a flexible learning and cultural resource hub

CMU will leverage its regional location by evolving into a hub for learning and cultural enrichment. The concept of "place" encompasses not only the physical campus but also satellite and virtual campuses, collectively representing a full set of access points for individuals to join the CMU learning community.

The campus is a holistic set of neighborhoods formed around shared interests that emerge from the overarching focus on the human condition and the SDGs. Community and a sense of belonging are key to the CMU learning experience. Learners feel at home, supported, and welcomed. To become a flexible learning and cultural hub, CMU must reimagine its physical and virtual footprint and how enhancements can strengthen learner success. As a means of enhancing access, CMU can create pop-up or storefront locations with free access and technology for learners in under-resourced communities. Residential living spaces can be reimaged as hoteling facilities or innovation incubators. Under-utilized spaces can be repurposed as learning spaces, flexible innovation or maker spaces, community-building spaces, and wellness spaces. The physical campus can also demonstrate its commitment to the SDGs by setting a future goal of carbon neutrality.

This strategy focuses on establishing a flexible infrastructure that meets the needs of the community, redesigning the Mt. Pleasant campus to enhance inclusivity and accessibility, fostering an environment where all learners can thrive, and ensuring the university's long-term sustainability.

SMART Goal 1: Explore, discover, and implement innovative ideas that leverage “place” as a flexible learning and cultural resource hub, creating a joint physical and virtual “place.”

SMART Goal 2: Redefine, repurpose and reinvigorate learning communities to incorporate best practices and reinforce cross-college and inter-institutional collaborations.

SMART Goal 3: Reimagine a sustainable footprint of CMU to support learner access, development, and success.

Strategy 5: Building an inclusive and accessible support system and resources for all learners and talent

This strategy highlights CMU's dedication to accessibility and inclusivity for under-resourced learners, ensuring their participation in all CMU programs and learning opportunities. By providing access to programs, learning experiences, and services both on campus and online, CMU aims to improve mental well-being and reduce stress among learners. Through its commitment to establishing an inclusive and accessible learning and cultural resource hub for all community members, CMU actively seeks investment and partnerships with employers to strengthen the talent pipeline for the future. CMU's goal is to offer universal access, ensuring that all demographics requiring its resources and embracing its inclusive values receive an equally beneficial educational experience.

SMART Goal 1: Achieve equity for all learners and talent.

SMART Goal 2: Attract and retain diverse learners and talent.

SMART Goal 3: Foster a culture in which all members of the CMU community feel valued, empowered, and aware of their positive impact on the university’s mission.

Enabling Technology for the Future Vision

Strategy 6: Investing in technology for learner-driven, seamless lifelong learning for sustained revitalization of the CMU community

CMU's technology infrastructure aims to facilitate robust learner engagement across diverse settings and circumstances. This entails establishing technology-enabled learning environments not only at the main Mount Pleasant campus but also at satellite locations across the region and in virtual spaces. Furthermore, a comprehensive learner support system will be implemented across all campus settings, including virtual platforms. Learning experiences will be dynamic and interactive, leveraging cutting-edge tools such as virtual reality and augmented reality to enrich access to knowledge, experimentation, and collaboration. Prioritizing relevant experiential learning and research will be pivotal within this framework. By harnessing "place" as a flexible resource and learning center, CMU seeks to revitalize the community with an emphasis on inclusivity and accessibility for under-resourced learners. Recognizing the indispensable role of technology, this investment is essential for advancing the Academic Plan and Vision. Without such technological enhancements, the ambitious goals outlined in the Academic Vision and Plan cannot be realized.

SMART Goal 1: Develop, prioritize, and fund a comprehensive technology plan to ensure appropriate and timely investment in technology to enable the achievement of the Academic Vision and Plan.

SMART Goal 2: Develop a sustained, adaptive, timely, and collaborative process of funding, governing, maintaining, and evolving the academic technological platform as needs and tools change.

SMART Goal 3: Educate faculty, staff, and learners to use and feel confident with evolving technology at CMU.