

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS

STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM REFLECTS INTENSIVE PARTICIPATION, READINESS TO INNOVATE

March 2024

In the fall of 2023, we embarked on a process to develop a strategic plan to serve as the blueprint for creating the Oakland University of the future. Since then, faculty, staff and students have met regularly to discuss initiatives and themes to support our mission, vision and values; in essence, to determine how our guiding principles and priorities will be applied in responding strategically to the fast-changing challenges affecting us now and in the days ahead.

The strategic planning process draws on the dedication, knowledge, collaborative approach and creativity of more than 200 strategic plan committee members. At every step of the development process, we aim to proceed transparently with team members engaged and inspired by the work.

In Phase I (i.e. environmental scan), the committee conducted an in-depth analysis of the university's strengths, weaknesses and opportunities, drawing largely on input from external sources along with faculty, staff and students. Subsequently, several dominant themes emerged, including:

1. Fostering an Engaging Student Environment
2. Refining our Academic Identity, Offerings and Investments
3. Strengthening External Relationships, University Partnerships and Community Engagement
4. Elevating Scholarship, Research and Creative Inquiry
5. Cultivating a Thriving Campus Community – Transforming OU's Operating Systems and Addressing Internal Workforce Needs
6. Exemplifying an Inclusive University Community

By the end of April, each team will submit initiatives that reflect their focus areas. It is expected that the innovative and timely initiatives will build on Oakland's strengths, consolidate current initiatives and consider key trends and challenges shaping higher education, including:

- Downward trend in high school student population
- Strategies to retain students while appealing to nontraditional students
- Making college more accessible and affordable
- Responding to the increasing demand for online and hybrid learning
- Improving responsiveness to students' mental health and well-being
- Building programs to enhance students' career readiness
- Integrating AI, virtual reality, and augmented reality into the educational experience
- Demonstrating the impressive return on investment (ROI) of a college degree as a means for upward social mobility

Beginning in May, the Cabinet will review the initiatives, and commence the rigorous process of determining the priority, funding and metrics to support each proposal. In the end, the strategic plan will reflect action-oriented initiatives that are highly integrated, feasible, pragmatic, and clearly communicated with well-defined objectives and progress that can be tracked by the OU community.

The greatest obstacle to our success is our own complacency. For us to succeed, we must accept that our greatest resources rest with our capacity to imagine the possibilities, work collaboratively and seize on the promise to further transform Oakland into a learning-centered university.