Introduction to the 2021-2025 Master Academic Plan

The Master Academic Plan (MAP) Team, comprised of one representative from each college, the Graduate School, Faculty Senate, and two administrators, was formed in September 2020 and was charged to develop a strategic plan for Academic Affairs over the course of the 2020-2021 academic year. The team designed four primary global initiatives to complement MWSU's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan and are centered around the institution's identity as Missouri's Applied Learning university.

Executive Summary

The framework serves as a snapshot of the Master Academic Plan. The full report expands into goals, actionable recommendations, and identifies key stakeholders (in alphabetical order) with a vested interest in the success of the Master Academic Plan. Stakeholders accountable for collecting, reporting, and evaluating data is indicated with an asterisk (*). Following each recommendation is a suggested timeline for implementation commencing in the fall of 2021. Please refer to the Master Academic Operational Plan for deadlines, leading parties, resources, and outcomes.

Master Academic Plan Framework

GI #1: Applied Learning
AL1.   Expand the quality and quantity of applied learning experiences available to students.
AL2.   Create an internal and external marketable identity with a consistent message and equitable student experience for applied learning activities.
AL3.   Clearly define terms, criterion, and assessment for all applied learning activities guided by the Eight Principles of Good Practice for All Experiential Learning Activities.
AL4.   Track, report, and utilize a co-curricular transcript to record applied and service-learning activities.

GI #2: Essential Skills Acquisition
ES1.   Identify formal and informal experiences on campus which develop critical thinking, ethical decision making, teamwork, communication skills, problem solving skills, work ethic, flexibility and adaptability, and interpersonal skills transferable to career readiness.
ES2.   Increase quality paid applied-learning and student employment opportunities through nonprofit and corporate partnerships.
ES3.   Provide professional development and ongoing training for faculty and staff to serve as applied learning or first-line supervisors for students, reinforcing that *Every Employee is an Educator.*
ES4.   Develop a consistent onboarding process for student employees conducted by trained first-line supervisors on campus.

GI #3: Innovative Curriculum
IC1.   Identify new and existing programs (credentials, certificates, degrees) for growth based on regional market demand, financial sustainability, and enrollment potential.
IC2.   Streamline curriculum processes to launch programs in a timely manner.
IC3.   Leverage best practices in course design and delivery guided by Quality Matters and Universal Design for Learning.
IC4.   Implement alternative scheduling (4/6/8 -week courses) with an online pathway through General Studies (CORE42) and 100% online degrees.

GI #4: Belongingness and Sense of Community
BC1.   Align efforts with Enrollment Management, Advisement, and Student Affairs to fully integrate students into the university community through the first-year experience.
BC2.   Establish a holistic focus on students' sense of community through collaborative efforts between academic and student support units.
BC3.   Assess student academic adjustment, classroom assimilation, and intent to persist.

Master Academic Plan Full Report

Definition of Applied Learning

*At Missouri Western State University, applied learning refers to any activity in which students use course content, models, theories and/or skills in real-world and/or hands-on settings to support workforce readiness. These activities can take place separately from a credit-bearing experience and/or be embedded as a part of a course. Applied learning activities will be assessed using the **Eight Principles of Good Practice for All Experiential Learning Activities.***

Overarching Theme: Student Success

Student success is the strand that connects each of the four global initiatives. The overarching theme highlights the demand for each initiative to be embedded into the culture of our institution with a unified vision clearly, consistently, and continuously communicated at every level. To support student success, the university community must:

1. Elevate student experiences in academic and student support units to promote equitable learning
2. Embed a culture of serving students into all academic and student support units, positively impacting student success
3. Empower faculty and staff to engage in organizational improvement measures based on student survey data
4. Enhance communication between academic and student support units to create an infrastructure for student achievement

Global Initiative #1: Applied Learning

Goal: 100% of graduates will engage in at least one educational experience directly related to workforce readiness. "Griffons Work, Griffons Serve, Griffons Discover, Griffons Create."

Recommendation #1: Expand the quality and quantity of applied learning experiences available to students.
Strategies:
   a. Conduct guided planning and preparation for authentic and engaging applied learning activities
   b. Ensure all applied learning activities based on criteria set by the National Society of Experiential Education (http://www.nsee.org/8-principles)
   c. Expand applied learning into General Studies courses which promote experiences in non-related vocational fields
   d. Offer applied learning experiences which explore career awareness, career exploration, and career preparation
   e. Support third-party applied learning supervisors with adequate onboarding, regular communication, and clear outcomes for student learning
Stakeholders: Academic Departments, Griffon Office of Applied Learning*
Timeline of Implementation: 1-3 years

Recommendation #2: Create an internal and external marketable identity with a consistent message and equitable student experience for applied learning activities.
Strategies:
   a. Develop departmental strategies for recruiting and retaining students through the lens of applied learning
   b. Improve and expand publicity utilizing the central message of applied learning to external stakeholders
   c. Internally calibrate applied learning activities across disciplines to assure students are receiving equitable experiences concerning quality and learning outcomes
   d. Recognize, celebrate, and communicate applied learning activities on and off campus
   e. Strengthen internal communication infrastructure to embed a culture of applied learning and student success on campus

      f.   Track and report applied learning initiatives, quantifying the impact of applied learning activities on our region.

Stakeholders: Academic Departments, Enrollment Management*, University Marketing and Communications *

Timeline of Implementation: 1-3 years

Recommendation #3: Clearly define terms, criterion, and assessment for all applied learning activities guided by the Eight Principles of Good Practice for All Experiential Learning Activities.

    Strategies:

    a.   Adopt standard baseline criterion for all applied learning activities for quality assurance

    b.   Apply for membership to the National Society for Experiential Education to engage in best practices, collaborate with other institutions, and seek resources which support applied learning

    c.   Document and evaluate student learning outcomes of applied learning activities to be reviewed annually and reported to the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research

    d.   Employ curricular mapping to strategically offer applied learning experiences within General Studies and/or a departmental program

Stakeholders: Academic Departments, Griffon Office of Applied Learning*, Office of Assessment, Institutional Research

Timeline of Implementation: 0-1 years

Recommendation #4: Track, report, and utilize a co-curricular transcript to record applied and service-learning activities.

    Strategies:

    a.   Design a co-curricular transcript to document, measure, and value activities

    b.   Develop a system to report and track applied learning activities via degree audit software

    c.   Support faculty to develop and establish applied learning goals and implementation plans

    d.   Systematically report applied learning activities and experiences for program review, accreditation, and unit assessment data

Stakeholders: Academic Departments, Enrollment Management*, Griffon Office of Applied Learning

Timeline of Implementation: 1-4 years

Global Initiative #2: Essential Skills Acquisition

Goal: 100% of graduates will engage in at least one guided experience directly related to essential skills acquisition.

Recommendation #1: Identify formal and informal experiences on campus which develop critical thinking, ethical decision making, teamwork, communication skills, problem solving skills, work ethic, flexibility and adaptability, and interpersonal skills transferable to career readiness.

    Strategies:

    a.   Align General Studies with essential skill acquisition, identifying opportunities to expand and connect coursework to dispositions fundamental to global citizenship

    b.   Design university-wide student learning outcomes (SLO) which measure essential skills acquisition

    c.   Incorporate Student Affairs to identify, cultivate, and reflect on essential skills in informal (extra-curricular) settings

    d.   Leverage Federal Work Study funds to strategically increase campus employment in areas which require high demand for mastering essential skills

    e.   Regularly assess campus employment opportunities tied to essential skills learning outcomes

    f.   Require all student employees to engage with the Center for Career Services to develop a resume, cover letter and a professional social media account

Stakeholders: Academic Departments, Center for Career Services, Center for Service, Griffon Office of Applied Learning*, Office of Academic Affairs*, Student Affairs

Timeline of Implementation: 1-4 years

Recommendation #2: Increase quality paid applied-learning and student employment opportunities through nonprofit and corporate partnerships.

> **Strategies:**
>> a. Build a database of partnerships to connect students with paid internships
>> b. Conduct a review of partnerships annually for effectiveness and alignment with Missouri Western State University's mission and vision
>> c. Develop relationships and student employment agreements with local leaders
>> d. Engage the alumni base to recruit and hire Missouri Western State University students and graduates
>> e. Identify and strengthen career-related work opportunities through local partnerships, leading to securing employment
>
> **Stakeholders:** Academic Departments, Center for Career Services*, Griffon Office of Applied Learning*, Legal Counsel, University Marketing and Communications *, Special Assistant to the President for Strategic Initiatives
> **Timeline of Implementation:** 1-3 years

Recommendation #3: Provide professional development and ongoing training for faculty and staff to serve as applied learning or first-line supervisors for students, reinforcing that *Every Employee is an Educator.*

> **Strategies:**
>> a. Develop opportunities for continued professional support and development for individuals serving in a supervisory role
>> b. Prepare Missouri Western employees to serve as first-line supervisors if engaging with students in a supervisory role
>
> **Stakeholders:** Center for Teaching and Learning, Griffon Office of Applied Learning, Human Resources*
> **Timeline of Implementation:** 1-2 years

Recommendation #4: Develop a consistent onboarding process for student employees conducted by trained first-line supervisors on campus.

> **Strategies:**
>> a. Establish a Learning Management System (Canvas) module for all Missouri Western State University employees to complete prior to supervising student workers
>> b. Establish a Learning Management System (Canvas) module for all Missouri Western State University student employees to complete prior to employment
>> c. Regularly assess onboarding procedures for student engagement, efficacy, and retention
>
> **Stakeholders:** Center for Teaching and Learning, Human Resources*
> **Timeline of Implementation:** 1-2 years

Global Initiative #3: Innovative Curriculum

Goal: Missouri Western State University will develop curricula that is responsive to workforce demands, student interest, and aligns with the university's mission and vision.

Recommendation #1: Identify new and existing programs (credentials, certificates, degrees) for growth based on regional market demand, financial sustainability, and enrollment potential.

> **Strategies:**
>> a. Broaden existing programs to address the needs and interests of military veterans
>> b. Engage in data driven decisions to build sustainable and vibrant programs
>> c. Expand Early College Academy for students in surrounding communities
>> d. Identify existing and new programs which address gaps in workforce demands
>> e. Initiate technology-based professional programs in response to industry standards
>> f. Launch stackable credentialing and micro credentialing, creating pathways for non-traditional students to seek timely degree completion
>
> **Stakeholders:** Academic Program Review Committee*, Academic Departments, Center for Military and Veterans Services, Center for Workforce Development, Early College Academy, Office of Academic Affairs*
> **Timeline of Implementation:** Immediately/Ongoing

Recommendation #2: Streamline curriculum processes to launch programs in a timely manner.
      Strategies:
          a. Adopt a rolling deadline for curriculum proposals to be considered by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
          b. Address university policies to allow for flexible review of curriculum by Faculty Senate, Governance Advisory Council, and other bodies of approval
      Stakeholders: Academic Departments, Faculty Senate*, Financial Aid, Office of Assessment and Institutional Research, Registrar*
      Timeline of Implementation: 0-1 years

Recommendation #3: Leverage best practices in course design and delivery guided by Quality Matters and Universal Design for Learning.
      Strategies:
          a. Assess course efficacy based on student learning outcomes (SLOs) for continuous improvement
          b. Commit to increasing the number of general studies courses using affordable educational resources and course materials
          c. Create guidelines for developing high quality learning activities and learner interaction
          d. Cultivate an understanding of accessibility and usability for student course engagement
          e. Customize and differentiate instruction to deepen student learning
          f. Design curriculum to ensure all individuals have an equal opportunity to learn
      Stakeholders: Academic Departments*, Center for Teaching and Learning, Faculty Senate*, Office of Academic Affairs, Office of Accessibility, Technology Services
      Timeline of Implementation: 1-2 years

Recommendation #4: Implement alternative scheduling (4/6/8 -week courses) with an online pathway through General Studies (CORE42) and 100% online degrees.
      Strategies:
          a. Design identified courses for asynchronous access to better serve non-traditional student populations
          b. Identify, develop, and support programs best suited for online delivery
      Stakeholders: Academic Affairs, Deans, Academic Departments, Enrollment Management, Registrar
      Timeline of Implementation: 0-3 years

Global Initiative #4: Belongingness and Sense of Community

Goal: Missouri Western State University will increase retention, student persistence, and degree completion by embedding student sense of belongingness and engagement in the university community.

Recommendation #1: Align efforts with Enrollment Management, Advisement, and Student Affairs to fully integrate students into the university community.
      Strategies:
          a. Adopt an advisement model focusing on student cohorts
          b. Design department and unit activities and events to foster community
          c. Develop a student peer-mentoring program targeting individuals identified as at-risk
          d. Explore implementing learning communities, affinity groups, or other kinds of formal student learning experiences
          e. Investigate a summer bridge program for first-time college attendees requiring additional support navigating the college experience
      Stakeholders: Academic Departments, Athletics, Center for Teaching and Learning, Enrollment Management*, Student Affairs
      Timeline of Implementation: 1-3 years

Recommendation #2: Establish a holistic focus on students' sense of community through collaborative efforts between academic and student support units.

> **Strategies:**
> a. Commit to hiring diverse employees and collaborate with diverse partners to better represent our student population
> b. Develop department best practices to create community through student interactions, collaboration, and learning support services in the spirit of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
> c. Engage non-traditional, non-residential, and transfer students in intentional ways
> d. Embed belongingness into the culture of the campus, down to the academic course level
> e. Streamline advisement among faculty to utilize best practices for student support

> **Stakeholders:** Academic Departments*, Accessibility Resource Center, Center for Career Services, Center for Academic Support, Center for Multicultural Education, Center for Teaching and Learning, Center for Student Involvement, Counseling Center, Enrollment Management*, Human Resources*
> **Timeline of Implementation:** 1-3 years

Recommendation #3: Assess student academic adjustment, classroom assimilation, and intent to persist.

> **Strategies:**
> a. Compare qualitative institutional data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to retention and completion statistics
> b. Determine whether a student's sense of belonging is a predictor for retention
> c. Make annual recommendations for adjustments to academic and student support units based on data

> **Stakeholders:** Academic Departments, Athletics, Enrollment Management*, Office of Assessment and Institutional Research*, Student Affairs
> **Timeline of Implementation:** 0-1 years

Conclusion:

The MAP Team recognizes that multiple recommendations require monetary support, an established infrastructure of communication and collaboration, and involve both short-term and long-term aspirations. This document is developed with the intention it may be adjusted over time as the plan unfolds and additional data becomes available. It is important to note that if an area or strategy is not mentioned in the Master Academic Plan, it is not a signal that it is unimportant or undervalued. This plan is an attempt to prioritize broad initiatives while leaving space for growth and expansion. The plan advocates for a shift in campus culture and encourages all employees to prioritize student success through a lens of holistic care for every individual seeking to further their education. The Master Academic Plan Team recommends that this document serves as a guide for department and unit planning and invites all employees to unite in the spirit of collaboration toward a shared goal of student success.

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