



**Strategic Plan**

# **A Difference with Distinction**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Central Methodist University is heading into another exciting stage in our history, one which over the next five years will put a renewed emphasis on programs and people, serving as an opportunity to enhance our academic quality and establish the foundation for continued long-term success.

Progress during this stage will be guided by the “Central Methodist University Strategic Plan - A Difference with Distinction” and will be inspired by its vision:

*“Central Methodist University will be recognized and valued as an institution delivering distinctive academic programs of excellence, nested within a robust and supportive campus environment, preparing students for making a living and living a life.”*

As Central Methodist University looks to the future, our foundation will center on a core set of guiding principles of community, communication, and curiosity, where graduates will embody the liberal arts education through a common set of student learning outcomes. As a Central Methodist University graduate, they will be guided by the following principles: "(1) I will respect....I will serve.....I will lead (2) I am articulate.....I am multimodal.....I am professional, and (3) I can discover.....I can analyze.....I can create."

Through the continued emphasis on highly qualified and engaged faculty, CMU will be poised to educate the next generation of students. And through appropriate investments, more efficient administrative procedures, and professional development of staff, CMU will be positioned to redefine what service means to our constituents.

To support the vision of the plan, three goals were established:

1. Students will engage in meaningful, distinctive experiences.
2. In serving students, CMU will demonstrate a willingness for change, a quest for innovation, and an awareness of our role in an ever-changing society.
3. Students will experience quality services provided in an environment that values people.

While the plan – developed by outstanding and engaged teams of faculty and staff rather than from the top down - will serve as the guide, Central Methodist University will be flexible in its goals and objectives to continue to be innovative over the next five years and beyond. The future of Central Methodist University is a collective responsibility, and one that requires all to work collaboratively as the journey begins through the next stage of this institution’s history, aspiring to make “A Difference with Distinction”.

## **VISION STATEMENT**

Central Methodist University will be recognized and valued as an institution delivering distinctive academic programs of excellence, nested within a robust and supportive campus environment, preparing students for making a living and living a life.

## **ASSUMPTIONS**

1. All elements of this student-centric strategic plan will support our mission, vision, and values.
2. Innovative, well-timed strategies to meet our goals over the next five years will align with the competitive landscape of higher education and our resource base.
3. To assure both the academic and fiscal integrity of the university, we will utilize an ongoing process of planning, budgeting and measuring as key components of this strategic plan.
4. The strategic plan will be evaluated annually, resulting in an executive summary of progress toward and achievement of goals and objectives that will be shared with the Central Methodist University (CMU) community.

**GOAL 1: Students will engage in meaningful, distinctive experiences.**

**OBJECTIVE 1: Promote a vibrant and engaging college experience through distinctive academic and co-curricular programs that prepare students for making a living and living a life.**

- a. **TACTIC: Adopt the University Guiding Principles and Student Learning Outcomes to facilitate the connection of all CMU experiences, academic and co-curricular.**

NOTE: What is the CMU experience and what does it mean to be a graduate of CMU?

- b. **TACTIC: Embark on an academic prioritization program.**

NOTE: Tactic based on the Vision statement. Matrix criteria include:

- i. Support for the University mission, program history, and campus culture.
- ii. Program demand – Internal
- iii. Program demand – External
- iv. Program quality
- v. Investments, revenues, and efficiencies

- c. **TACTIC: Embark on a co-curricular prioritization program.**

NOTE: Tactic based on the Vision statement. Matrix criteria include:

- i. Support for the University mission, program history, and campus culture.
- ii. Program participation
- iii. Program demand – External
- iv. Program quality
- v. Investments, revenues, and efficiencies

- d. **TACTIC: Create learning communities in residence halls.**

NOTE: Deliberate placement of residence hall students in group-type cohorts, either by major or co-curricular activity. This practice assists in retention efforts.

**OBJECTIVE 2: Support a teaching and learning environment that cultivates a relevant, robust educational experience.**

- a. **TACTIC: Faculty, with appropriate professional development, will explore the use of current and best practices for incorporating the use of technology in the classroom.**

NOTE: This would include current features and capabilities found in Office 365, myCMU and trending technologies, such as the integration of portable devices in the teaching and learning environment.

- b. **TACTIC: Emphasize and promote professional learning opportunities in the academic curriculum and through resources such as career services.**

NOTE: The unique learning opportunities within each major will seek to heighten the perception of the quality of return of each student's investment. It is recommended that:

- i. Majors should engage students in real world experiences to enhance marketability and professional outcomes.
- ii. Relevant professional practice should be incorporated in each major to ensure students are leaving college prepared for the newest trends in their careers.

- c. **TACTIC: Faculty will incorporate pedagogical best practices that are consistent with the learning styles of today's students.**

NOTE: Professional development focusing on how students learn provided through online webinars, regional and national conferences, as well as internal programming sponsored by the Center for Learning and Teaching. Organizations such as Educause and the Teaching Professor also provide a variety of resources for faculty.

- d. **TACTIC: Align course and program design, including assessment best practices, with the University Guiding Principles.**

NOTE: Through program review, regular assessment, and the support of the Assessment Committee, faculty will use assessment tools such as the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) Valuing Rubrics to assess learning as it relates to the University Guiding Principles.

**OBJECTIVE 3: Regularly examine system processes, structures, and facilities, changing those that lessen our ability to deliver excellent customer service and models of efficiency.**

- a. **TACTIC: Develop business intelligence with the capability to review key activities and trend analyses at multiple points throughout the semester.**

NOTE: CMU must be committed to cross-departmental sharing of key data points (possibly a University dashboard) to prevent the creation of silos.

- b. **TACTIC: Establish mechanisms to strengthen communication flow between students, advisors, and staff.**

NOTE: One example would be a dynamic "to do" list for students that is easily accessible to both students, advisors, and staff. The "to do" list would be a proactive measure to inform students of tasks they should complete. It would be highly customizable and personalized based on the student. For example, a student who is eligible for graduation would be notified to complete any related form(s). The "to do" list would be located in one place within myCMU with a focus on the incorporation of administrative-related items first.

- c. **TACTIC: Explore a "one-stop" student service center to provide excellent customer service to our students.**

NOTE: Redefine what service means to our students by integrating a myriad of services in one location, such as: student accounts receivable, registrar, financial assistance, and advising. Would this model serve both CLAS and CGES students?

- d. **TACTIC: Periodically update the Campus Master plan, which should include reassessing University space utilization at the main campus and off-campus leased spaces.**

Note: As part of a review of the campus master plan, a space utilization study should be conducted at the main campus and a review schedule established for leased spaces to ensure they are still being effectively used. Is CMU making the best use of its space? Can we make improvements to benefit academic, co-curricular and office areas? Can we identify dedicated spaces for student activities?

**GOAL 2: In serving students, CMU will demonstrate a willingness for change, a quest for innovation, and an awareness of our role in an ever-changing society.**

**OBJECTIVE 1: Focus recruiting efforts on programmatic needs and class profile alignment.**

- a. **TACTIC: Value and promote relationships with the United Methodist Church and in the communities we serve.**

NOTE: Fulfilling our obligation as the only United Methodist institution in Missouri, CMU must continue to value and enhance its relationships with the Missouri United Methodist Conference, its local churches, and associated constituencies.

- b. **TACTIC: Create a Task Force to carefully consider what the class profile should be for CMU in the future.**

NOTE: Historically the CMU student has been a first generation, Pell-eligible, and a moderate academically achieving student. CMU must ensure its student body is in alignment with its mission. Therefore, it is recommended that a Task Force review the following and make recommendations regarding a future CMU student profile for recruitment:

- i. What key factors are a part of a class profile?
- ii. What measurements should be used?
- iii. How to align recruitment practices and messages to engineer a class?
- iv. Will CMU need to devote additional resources and attention to growing the market of the identified students?

- c. **TACTIC: Equip employees with the necessary information to effectively market CMU's academic programs.**

NOTE: Provide key data points for each major that identify how it will meet the University Guiding Principles and Student Learning Outcomes. This will allow employees to accurately and directly communicate the benefits of attending CMU.

- d. **TACTIC: CMU should ensure that it has a robust and dynamic student population.**

NOTE: Review the various populations of the student body (resident, international, traditional non-traditional, etc.) to ensure CMU is maximizing its ability to serve varied populations. CMU needs to consider the resources and services necessary to accommodate the current and possibly new populations in its review.

**OBJECTIVE 2: Strategically develop and maintain partnerships and relationships that benefit and strengthen our current and new programs, services and operations.**

- a. **TACTIC: Expand program offerings, articulation agreements and recruiting efforts with current partner schools and businesses.**

NOTE: Program offerings could include onsite and/or online delivery. Recruiting efforts outside of the state of Missouri would focus on SARA member states. For existing and future out-of-state locations, the University should consider adopting a staffing model that is consistent with our in-state efforts. Continue to build relationships with businesses to provide identify new ways to serve current and future students.

- b. **TACTIC: Continue to build and reinforce partnerships with other higher education institutions and our alumni base to provide opportunities for CMU students.**

NOTE: This includes programs such as reverse and statewide articulated seamless transfer, as well as "3+3 or "3+2" programs with institutions like Missouri S & T and Maryville University.

- c. **TACTIC: Continue to monitor and foster our relationship with the administration, faculty, staff, and students at community college partner sites through focused activities.**

NOTE: Assess partner satisfaction through surveys, face to face meetings, and informal feedback.

- d. **TACTIC: Explore a scholarship model for CGES students.**

NOTE: Should we offer scholarships for CGES students? While this would decrease tuition revenue per student, an overall increase in total tuition revenue could occur as result of increased enrollment.

- e. **TACTIC: Reorganize CGES to provide the best use of administration and staff.**

NOTE: This may include an increase/reorganization of CGES staff and/or creation of a student service center.

- f. **TACTIC: Combine recruiting efforts of CLAS and CGES to decrease the expense of recruiting students while increasing the presence of CMU at all recruiting events across the United States.**

NOTE: This will involve an increase in travel budget (college fairs, out of state recruiting, etc.) and deliberate cross-training for CGES and CLAS recruiters. In addition, we need to engage our alumni in the recruiting process where applicable.

**OBJECTIVE 3: Communicate our achievements to increase our recognition in the market place and support our efforts in enrollment management and fundraising.**

- a. **TACTIC: Redesign and enhance the content and information architecture of the CMU website.**

NOTE: The University recognizes the role of the website as a communication tool for all of our constituents. A new design, better content and improved information architecture will revolutionize the CMU website, making it a more powerful interactive tool. The project will include:

- i. a new look and feel
- ii. responsive design, which will allow users better utilization on more devices
- iii. more intuitive navigation
- iv. better organization of existing content
- v. a review and rewrite of existing content, specifically the academic and admissions sections

- b. **TACTIC: Strengthen coordination of achievements and activities for both CLAS and CGES.**

NOTE: Coordinating and communicating achievements and activities across Colleges will better align CMU's brand and allow CMU to better share its successes. Sharing more stories about both CLAS and CGES students, staff, faculty, and alumni will allow for an increase in recognition in the marketplace and will assist our efforts in enrollment and fundraising.



- c. **TACTIC: Expand our marketing efforts in Missouri and surrounding states while improving the quality of CMU's marketing materials.**

NOTE: Encompasses all forms of marketing (i.e. digital/internet, print, etc.) Improved marketing materials and higher visibility will allow admissions and advancement staff to spend less time introducing CMU and more time cultivating important relationships.

**GOAL 3: Students will experience quality services provided in an environment that values people.**

**OBJECTIVE 1: Establish effective channels of communication to inform our geographically dispersed University community.**

**a. TACTIC: Train employees on the institution's mission, goals and policies.**

NOTE: What does it mean to be an employee of CMU? Employees will experience confidence in, and have a complete understanding of their responsibilities as an employee of CMU. Current employees should have periodic refresher training.

**b. TACTIC: Seek input from all employees about satisfaction levels and ideas.**

NOTE: Conduct an annual faculty and staff survey, asking all employees to rank proposed professional development activities in terms of importance, and then plan the professional development and training activities based on their feedback. Some activities include:

- Conducting an employee satisfaction survey.
- Staff training coordinated by an additional Human Resource staff member.
- Provide an online platform to maintain dialogue across the entire CMU community.
- Research other ways to collect input, from all employees, including online discussions, focus groups, and open forum meetings.

**c. TACTIC: The President will send regular communication to all employees.**

NOTE: Include notes from Senior Staff, Board of Trustee meetings and other relevant CGES/CLAS news. Employees will have a better sense of community, transparency, teamwork, and be aware of changes and news across the entire CMU community.

**d. TACTIC: Supervisors will have regular departmental announcements and/or meetings to report information given to them by senior administration.**

NOTE: Employees will have a better understanding of what is happening within their own department, but with a line of communication that allows for information to travel to and from all employee levels. Include events, new/retiring employee announcements, accomplishments, changes in policy, changes in academic requirements etc. Supervisors are responsible for informing the team on how their processes affect others.

**e. TACTIC: Create a foundation for communication flow across our vastly dispersed community by holding CMU employee training.**

NOTE: Employees can put a face with the names of other employees. Include training in this retreat to ensure that all employees are on the same page (FERPA, sexual harassment, TIAA-CREF, customer service, etc.). The employee training retreat concept is a key contributing factor related to all objectives under this goal.

**OBJECTIVE 2: Develop and retain highly qualified and diversified faculty and staff to provide outstanding service to our students**

**a. TACTIC: Continually review and evaluate positions and their respective job descriptions using a standard format and process to ensure that roles and expectations align with the mission and the duties performed.**

NOTE: Outside of specific job duties, each job description should have set expectations for providing customer service. Training for faculty and staff would be provided to address areas of concern and professional development would be encouraged for growth opportunities.

b. **TACTIC: Retain qualified faculty and staff.**

NOTE: Faculty should have broad disciplinary knowledge, experience with undergraduate instruction, demonstrate effective use of instructional technology, understand learning styles, and be committed to the independent residential institution. Reward people for good performance (i.e. give raises based on objective performance). Recognize and provide positive feedback to people about their job performance when appropriate.

c. **TACTIC: Provide and require training of all employees to maximize the use of existing resources.**

NOTE: Topics include: Eagle mail, Cognos, Nolib, myCMU, Microsoft Office, Office 365, Spectrum, and Jenzabar.

**OBJECTIVE 3: Encourage innovation brought about by new technology, changes to the educational environment, and other unforeseen factors.**

a. **TACTIC: Develop and assess tools to support a culture of innovation.**

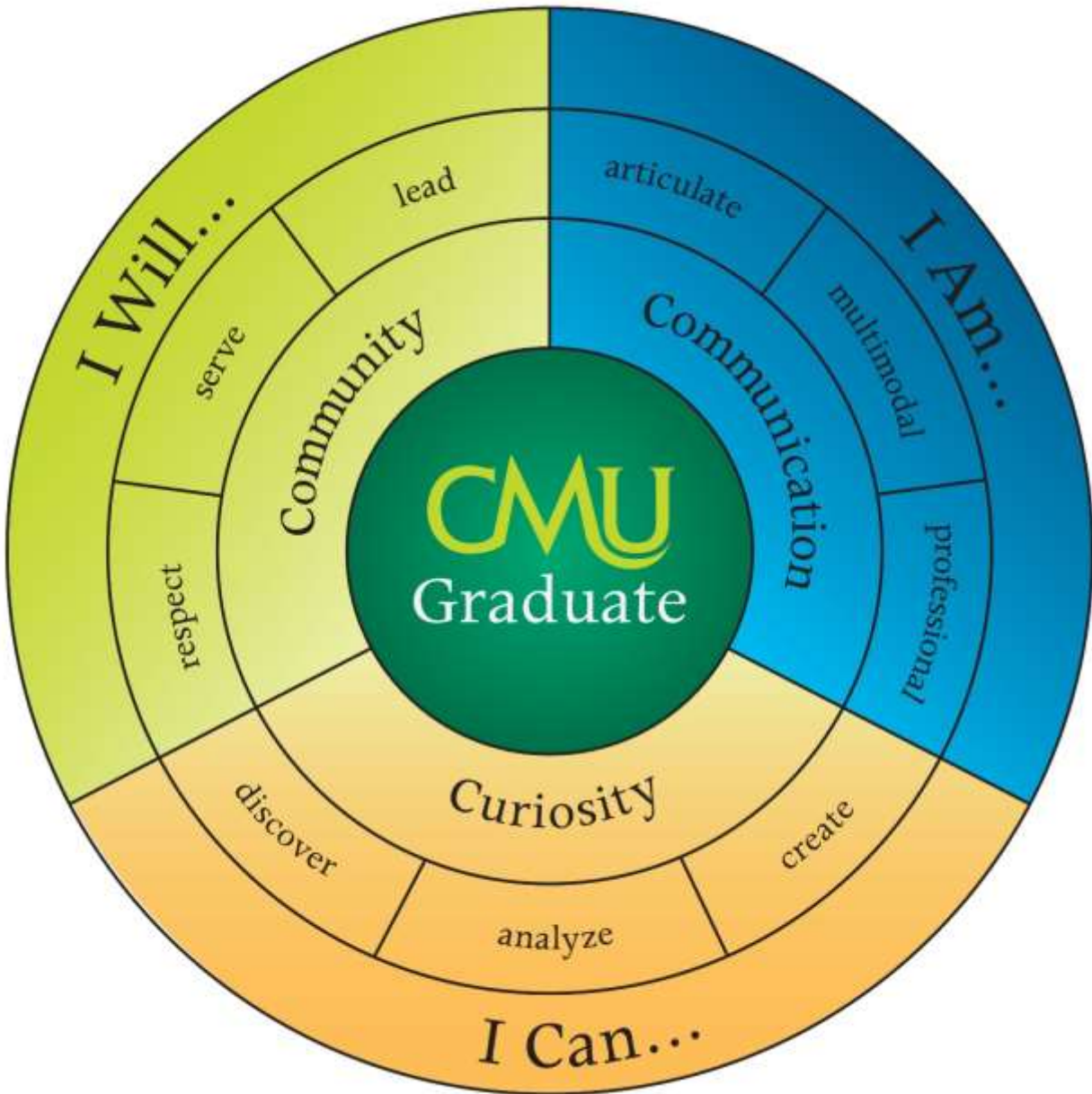
NOTE: Some examples of tools for innovation whereby everyone, at every level of the institution, may contribute innovative ideas include the following:

- i. Campus-wide competitions for proposing innovative ideas to solve specific problems (recognition for contributing ideas).
- ii. Open forums for the CMU community where suggestions for all innovative ideas can be proposed. The forums could also be specific (e.g. Open forum for Innovations in Technology, Innovations in Student Life, etc.)
- iii. Innovation/suggestion box (either physical or electronic)

b. **TACTIC: Establish processes to support a culture of innovation.**

The University will create a committee (with CLAS and CGES representation) which would be responsible for establishing the appropriate processes, evaluating and assessing innovative ideas, and making recommendations to the Senior Staff/Board of Trustees. It is understood that innovation may be incremental and involve levels of risk without a guarantee of reward.

APPENDIX A - University Guiding Principles and Student Learning Outcomes



## Curiosity

- ▶ Promote a vibrant and engaging college experience through distinctive academic and co-curricular programs that prepare students for making a living and living a life.
- ▶ Support a teaching and learning environment that cultivates a relevant, robust educational experience.
- ▶ Focus recruiting efforts on programmatic needs and class profile alignment.
- ▶ Develop and retain highly qualified and diversified faculty and staff to provide outstanding service to our students.

## Community

- ▶ Regularly examine system processes, structures, and facilities, changing those that lessen our ability to deliver excellent customer service and models of efficiency.
- ▶ Encourage innovation brought about by new technology, changes to the educational environment, and other unforeseen factors.

## Communication

- ▶ Strategically develop and maintain partnerships and relationships that benefit and strengthen our current and new programs, services and operations.
- ▶ Communicate our achievements to increase our recognition in the market place and support our efforts in enrollment management and fundraising.
- ▶ Establish effective channels of communication to inform our geographically dispersed University community.

Strategic Plan Objectives



**APPENDIX B – Task Force Members**

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Kent Propst  
Sam Mason  
Annette Van  
Carlena Klusmeyer  
Kimberly Thomson  
Molly Moore  
Maryann Rustemeyer  
Matt Williams  
Stephen Stull  
Cathy Baxter  
Ryan McLouth  
David Hutchison  
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