

# OVERVIEW

## AQIP Systems Portfolio

The University of Mount Union, founded in 1846, is a four-year, private, nonprofit institution grounded in the liberal arts with a focus on practical education. Mount Union offers an array of broad-based and career-specific undergraduate and graduate programs to its 2,200 students who experience outstanding opportunities for success after graduation. Ranked as one of America's Best Colleges by *U.S. News & World Report*, the University is committed to providing a student-centered approach and an exceptional educational experience as evidenced by its mission to prepare students for fulfilling lives, meaningful work and responsible citizenship. Throughout the course of the past decade, more than \$100 million has been invested in the construction and renovation of modern facilities including a natural sciences building, recreation center, welcome center and apartment-style housing options. Primarily residential in nature, Mount Union's picturesque 123-acre campus is located in Alliance, OH (population 23,000), within 80 miles of both Cleveland and Pittsburgh. An additional 142-acre nature center is located six miles away. The University's endowment is in excess of \$138 million.

### The Value of a Mount Union Education

The University of Mount Union provides students with the academic preparation, hands-on experience and global perspective necessary to stay competitive in a fast-paced world. Simply put, students will be primed for success in the 21st century. Our approach truly combines the close-knit community associated with a small college and the opportunity and variety of a larger university, all in a friendly and safe environment that features a robust curriculum, charming campus and remarkable facilities.

In today's society, a college degree is a necessity for those hoping to get ahead in the world. In fact, statistics show that those with bachelor's degrees can expect, on average, to earn \$1.2 million more over the span of their adult working lives than those with high school degrees alone (*Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workplace*). Mount Union values an education that arms students with the ability to communicate effectively, think critically and creatively, solve problems and work collaboratively in a team environment (*American Association of Colleges and Universities*). With a curriculum grounded in the liberal arts and practical education, a University of Mount Union education is uniquely structured to meet these demands.

### A Proven Investment in the Future

Mount Union provides an exceptional experience that has been recognized for its combination of benefit and value – a personal, practical and pertinent education that is a proven investment in the future as evidenced by the success and satisfaction of our students, alumni and parents.

- **They love their experience...** Survey results indicate that our current students' level of satisfaction with Mount Union is significantly better than national averages for other four-year private institutions, and 95% of our alumni are pleased with their Mount Union educations as well.
- **They get jobs upon graduation...** Among members of the 2012 graduating class, 98% self reported that they secured a degree-required career or graduate school placement in the college or university of their choice, all in an average of 20 days after graduation.
- **They say it was worth it...** An overwhelming majority – 93% of parents and 91% of alumni – say a Mount Union education is worth the investment.

Mount Union also is ranked #1 in the Great Lakes Region for return on investment by CollegeFactual.com and the University was named one of the top schools in Ohio for the greatest lifetime return on investment by AffordableCollegesOnline.org. For 23 consecutive years, Mount Union has been recognized as a top university by *U.S. News & World Report*. In addition, the University also has been recently cited by *Forbes*, *Washington Monthly* and *The Princeton Review's Green Guide*, in addition to garnering other national recognitions.

### An Experience Within Means

Mount Union has consistently ranked among the lowest in tuition and fees among comparable colleges and universities. Our tuition is more than 12% below the average cost of other similar private institutions in Ohio.

Through our financial aid and merit-based programs, Mount Union strives to make its high-quality education accessible to students of all socioeconomic backgrounds. About 98% of undergraduate students receive some form of financial aid, and more than 87% receive need-based aid. Our average package of \$20,597 demonstrates Mount Union's commitment to affordability. The University also offers nearly \$26 million in grants and scholarships each year, ranging from \$1,000 awards to competitive full-tuition scholarships.

## Vital Characteristics

The University of Mount Union is the outgrowth of a town meeting held by forward-looking citizens of the village of Mount Union on October 4, 1846. At that time, the people gathered to hear Orville Nelson Hartshorn outline the need for a new institution in the area, where men and women could be educated with equal opportunity, science would parallel the humanities, laboratory and experimental subjects would receive proper emphasis and there would be no distinction due to race, color, sex or position. On October 20, 1846, this young man organized and taught on the third floor of the "Old Carding Mill" a "select school" of six students. The school grew rapidly under his inspired leadership, and, in 1849, became known as "Mount Union Seminary." In 1853 a "normal department" was added for the training of teachers. On January 9, 1858, the institution was chartered and incorporated under the laws of the state of Ohio as "Mount Union College."

Although Mount Union had not been established by church efforts, its founder and early faculty members were dedicated Methodist laymen. One of the articles in the charter of the institution looked to the day when Mount Union would come under the patronage of some annual conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The Pittsburgh Annual Conference "heartily endorsed" the new University in 1858, but it was not until 1864 that Mount Union was granted full patronage by the conference.

On August 1, 2010, the institution officially became known as the University of Mount Union. The change to a "university" designation was made in an effort to better describe what Mount Union is today and more effectively communicate all that the institution has to offer. This decision, unanimously approved by the Board of Trustees, came after careful review of data gathered through numerous research efforts and thoughtful consideration and discussion.

Two admirable characteristics of the University of Mount Union are the vigor of its business practices and its dedication to seeking out the opportunities necessary for new growth and improved viability. UMU is rooted in a conservative fiscal approach that has resulted in 59 years of balanced budgets and overall endowment growth. UMU nurtures relationships with alumni and friends that yield creative and expert volunteer leadership and successful fundraising campaigns. Most recently, Mount Union successfully raised more than \$25 million to fully fund a new health and medical sciences building and performing arts center. In 2008, Drive for Distinction campaign ended early when gifts surpassed the goal of \$80 million. UMU consistently invests in the development, preservation and maintenance of its beautiful facilities and grounds. Finally, the University has a thriving, mutually beneficial commitment to Alliance and Stark County, the community in which UMU resides. All of these practices have helped to create the institution that Mount Union is today, allowing administrators, faculty and staff members to creatively pursue their passion to prepare students for fulfilling lives, meaningful work and responsible citizenship.

It is on the basis of these strengths that Mount Union crafts innovative strategies tied to the mission and vision that serve to further enhance the sustainability of the institution for its stakeholders in the face of many current challenges in higher education. The six strategic initiatives of *Advancing Excellence – A Strategic Plan for the University of Mount Union* represent such strategies and guide Mount Union's efforts to help students learn and to identify and manage those non-academic objectives that, together, distinguish it from its peer and aspirant institutions.

### Campus and Location

The University of Mount Union and the city of Alliance have developed very strong ties over the course of 167 years with the University often assuming a leadership role in community and economic development efforts. Alliance's viability is challenged by an aging and declining population and higher than average poverty rates. Administrators, faculty and staff serve on commissions and within civic groups and nonprofit organizations that enhance the quality of life, which mutually benefits the University and the city. Students devote thousands of hours each year to community service projects, service-learning, internship experiences and field placements within the community. UMU also serves as the cultural center for Alliance, providing performing arts, visual arts and lectures at no cost to community members.

### Student Community

Currently, the University consists of **2,100** undergraduate students and **91** graduate students of which **49%** are men and **51%** are women. UMU attracts the majority of its undergraduate students from within the 150-mile radius of campus encompassing northern and eastern Ohio and western Pennsylvania. The current student population has representation from **30** states and **16** countries, with **4%** international students and **13%** American students of color. Among the international students, **61%** come from China, Japan and Vietnam as a result of well-developed relationships with high schools and an increasing number of alumni in these countries. During the 2012-2013 Academic Year, nearly **80%** of all students at Mount Union volunteered at least once, contributing **36,249** hours of community service while raising and distributing nearly \$100,000 in philanthropic gifts.

### Academics

As of the fall of 2013, the University boasts a student to faculty ratio of **13:1** and an average class size of **19**. The University curriculum offers **61** diverse majors including civil engineering, mechanical engineering and nursing as well as two graduate programs: physician assistant studies and educational leadership. The most common areas of study are within professional programs of education and business with recent strong growth in the natural sciences, exercise science and sport business. About **90%** of Mount Union's faculty hold a doctorate or other terminal degree.

## Helping Students Learn

The University employs a three-pronged approach to helping students learn that in turn facilitates continuous improvement in student learning outcomes.

### Helping Students Learn

Curriculum Development	Faculty Development	Program Review Assessment
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At the forefront of the University of Mount Union is a vigorous academic program geared to prepare students with an education grounded in the liberal arts. Students develop the skills to think critically, communicate effectively, understand the various cultures and interdependence of the global community and form moral and religious values that encourage them to address complex societal problems that affect the individual and the world. Mount Union and its faculty have identified a set of common abilities, skills, areas of knowledge and experiences for undergraduate courses:

#### I. Demonstrate Core Abilities

- A. Demonstrate the ability to acquire and assess information
- B. Demonstrate research skills (both quantitative and qualitative)
- C. Develop the ability to think critically
- D. Develop the ability to think creatively
- E. Develop communication skills

#### II. Foundational Knowledge and Integration

- A. Acquire knowledge in humanities, arts and sciences
- B. Demonstrate the use of concepts and methods in the humanities, arts and sciences
- C. Develop the ability to view the world from multiple disciplinary perspectives
- D. Integrate knowledge and techniques across multiple disciplines

#### III. Preparation for Fulfilling Lives

- A. Acquire the tools for self-development in order to assess and improve physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual growth and wellness
- B. Find and cultivate intellectual pursuits
- C. Find and cultivate pursuits for personal enrichment

#### IV. Preparation for Meaningful Work

- A. Acquire discipline-specific knowledge and skills needed at a professional level
- B. Demonstrate use of discipline-specific knowledge and skills
- C. Integrate discipline-specific knowledge and abilities with multiple disciplinary perspectives
- D. Develop the ability to collaborate with others to solve problems

#### V. Preparation for Responsible Citizenship

- A. Develop knowledge and appreciation of the individual's culture and other cultures in a global context
- B. Understand and employ ethics within diverse cultural, social, professional, environmental and personal settings

- C. Demonstrate civic engagement by active involvement in and beyond the classroom

These abilities, skills, areas of knowledge and experiences guide every undergraduate course, major and minor field of study. However, it is primarily through the Integrative Core – Mount Union's general education curriculum – that undergraduate students experience the liberal arts education.

### The Integrative Core

The Integrative Core at the University of Mount Union is a collection of foundational courses that ensure a well-rounded educational experience. Extending throughout all four years of students' undergraduate college careers, this unique curriculum allows them to explore a variety of topics and ideas through four levels that build on skills learned previously. The Integrative Core enhances the learning developed through a major and minor and provides for the development of complex thinking and effective communication skills – all of which students need to be successful in life after college. After two years of planning, the Integrative Core was implemented for all incoming students in the fall of 2012. See Overview – Integrative Core graphic detailing the curriculum below.



### Overview – Integrative Core

#### First Year Seminar

Each First Year Seminar (FYS) focuses on a specific topic in a wide range of areas. The small class size allows students to interact closely with a professor who will help cultivate a vision for their education. The FYS also exposes students to basic writing, communication and critical thinking skills, among others. The professor of the student's FYS serves as academic advisor until the student selects a major.

#### Foundations

These second-year courses focus on four major areas of human knowledge – humanities, natural sciences, social sciences and fine arts, building on the skills the student learned in the FYS. They address issues such as:

- What questions do these perspectives ask about the world?
- How do these perspectives go about answering the questions?
- Why is this perspective important?

## Themes

These are a pair of connected third-year courses designed around a common theme that build upon what students learned in the Foundations to help integrate ideas, methods and perspectives from different fields.

## Capstone

In the Capstone Seminar, students work collaboratively to address a real-world issue. This problem-solving experience will prepare students to draw upon their entire education for life beyond college.

## Proficiency Requirements

In addition to fulfilling the requirements of the Integrative Core, students must also meet identified levels of proficiency in mathematics and foreign language.

## Key Instructional Divisions

The University of Mount Union's undergraduate educational programs are divided into four "divisions": Arts and Humanities; Social Sciences; Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Engineering; and Professional Studies. Each department within the divisions has a mission statement tied to the institutional mission that guides the program philosophically. Departmental learning goals for each major are reviewed and affirmed or revised as part of the program review self-study on a seven-year cycle.

The undergraduate curriculum at UMU emphasizes for each student in-depth learning in at least one discipline and substantial learning in at least one discipline. Students also will likely have to select from a number of elective courses to complete the 128 credit hours required for graduation. In addition to established GPA requirements, some programs have minimum proficiency standards, performance evaluations and portfolio requirements.

The University of Mount Union also offers **two graduate programs**: a Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies and a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership. Total graduate enrollment is currently 91 students.

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### Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives

UMU is currently pursuing a variety of distinctive objectives and chose to focus on three that illustrate its relationships with different stakeholders. These three reveal unique dimensions of the University, yet all grow out of values that are closely held and serve to enhance the broad-ranging set of experiences that constitute a Mount Union education.

#### Sustainability

Under the strategic initiative "Ensure the Sustainable Management of Resources" in *Advancing Excellence—A Strategic Plan for the University of Mount Union*, one of the key objectives is to serve as a leader in the higher education sustainability movement. Mount Union's interest in sustainability is rooted in its

conservative use of resources, the ethical consideration that it is "the right thing to do" and the high level of interest in green initiatives among our stakeholders. Mount Union developed a formal Sustainability Task Force that created a comprehensive sustainability plan for the institution. After the Board of Trustees approved the plan, the Task Force was replaced with the Sustainability Management Advisory Committee (SMAC) with representatives among all campus stakeholders and community members. Mount Union was the first institution in Ohio to receive a STARS (Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System) rating as well as one of the first smaller universities to sign the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC). The University also built its first LEED-certified building, the Gartner Welcome Center, and its policy requires that all new buildings on campus be built to silver LEED certified standards. In addition, Mount Union installed a 54-kilowatt solar panel, which is one of the largest single solar arrays of its kind in the state of Ohio. Mount Union earned Tree Campus USA recognition for its dedication to campus forestry management and environmental stewardship and holds three recycling events annually. UMU's interests extend beyond campus borders to participate in community efforts to reduce, reuse and recycle.

#### Athletics and Recreation

Under the strategic initiative of "Foster an Engaging Campus Community" in the University's Strategic Plan, one of the key objectives is to expand recreation, gathering and eating venues as well as support the Division III student athlete. Athletics help connect major stakeholders (community members, alumni, trustees, students, faculty, staff) to the University. In addition, successful athletic team records also assist with recruitment. On campus, Mount Union recently renovated its academic and athletic wellness facility – the McPherson Academic and Athletic Complex (MAAC) – to better meet the needs of today's health-conscious students. The facility provides athletic and wellness equipment and programming for students, faculty, staff and board members to utilize. In short, it's a place for individuals to train, workout and practice. More than 65% of students participate in intramurals and 30% participate in intercollegiate athletics. Currently, the University of Mount Union sponsors 23 NCAA Division III sports, including a Division III football team that has won 11 National Championships (1993, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2012). Additionally, national recognition and local fans bring thousands of visitors to campus annually, supporting the economic bottom line for area restaurants, hotels and retail establishments.

#### Diversity

Under the strategic initiative of "Enhance the Diversity of Our Campus Community," there are numerous key objectives that have been set to assist Mount Union in reaching this initiative. As stated previously, Mount Union was founded as a place where men and women could be educated with equal opportunity, science would parallel the humanities and there would be no distinction due to race, color or sex. A comprehensive diversity plan, which was created by the assistant to the president for diversity affairs and the University vice presidents, is currently guiding change within the institution. The University is devoting a significant amount of institutional resources to in-



ternational admissions and study abroad, while also expanding the range of intercultural experiences for students, faculty and staff. The resource allocation reflects the diversity represented on campus: 17% of the student body is composed of students with international and minority backgrounds. The major offices and committees that specifically support the Diversity Plan include the offices of Admission, Diversity and Inclusion, Student Accessibility Services and Athletics as well as the Center for Global Education and the Diversity Initiative Steering Committee.

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### Student and Stakeholder Needs

Mount Union's stakeholders are those commonly found in educational institutions: students and their families, prospective students and their families, alumni, trustees, faculty and staff and community members. Mount Union's website shows an additional stakeholder group defined as athletic fans. The inclusion of athletic fans reflects a public relations reality that the institution has come to recognize due to the national attention garnered by the success of our Division III football program. However, this group is not separated for discussion in this section.

#### Students

Mount Union takes great pride in its personal approach with students. With small class sizes, relatively low student-faculty ratio, a high participation rate in extracurricular activities and a very high percentage of students living in on-campus housing, Mount Union has unique advantages in building a close-knit and nurturing relationship with students.

UMU encourages student involvement and leadership; students can participate at Mount Union through 80+ campus organizations, 23 intercollegiate athletic teams and an array of community service opportunities. The traditions and cultures at Mount Union make athletic activities an important means of relationship building among students, faculty and staff. The University offers a thriving Division III athletics program in which 30% of the overall student population participates. Over several decades, UMU has nurtured relationships with several Asian educational institutions and attracts a significant number of international students, faculty and staff.

Additionally, 76% of Mount Union students living in on-campus housing, the Office of Residence Life employs community educators, program administrators, assistant resident managers and assistant resident directors to implement regular community-building and enrichment programs to our student residents.

In attempting to address the needs of students, UMU is most often competing with other schools in the region. With the assistance of a consultant, the University identified a list of peer and aspirant institutions that are used to guide decision making and help the institution hone and articulate its competitive edge. UMU's strategic planning process helped identify strengths and opportunities that assist the institution in competing for a shrinking demographic of high school graduates.

#### Other Stakeholders

UMU's 17,000 alumni provide essential financial resources for many budgetary needs through capital and endowment gifts, serve as in-the-field recruiters of students and provide perspective on boards and committees throughout the institution. Many engagement efforts are led by the Office of University Advancement, which houses the Office of Alumni Engagement. UMU's culture of faculty mentoring encourages sustained involvement with alumni, and the Office of Career Development provides resume assistance and employment contacts.

In addition to hundreds of cultural and athletic events that are offered to members of the Alliance community each year, three UMU Centers of Excellence offer opportunities for stakeholder engagement, helping UMU build relationships through service as well as social and academic enrichment within the greater Alliance, Ohio community. These three centers include:

The **Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center**, six miles south of UMU, offers 142 acres of trails, ponds and other opportunities to explore the outdoors. Each year, the Center welcomes thousands of students to environmental education programs, creates opportunities for hundreds of people to give of themselves as volunteers and offers a place for reflection and nature study for any who choose to visit.

The **Center for Global Education** provides the chance for community members to serve as adoptive homes and international friends to our exchange and degree-seeking international students. To support these efforts, the institution provides programs (e.g., the annual International Dinner and monthly International Teas), which enable the international community on campus to connect with and educate the campus, alumni and broader community.

The recently-established **Ralph and Mary Regula Center for Public Service and Civic Engagement** works with nearly 80 community partners to ensure UMU and its students are connecting with the surrounding community through a variety of events, educational pieces and volunteer coordination such as MLK Day, Thanksgiving Dinner, Constitution Day, etc. Some of these student organizations that contribute these community service hours include Religious Life Council – Composed of the religious organizations on campus, this group encompasses community service while furthering religious outreach; Fraternity and Sorority Life – The students on campus who are involved in fraternity and sorority life are constantly active in service working locally and contributing to philanthropy projects that support national organizations; and Alpha Phi Omega – This co-ed service fraternity focuses on making a difference in all capacities while providing students with a supportive, fun social experience. In addition, many professors at UMU find ways to incorporate service into their classes, asking students to complete hours at local agencies, tutor students at Alliance City Schools and attend spring break service trips.

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### Valuing People

Mount Union strives to employ dedicated and dynamic individuals who truly care about making a difference in the lives of students by enhancing their overall academic journey. From the faculty and administration to a varied support staff, every individual counts when it comes to delivering an exceptional experience for the Mount Union student. UMU offers excellent benefits, beautiful facilities and a warm and friendly working environment. Not only does Mount Union make a practice of hiring alumni for faculty and staff openings, it also provides an avenue for many entry-level employees to seek a bachelor's degree for themselves. Tuition benefits also are offered to the spouse, partner or children of full-time employees.

Faculty, staff and administrators are allowed a tuition benefit and are encouraged to attend workshops, training and courses for professional development. University-funded support for faculty (e.g., research appointment, Austin Montgomery Fund, STAR Grant) helps to create an environment and culture where professional development is valued. For tenure and promotion, faculty members are expected to pursue professional development opportunities. Once tenure and promotion are achieved there is an expectation of continued development; the University reserves certain appointments and professional recognitions (e.g., endowed chairs and professors, division deanships) for those faculty members who demonstrate excellence in scholarship, professional development and service beyond tenure and promotion. UMU employees are organized under the six administrative areas led by six vice presidents. None of our employee groups are unionized.

Mount Union publicly recognizes excellence in faculty and staff through the Great Teacher Award and the Davidson Staff Award given annually through nominations processes.

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### Leading and Communicating

UMU uses a shared-governance model for institutional oversight and management, which includes a Board of Trustees, the president, six vice presidents, the faculty and an array of administrators and staff members.

### Mission Statement

The mission of the University of Mount Union is to prepare students for fulfilling lives, meaningful work and responsible citizenship.

### Vision Statement

In 2015, the University of Mount Union will be a deliberately dynamic private university of 2,500 students, comprised of 90% undergraduate students and 10% graduate students. Our increasingly-diverse community will be enriched by challenging academic programs and an attractive, predominantly-residential campus that will feature remarkable grounds and first-class facilities.

We will be known for offering a relevant broad-based and career-specific curriculum, ensuring that our students are prepared for career and personal success. Academic program expansion will primarily come in the way of high-demand graduate programs and undergraduate majors aligned with the healthcare field that will fill societal needs while maintaining our firm commitment to a strong academic program that is grounded in the liberal arts tradition. All the while, students will thrive in an environment that fosters one-on-one personal attention and appreciates an optimal student-faculty ratio of approximately 14:1.

The excellence of our programs and proven success of our students upon graduation will broaden awareness of the institution. As a result, increased alumni loyalty and public recognition will garner support at the highest levels, ensuring continued fiscal and sustainable responsibility.

### The Strategic Plan and Six Strategic Initiatives

The development of a strategic plan for the future stems from six strategic initiatives first presented in 2005 as guiding principles for the institution. The continued use of these strategic initiatives was confirmed during the research phase of the strategic planning process, and the data gathered during this phase allowed for the identification and prioritization of the key objectives that emerged within each strategic initiative. The following identifies the strategic initiatives and the key objectives of each, listed in order of priority:

#### Develop a Curriculum for the Future

Key objectives:

- Strengthen and revise the general education curriculum
- Expand graduate programs
- Identify and implement strategic additions or modifications to the undergraduate program with a focus on high-demand health care programs
- Enhance the fine arts program
- Increase opportunities for research and scholarly accomplishment
- Increase opportunities for experiential learning
- Design and grow online offerings

#### Foster an Engaging Campus Community

Key objectives:

- Continue the transformation of student housing
- Expand recreation, gathering and eating spaces
- Broaden the reach of the cultural and fine arts programs
- Support the Division III student-athlete
- Create an environment that encourages alumni-student interaction

#### Manage Strategic Enrollment Growth

Key objectives:

- Establish and achieve strategic enrollment levels
- Build strategic pipelines for recruitment
- Increase traditional undergraduate retention and graduation rates
- Secure an appropriate segment of the transfer market

## Ensure the Sustainable Management of Resources

Key objectives:

- Design a modern Campus Master Plan including commercial development opportunities on the perimeter of campus
- Launch a focused fund-raising campaign
- Engage Mount Union alumni of all generations
- Develop a competitive salary and benefits plan that recognizes outstanding achievement
- Serve as a leader in the higher education sustainability movement

## Enhance the Diversity of Our Campus Community

Key objectives:

- Foster an inclusive campus environment
- Increase the number of U.S. minority and international students
- Increase U.S. minority retention and graduation rates
- Increase the number of full-time U.S. minority, female and international faculty
- Increase student exposure to intercultural experiences
- Create new intercultural opportunities for faculty and staff

## Broaden the Visibility and Reputation of the Institution

Key objectives:

- Embark on an institutional positioning and brand clarification effort
- Emphasize the value and benefits of becoming University of Mount Union
- Leverage the outcomes and value of a Mount Union education
- Develop a cutting-edge web presence
- Position Mount Union faculty as experts in their disciplines
- Communicate the University's commitment to diversity efforts

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### Supporting Institutional Operations

UMU's mission to prepare students for fulfilling lives, meaningful work and responsible citizenship directs the institution to assist students in their overall development into adulthood. Consequently, UMU provides support services that facilitate academic, social, moral and spiritual growth. Program development and evaluation is ongoing and guided by the best practices that are gleaned from examinations of our 24 peer and aspirant institutions across the United States.

Faculty and staff needs are identified in the annual review process and analyzed by administrators to guide training and development needs. Overall, as a smaller institution, Mount Union benefits from constant communication both within and between functional areas to gather feedback on existing support needs. Routine support needs for technology, safety and security, equipment and supplies are determined primarily through the annual "zero-based" budgeting process beginning in March of each year.

The University ensures it is addressing needs by soliciting direct feedback and tracking and monitoring data trends. All departments, areas and offices engage directly through email, face-to-face meetings, information sessions and in large group meetings and forums, all of which encourage those involved to provide immediate feedback. Support services are routinely discussed in weekly meetings of the President's Council and regular formal and informal meetings that take place within each of the areas managed by VPs.

The design of physical facilities and infrastructure is guided by a campus master planning process that takes into consideration the campus community and surrounding neighborhoods, now and several years into the future.

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### Measuring Effectiveness

The overall process of data selection, management and distribution is guided by the mission of the University.

#### Selection

Some data selection processes are mandated by law, e.g., Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Federal Department of Education; some are considered best practices; and some are based on the desired outcome of the queries (overall UMU learning goals and integrative core learning goals).

#### Management

The Office of Institutional Research serves as the "hub" of both instructional and non-instructional data at the University. Much of the information is shared with the public, accreditation agencies and the government; some is used for internal decision-making. The Office of Academic Affairs manages instructional data, including things such as research from sabbaticals, student course evaluations, feedback from the Business Advisory Board and BEST program and other academic advisory boards of major programs. The responsibilities of managing non-instructional data are distributed between the Office of Institutional Research and some individual offices.

#### Distribution

Data are distributed in numerous ways. Some are available on a self-serve basis through University portals, but materials are exported to other systems, queried by individuals and downloaded to rightful users. Data are also distributed online, through forums like the "State of the University Address" by the president, emails, special ad hoc management reports and the University website. In addition, data are shared through various external agencies such as The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the *U.S. News and World Report* and other publications such as the *Princeton Review* and through the local newspaper the *Alliance Review*.

## Using Data to Plan and Improve

Key performance indicators and benchmarking data are used by the President's Council and the Board of Trustees for planning and improvement at the institutional level. Over time, these indicators are selected, managed and distributed to track institutional strengths and weaknesses and compared against other institutions. Other (benchmarking) institutions are selected on the basis of similar size, scope, mission and geographical area. UMU currently utilizes a list of 24 peer and aspirant institutions selected with the assistance of a consultant.

The various vice presidential areas of the institution are in charge of data that are pertinent to the planning and improvement of their areas of operation, such as physical plant metrics, admissions indicators, marketing strategies and information technology updates. Other examples of data used for planning and improvement include tracking of retention rates, suspensions, probations, Honors Program participation, curriculum changes, student recruitment, enrollment, capital planning and financial forecasts.

Department chairs and directors at all levels select, manage and distribute data for periodic program or departmental reviews and institutional research data for planning and improvement purposes of their specific programs. Faculty committees (e.g., Academic Policies Committee, Cross-Curricular Development Committee, Committee on Assessment, Faculty Personnel Committee, Faculty Development Committee, Campus Life Committee and the Diversity Initiatives Steering Committee) select, manage and distribute data for campus-wide program improvement.

New academic and instructional programs are determined by using some specific criteria/data and feasibility reports. When deciding which program to add and when to add, Mount Union has identified five criteria to be used in the feasibility study and the decision-making process:

1. Mission compatibility
2. Market need (for incoming students and for career opportunities for graduates of the program)
3. Ability to attract academically-prepared students (at or above current student academic profile)
4. Fiscal responsibility
5. Sustainability

## IO8

### Planning Continuous Improvements

The University of Mount Union uses and aligns the efforts of three key planning processes: the Strategic Plan, the Campus Master Plan and the Five-Year Operating Plan, which are informed at every level by input from faculty, staff, students and other stakeholders. The Imagine Mount Union Steering Committee oversees the planning of continuous improvements within the institution.

#### Planning Group

The AQIP Steering Committee was established to guide and monitor the activities and responsibilities of the AQIP accrediting system for the institutional accreditation process through the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The committee is composed of six faculty members, four of whom are recommended by their academic divisions to the Nominating Committee and two faculty members who serve at-large. Additionally, six staff members are recommended by their respective vice presidents, including a member of the physical plant staff and a member of the support staff. The president of Student Senate serves on the committee, as outlined in the constitution of that body. The committee is convened by a faculty member who is appointed by the president. A liaison to the committee is also identified by the president. The members of the AQIP Steering Committee serve on the strategic planning steering committee known as Imagine Mount Union Steering Committee, which includes the president, assistants to the president and the six vice presidents.

#### Strategic Plan

*Advancing Excellence – A Strategic Plan for the University of Mount Union*, which was approved by the Board of Trustees in January of 2011, identifies the six strategic initiatives: Develop a Curriculum for the Future, Foster an Engaging Campus Community, Manage Strategic Enrollment Growth, Ensure the Sustainable Management of Resources, Enhance the Diversity of Our Campus Community and Broaden the Reputation and Visibility of the University.

#### Campus Master Plan

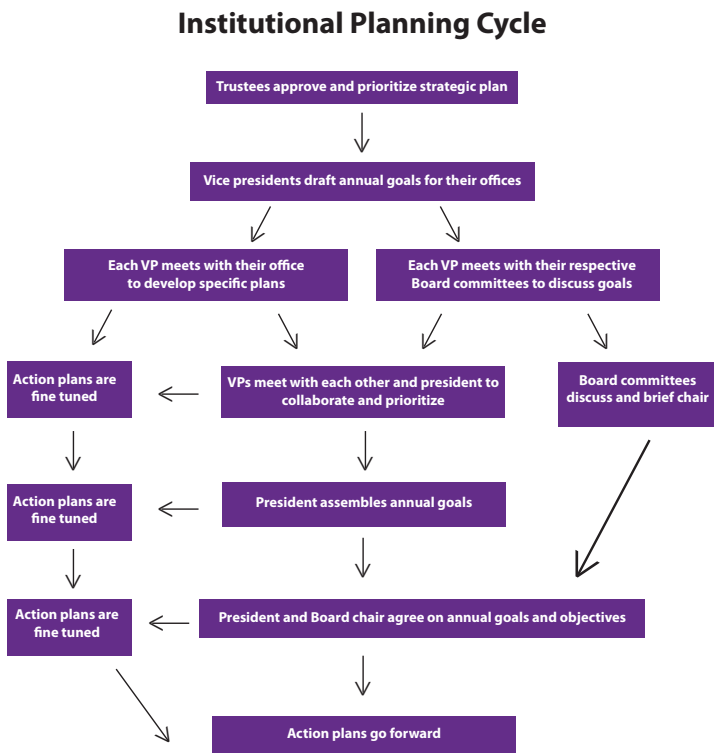
The Campus Master Plan supports the Strategic Plan by providing the facilities and infrastructure to meet our strategic initiatives, focusing on building space allocation and utilization, land acquisition, parking, pedestrian access, sustainability issues, utility infrastructure and telecommunications and technology. The Campus Master Plan is revisited periodically and last underwent revision during 2011-2012.



## Five-Year Operating Plan

The Five-Year Operating Plan is based on projected enrollments (revenue) and expected expenses (including costs of new initiatives supporting the Strategic Plan). The first year of the Five-Year Operating Plan is the annual operating plan, which allocates annual funding (budget) for specific plans within each functional office: President, Academic Affairs, Enrollment Services, Business Affairs, Advancement, Student Affairs and Marketing. Each fiscal year, the Five-Year Operating Plan is rolled out for the next five-year period.

See Overview – Institutional Planning Cycle graphic detailing the planning cycle at the University of Mount Union.



## Overview – Institutional Planning Cycle

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## Building Collaborative Relationships

The UMU Strategic Plan is the foundation for creating, prioritizing and building collaborative relationships both externally and internally.

Mount Union cultivates relationships with educational organizations and other organizations via targeted outreach efforts, partnerships, memberships in professional organizations and hosting members of educational organizations. The University uses a multi-faceted approach to establish relationships, build rapport and generate interest in the academics and programs offered. Offices and departments individually focus on a particular area, goal or initiative to cultivate relationships with many organizations to generate and steward interest in the University.

UMU has several advisory boards for pre-professional programs that ensure quality of programs and licensure of students including the Department of Economics, Accounting and Business Administration (EABA) Business Advisory Board; the Engineering Advisory Board; the Physician Assistant Advisory Board; and the Pre-Health Advisory Board.

The Office of Career Development is the area primarily responsible for establishing relationships with organizations that seek our graduates. The office seeks out graduate and professional school programs and employers that offer programs and employment suitable for graduates. In addition, the staff organizes and hosts recruiting events.

The Office of Student Affairs is primarily responsible for creating, prioritizing and building relationships that provide mostly non-academic services to students. As an institution, the University currently outsources few services for students, preferring instead to maintain housing, counseling, safety, religious life, health, career, technology and academic support services within the institution. Food services and print shop services operate under contract by outside corporations.

Mount Union values a strong partnership with the city of Alliance, recognizing that when Alliance succeeds, the institution succeeds; this is considered a priority within the Strategic Plan. The partnership is demonstrated by continued participation in economic and community planning groups and organizations designed to create improvements in cultural and educational opportunities for local residents.