

**A TIME OF TRANSFORMATION**  
**2012-17 Strategic Plan**

**METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER**

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## **Metropolitan State University of Denver in 2017 A Five-Year Strategic Vision for the Urban Land Grant University**

Academic excellence and rigor continue to be “lived” principles leading to an enhanced reputation for the quality of MSU Denver’s graduates, who are known for their preparation in a diverse, fast-paced and increasingly interdependent world. This commitment to our statutory mission of providing high quality, affordable and accessible education to Colorado residents remains steadfast as evidenced by our teaching known for its

- robust and challenging classroom experience,
- relevant and engaging curriculum, and
- rigorous academic standards that are responsive to the varied learning needs and styles of our students.

In addition, MSU Denver is known for the personal attention and effective student interactions provided by all faculty and staff.

MSU Denver's democratic and diverse institutional culture provides a respectful place for all who work and learn here. The high level of trust among administration, staff and faculty empowers us to do great things together. Civility, clarity, transparency, accountability and inclusivity describe our communications, conversations and collaborations.

We have achieved financial sustainability because we have made good choices and tough decisions, diversified our sources of revenue, grown our endowment and sensibly improved our student enrollment in a thoughtful and disciplined manner.

MSU Denver continues to embrace its place as the most diverse and inclusive university in the state of Colorado. With our goal of achieving the federal designation of Hispanic Serving Institution well within sight, we are a model of excellence for the recruitment and retention of faculty, staff and students from multiple underrepresented and underserved communities.

We are integrated into the fabric of civic life and are seen as a respected community asset that is responsive to the changing needs of our surrounding environment.

Our brand is authentic, clear and understood by all our stakeholders. We are regionally acclaimed and nationally recognized for what we do and how we contribute to the success of our students and community. We remain proud of and loyal to MSU Denver, and are well on the way to preeminence.

# **METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER 2012-17 STRATEGIC PLAN: A TIME OF TRANSFORMATION**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

MSU Denver is not only rising but also soaring, as the University celebrates successes in so many arenas: students and graduates excelling, programs making real differences in people's lives, capital improvements morphing from paper to brick, as well as a new name and strengthened institutional identity. All of these achievements are despite having one of the lowest levels of state funding per pupil in Colorado and facing the specters of continuing shrinkage in state support and a seemingly ever-present scarcity of resources.

Looking to the future, we see that galloping advances in technology and internationalization, changing social mores and unprecedented budget challenges are changing the face of every endeavor. Business, sciences, social services, medicine, transportation, communications, the arts and even government are going to look different in five years than they do today. To thrive, today's organizations need to be agile and flexible. We must transform ourselves in higher education; we can't adhere to the old model in which change took place over 20 or 30 years. Change needs to occur quickly, yet deliberately. Likewise, our charge is to help our students and our urban community in their own transformations.

This 2012-17 Strategic Plan corrals an abundance of ideas, aspirations, imagination, scientific data, hard-won knowledge and hard facts, collected from hundreds of stakeholders—students, faculty, affiliate faculty, staff, alumni and community members. This information has been studied deeply, debated, enhanced and refined through a deliberate and inclusive process into a pragmatic document that will provide direction, shine a light toward our goals and guide our steps over the next five years.

### **COLORADO'S URBAN LAND GRANT UNIVERSITY— A DEFINITION OF PREEMINENCE**

At the heart of the Strategic Plan is MSU Denver's role as Colorado's urban land grant institution. The land grant concept stems from the Morrill Act of 1862, which granted certain federally controlled land to the states to develop educational institutions of higher learning. They were to focus—although not at the expense of other sciences and classical studies—on teaching practical sciences, such as agriculture and engineering, to address real-world problems. Those institutions opened higher education to the masses and equipped graduates with real-world skills. The idea was transformative, embodying the democratic and entrepreneurial spirit at the very basis of the United States' break from

Europe. One result was the conscious transformation of agriculture to the point where the United States became the world's agricultural power.

Because of MSU Denver's heritage as a public institution, our location in the heart of the state's largest metro area and our mission of accessibility, diversity and academic excellence, we choose to embody this ethic by declaring ourselves Colorado's urban land grant university. We are more powerfully poised than ever before to apply the intellectual strength of our faculty and the energy of our students to solving real-world problems. We have the ability and the self-assigned mandate to assume a measure of responsibility for the economic health, cultural health and well-being of the community to benefit the public good. What the Morrill institutions did to transform rural America, we can do to transform urban communities in Colorado and the Rocky Mountain region.

## **INTERNATIONALIZATION AND TECHNOLOGY**

Internationalization and technology are central to MSU Denver's role as an urban land grant university because they open up new opportunities for innovative partnerships with our community and for our students as global citizens. Our challenge is to take advantage of those opportunities in ways that are effective and pay future dividends. Research is showing that courses delivered purely as distance learning have weak long-term results in retention. But we've found that a hybrid model—one that takes advantage of state-of-the-art technology yet still involves personal student-faculty interaction—works very well.

Technology may help us in our quest to find ways to instill learning more deeply into students and help them achieve degrees more quickly, with the impact cutting across more socioeconomic groups than higher education has done in the past.

## **FOUR DISTINCT PILLARS**

Interwoven throughout this Strategic Plan are four themes that we have embraced to guide our progress. They are: diversity (inclusive excellence), democratic workplace, entrepreneurship and telling the MSU Denver story.

### **1. Diversity (inclusive excellence)**

A commitment to diversity has been a key part of MSU Denver's mission for many years. The University's approach has moved beyond a strategy grounded in numeric measurements to a strategy of "inclusive excellence," which involves embedding practices and philosophies that encourage diversity in every aspect of the organization. For an organization as large as MSU Denver, serving the size of student body and complexity of the community that we do, diversity is mandatory for us to yield the excellence we seek—diversity as reflected by our leadership, faculty, staff and students; through our policies, procedures and practices; within

our organizational structures; throughout our curriculum; and woven into the fabric of our institution.

Many of our Strategic Planning goals reflect this pervasive commitment to diversity. It is exemplified by MSU Denver's significant progress toward being designated a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) by 2018.

## **2. Democratic workplace**

Our Strategic Plan is informed by the spirit of a democratic workplace that thrives on transparency, accountability, choice and decentralization of power. The push toward transparency and accountability by companies is a great wave prompted by events ranging from oil spills to Wall Street's crisis and accelerated by people's unprecedented access to information via the Internet. At MSU Denver, we have taken to heart the idea of the free and democratic workplace put forth by WorldBlu™ ([www.worldblu.com](http://www.worldblu.com)), a company that has trained a number of MSU Denver employees in the elements of promoting organizational democracy. As Traci Fenton, founder of WorldBlu, puts it: "A democratic workplace is one where relationships are peer-to-peer rather than parent-to-child . . . resulting in an ethos that unlocks people's full potential to truly give to the organization in a meaningful way."

## **3. Entrepreneurship**

A respect for entrepreneurship pervades our institutional direction and this Strategic Plan. We are not simply equipping graduates to open businesses; we are teaching students to think entrepreneurially, creatively and boldly, with a bias toward action.

Traditionally higher education has been organized in subject-matter silos, but that's not the way the world operates. We need to create functionally designed enterprises, embracing a variety of academic disciplines, to collectively focus on an area of interest. We are committed to forming these enterprises to enable our students to address community issues and that will attract the broader community to come seek our expertise.

We already have examples, such as:

- The Center for Innovation and its cross-curriculum approach to infusing the entrepreneurial spirit and making entrepreneurship education a University- and community-wide experience.

- The Franchise Program, where investors can help finance a franchise business for students who will be trained by MSU Denver in the operation of that franchise, ultimately stimulating small business economic development.
- The Hotel and Hospitality Learning Center, which will serve as a fully functioning flagged hotel—SpringHill Suites® by Marriott—and a learning laboratory for our growing cadre of hospitality students.
- The Center for Advanced Visualization and Experiential Analysis (CAVEA) will be showcased in the new Student Success Building. There, a core group of faculty from several departments will work with students who will learn interdisciplinary analysis and wide-ranging problem-solving.
- The new One World, One Water Center for Urban Water Education and Stewardship (OWOW Center), which will provide an interdisciplinary educational program on what is one of the most-valued resources in Colorado – water.

#### **4. Telling the MSU Denver story**

As the top educator of resident undergraduate students in Colorado, MSU Denver has a powerful and compelling identity that can be leveraged to improve its market position and stature. It is important to continue to tell MSU Denver’s story in a way that powerfully demonstrates its value to the community in order to help the University reach its goals, including increasing funding and public support, maintaining financial sustainability, attracting excellent faculty and staff and strengthening its leadership position in the metropolitan Denver community.

As an urban land grant university with a compelling role and mission and an exceptionally diverse and dedicated student population, MSU Denver has poignant stories of student success despite significant challenges, faculty for whom teaching is their lifelong passion, staff who will go beyond the extra mile to help a student, and myriad programs and partnerships in which the University is enriching the Denver metro and Colorado community. These MSU Denver stories need to and will be told.

### **MEASURING SUCCESS**

We can provide access and demand excellence. We can set targets and measure our progress toward them. But we cannot declare our own success. Instead, we’ll know we are successful and have reached our vision of preeminence when the community makes the judgment that we are the university responsible for positively changing and transforming real conditions in the community through partnerships, for providing students with knowledge and experience, and for putting those students back into the community as successful and admirable citizens.

Similar to the tenets of Arizona State University's "new American university," we will be measured by our inclusivity, by pursuing research for the public good, by ensuring the vitality of the community, and by engaging in activities that have positive, real-world applications.

We've already seen progress toward this form of success in many ways. A few examples include how state leaders acknowledge the University's vital role in training teachers for high-need urban K-12 classrooms and in helping supply Colorado's workforce. And we've been called on to provide help in designing the vision that will transform the Santa Fe Arts District community, where the MSU Denver Center for Visual Art is located.

## PLANNING PROCESS

The current Strategic Planning effort started in 2010 with establishment of the Strategic Planning Committee consisting of 23 respected members of the MSU Denver community—from affiliate and full-time faculty, to staff, administrators and students. Leadership was given by co-chairs Kamran Sahami, Faculty Senate president and associate professor of physics, and Cathy Lucas, the associate to the president for marketing and communications. The committee first developed a timeline and process for attacking the monumental task. One key step was to assess progress made through the previous [Strategic Plan](#) (2005-10) and note process improvements such as additional data collection points and information markers that could be used going forward.

The committee then pursued dozens of interviews with University constituents. Affiliate faculty, students, faculty and administrators as well as the business community participated in SWOT analyses, contributing their view of MSU Denver's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. After synthesizing the SWOT results, the committee focused on five major issues affecting the University: **academic excellence, stakeholder relationships, institutional identity, institutional climate** and **resources**. They also delved into existing studies and reports on the MSU Denver's campus climate, faculty climate, financial accountability, Equity Score Card and more. They reached out to glean the best of what could be learned from other institutions' planning processes and philosophical approaches.

During summer 2011, subcommittees crafted in-depth position papers about the preliminary five planning themes. You may read those papers at: [strategicplanning/helpfulresources](#).

Through an August 2011 Vision Conference and an October 2011 Goals Conference that was attended by more than 100 internal and external stakeholders, the committee worked



together to establish a framework and hammer out goals for each of the four strategic themes to be included in the final plan:

- Student and Academic Success
- Community Engagement and Regional Stewardship
- Institutional Culture
- Institutional Resources

## **ASSUMPTIONS**

The following assumptions are implicit in this Strategic Plan and will receive regular attention throughout its development and implementation:

- We will continue to gather evidence to inform decision making and regularly fold the results of assessment back into service delivery, program improvement and institutional effectiveness.
- We will regularly track and assess progress toward each key goal and communicate the results to the University and its constituents.
- The development and implementation of this plan will be transparent and inclusive; all important planning documents will be made available to the public via MSU Denver’s Strategic Planning website, [www.mscd.edu/strategicplanning](http://www.mscd.edu/strategicplanning).
- This will be a web-based, interactive and living plan. It will be strategic and agile to allow the University to respond to changes that create opportunities or obstacles— or both—while preserving its core values.

## **PHASED IMPLEMENTATION**

We are a responsible, proactive university. With the approval of the Board of Trustees, we will begin phased implementation of our Strategic Plan at the start of our fiscal year, July 1, 2012:

- Phase I – Develop plan
- Phase II – Prioritize and align resources
- Phase III – Implement
- Phase IV – Flex review and monitor
- Phase V – Adjust and refocus

# Strategic Themes

## **Student and Academic Success**

- Goal A: MSU Denver facilitates and enhances student success through the implementation of research-based, best-practices degree-completion strategies.
- Goal B: MSU Denver students are prepared to meet business/employer/graduate school expectations.
- Goal C: MSU Denver hires and retains quality faculty who are excellent teachers and productive scholars who contribute to our communities.
- Goal D: MSU Denver continues to seek and sustain innovative resources for student and academic success.

## **Community Engagement and Regional Stewardship**

- Goal A: MSU Denver is sought after by Colorado's public, private and nonprofit sectors as a partner in addressing and solving community problems.
- Goal B: MSU Denver is regionally and nationally recognized as a high-quality university that contributes to the success of our students as well as the metropolitan Denver community.

## **Institutional Culture**

- Goal A: MSU Denver faculty, staff and students feel valued and engage in an environment of empowerment, trust and fairness.
- Goal B: MSU Denver has an environment that has cross-functional dialogue and collaboration.

## **Institutional Resources**

- Goal A: MSU Denver has an effective, efficient and transparent institutional allocation resource process to accommodate the prioritization of the Strategic Plan goals.
- Goal B: MSU Denver has fiscally efficient and effective entrepreneurial practices in alignment with its vision.
- Goal C: MSU Denver continues to seek, sustain and grow innovative institutional resources for the University such as the Hotel and Hospitality Learning Center and the Franchise Opportunity Program.

# Operational Plan

## Student and Academic Success

MSU Denver is a teaching university where academic excellence in teaching and learning and student success—supported in a collegial atmosphere of academic freedom—are accorded the highest priority. We evaluate our success by utilizing measures focused on the knowledge, skills and understanding students gain during their educational experience with us. MSU Denver students, faculty and staff strive for excellence in all that they do.

### **Goal A: MSU Denver facilitates and enhances student success through the implementation of research-based, best-practices degree-completion strategies.**

Objective A.1: Develop and implement a strategic enrollment plan that includes intentional outreach and adapts research-based retention and graduation best practices<sup>1</sup> to MSU Denver’s diverse student body.

Objective A.2: Improve curriculum delivery.

Strategies include:

- Expand collaborations with regional schools and community partners.
- Engage families of traditional-aged and first-generation students during recruitment and pre-enrollment.
- Attract a diverse pool of applicants, admits and enrolled students from the seven-county metro area.
- Improve or develop and implement (depending on item):
  - appropriate early academic progress reports
  - absence-tracking efforts
  - course-management software tracking
  - intervention tracking
  - prescriptive degree roadmaps
  - degree-map milestones
  - local transcript-audit consultants
  - senior dropout re-enrollment outreach
- Identify engagement opportunities that support persistence and increase student participation in those activities.
- Ensure predictable course-offerings rotation.
- Clearly and intentionally define and enforce course pre-requisites.

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<sup>1</sup> See University Leadership Council, *Hardwiring Student Success: Building Disciplines for Retention and Timely Graduation*, Washington, DC: Educational Advisory Board, 2009.

- Engage in state-of-the-art teaching, instructional delivery methods and student support.
- Develop curriculum designed to support the academic needs of enrolled students, especially during the first year.
- Develop and implement activities in and beyond the classroom that promote critical thinking and analytical reasoning.
- Expand partnerships with Community College of Denver, especially for our students taking coursework there.
- Continue and expand efforts to provide financial advising and grow this to include financial education that builds on instructional presentations and website information.<sup>2</sup>
- Continue and refine efforts to assess and improve First Year Success program.
- Identify, develop and implement strategies to overcome “sophomore slump,” e.g., intrusive advising interventions triggered by low GPA.
- With advent of new Associate Vice President for Student Success:
  - Work through transition of merging previously unconnected units within Academic and Student Affairs.
  - Strengthen linkages among advising, career development, career services, etc.
- Expand retention efforts aimed at transfer students:
  - Enhance advising and ease admissions strategies in alignment with Colorado statewide articulation agreements, Pathways and other transfers from community and four-year institutions of higher education.
  - Enhance “single point of contact” advising, etc., for transfer students.
- Expand use of Supplemental Instruction to support students’ successful move through difficult gateway courses.
- Identify, develop and implement strategies aimed at upper-division students to facilitate graduation.
- Complete study of Summer School and implement new strategy that serves student needs and facilitates more efficient use of campus facilities and effective deployment of faculty and staff resources.
- Continue efforts—primarily through the Individualized Degree Program—to:
  - Identify students, both on and off campus, who are close to completing a degree and assist them in achieving that goal.
  - Assist students in earning credits for prior learning experiences.
- Expand opportunities for students to engage in global education.
- Engage in intentional course design to improve student success in courses with historically high “D,” “F” and Withdrawal rates.
- Use program assessment findings to improve curriculum development and delivery.

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<sup>2</sup> Items with \* adapted from IUPUI (Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis) Undergraduate Council on Retention and Graduation “Top Ten for Retention in 2010.” See [ucrg.uc.iupui.edu/topten](http://ucrg.uc.iupui.edu/topten).

- Assist faculty with implementing accessible pedagogies and course materials

Success measures include but are not limited to:

- Greater predictability for all institutional sectors regarding numbers of students coming to campus and in what areas of interest.
- Increased numbers of students concurrently enrolled in high school and MSU Denver courses.
- Increase in first-time, full-time freshman retention rate to 75% (from 66%) and six-year graduation rate to 44% (from 21%).
- Increase in full-time transfer student retention rate to 85% (from 74%) and six-year graduation rate to 60% (from 44%).
- Increase in first-time, part-time student retention to 70% (from 51%).
- Decrease the gap in first-year retention and performance between students placed in remedial courses and those who do not require remedial work.
- Increase in number of graduates, regardless of time to complete degree.
- Extend collaboration with University of Alaska for development of student success measurements not currently monitored by Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).
- Increased student participation in co-curricular and extra-curricular programs.
- Increase in employment and graduate school acceptance rates. Re-visit after a year to look at retention.
- Decrease in average number of hours at graduation.
- Decrease in number of undeclared majors by the end of the sophomore year.
- Increase in number of students completing their first 15 hours.
- Decrease in the number of students in academic jeopardy from 4% to 1% of the total headcount.
- Increase in the number of students participating in study-abroad courses.

**Goal B: MSU Denver students are prepared to meet business/employer/graduate school expectations.**

Objective B.1: Create a data base of business/employer/graduate school expectations that is readily available online for student perusal/advising purposes.

Objective B.2: Embed those expectations in student learning outcomes across Academic and Student Affairs.

Objective B.3: Establish clear performance expectations for students.

Objective B.4: Hire and retain quality staff and administrators who are experts in student support and committed to MSU Denver's diverse urban mission.

Strategies include:

- Expand partnerships with various Chambers of Commerce, professional organizations and local/regional businesses to identify business and employer expectations.
- Work with faculty to establish easily understood graduate school expectations by discipline.
- Provide academic and career advising for all students within their first semester at MSU Denver.
- Expand opportunities for students to participate in internships, service learning courses, undergraduate research projects and community volunteerism.
- Utilize industry advisory boards effectively.
- Gather qualitative and quantitative data related to future employer needs to align workforce needs with MSU Denver's curriculum.
- Cultivate and develop relationships with a broader range of employers, including nonprofits and governmental agencies as well as for-profit entities.
- Continue efforts to identify and assess meaningful student learning outcomes within academic departments, Academic Affairs entities (e.g., centers and programs) and Student Affairs units.
- Embed student learning outcomes review/assessment into program review.
- Continued intentional recruitment and retention of student affairs professionals with proven expertise in supporting diverse, urban students.

Success measures include but are not limited to:

- Increased employer satisfaction with recent hires and interns as demonstrated in the results of a needs-assessment and a satisfaction survey.
- Increased student participation in internship, service learning, undergraduate research and community volunteering opportunities.
- Increased employment and graduate school acceptance rates.
- Increased number of partnerships with companies and civic organizations.
- Increased number of paid internships across disciplines.
- Improved access to regional labor market information for faculty and students.

**Goal C: MSU Denver hires and retains quality faculty who are excellent teachers and productive scholars who contribute to our communities.**

- Objective C.1: Sustain and enhance “telling MSU Denver’s story” to draw significant pools of highly qualified applicants.
- Objective C.2: Ensure that faculty hires reflect the demographics of the region.
- Objective C.3: Sustain and expand programs to support faculty in adopting state-of-the-art pedagogy, engaging in scholarly activities and contributing service to our multiple communities, including the global community.
- Objective C.4: Continue to work on providing competitive salary and benefits packages.
- Objective C.5: Establish clear performance expectations for faculty.

Strategies include:

- Continue and possibly expand visibility in The Chronicle for Higher Education in collaboration with Marketing and Communications office.
- Refocus efforts on using current Target of Opportunity (TOPS) and Faculty Recruitment Incentive Program (FRIP) instruments to hire diverse faculty, including faculty of color.
- Continue and expand support to the Center for Faculty Development.
- Partner with Advancement and External Relations to increase support to the Office of Sponsored Research and Programs to provide support to faculty seeking to write grants and engage in public/private partnership contracts.
- Continue to develop and implement mentoring/coaching programs to support faculty in successfully negotiating the tenure and promotion processes.
- Continue to revisit appropriate College and University Professionals Association (CUPA) comparators for salaries.
- Finalize and implement the work of the Faculty Evaluation Task Force to improve the faculty evaluation process.
- Ensure meaningful and equitable departmental guidelines for critical faculty milestones, e.g., earning tenure, promotion to associate and professor rank, and post-tenure review.
- Proactively develop a database of qualified candidates of color and relationships with institutions that produce Ph.D. graduates of color in disciplines at MSU Denver and use these resources in faculty searches.
- During the recruitment process, highlight resources available to faculty through the Center for Faculty Development.
- Encourage the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) and Community-Based Research to link faculty scholarly interests with student and community success.
- Consider providing one course reassigned time to tenure-track faculty in each of the first two years of their appointment.

Success measures include but are not limited to:

- Large pools of qualified faculty for hire opportunities.
- Fewer “no’s” to job offers; fewer “failed searches.”
- Faculty reflects the demographics of the region—to the extent possible.
- Faculty earns tenure and promotion in a timely fashion.
- Increase in successful grant writing and publication.
- Sustained student ratings of instruction quality.
- Enhanced recognition and engagement of MSU Denver faculty as resources in the community.
- Improved faculty satisfaction with the performance evaluation system in the next climate survey.

**Goal D: MSU Denver continues to seek and sustain innovative resources for student and academic success.**

Objective D.1: Partner with Divisions of Advancement and External Relations and Administration, Finance and Facilities to expand public/private partnership opportunities. (*See Community Engagement and Regional Stewardship, page 18.*)

Objective D.2: Utilize alumni more effectively as connections for fundraising, donations of critical equipment and similar opportunities.

Strategies include:

- Increase relevant training opportunities for faculty and administrators to learn about best practices in creating development opportunities.
- Establish departmental/programmatic liaisons to work with Advancement and External Relations and Alumni Relations.
- Provide access to development and alumni software.
- Expand efforts to develop financial support—e.g., scholarships—for low-income, first-generation and under-represented students.
- Expand efforts to develop financial support for space, equipment and software necessary to provide quality education.
- Develop external funding for student research and participation in academic conferences.

Success measures include but are not limited to:

- Overall increased revenues/resources from non-state entities.



- Establishment and achievement of annual benchmarks for increased number and/or scope of public/private/partnerships that involve either joint financial investments or joint investments of physical and/or human capital for the mutual benefit of MSU Denver and the community.
- Establishment and achievement of annual benchmarks related to donations, grants and fee-for-service work.
- Establishment and achievement of annual benchmarks related to alumni support, including financial support and engagement in alumni activities.
- Continual evaluation of budget processes to assure efficient work streams.
- Improved fundraising performance against benchmarks from similar institutions in Colorado and beyond.

## **Community Engagement and Regional Stewardship**

The heart of MSU Denver's Strategic Plan is to be recognized as Colorado's urban land grant university, a university that will transform Colorado's and the Rocky Mountain region's urban communities. To achieve this, our campus neighborhood and surrounding facilities must be recognized as a welcoming urban environment to the external community, students and alumni. We must be a sought-after partner for public-private partnerships that involve joint financial investments or joint investments of physical and/or human capital for the mutual benefit of MSU Denver and the community. Partnerships with other public entities are also an important part of community engagement. These partnerships allow MSU Denver to leverage our strengths and the strengths of community partners to advance our educational mission and community interests. This not only requires effective communication and the support of external stakeholders, but also a strong MSU Denver infrastructure and responsive staff and faculty to support these partnerships. We must give business and community leaders a good reason to invest in us.

### **Goal A: MSU Denver is sought after by Colorado's public, private and nonprofit sectors as a partner in addressing and solving community problems.**

- Objective A.1: Inventory and assess current community engagement efforts and establish a rapid response process to develop, enhance and increase community engagement and partnership opportunities.
- Objective A.2: Increase the number of MSU Denver's public and private partnerships through the better positioning of the facilities in MSU Denver's neighborhood and athletic fields.
- Objective A.3: Involve the entire campus community, including the alumni and foundation boards, to expand public/private partnership opportunities.
- Objective A.4: Pursue the efficient use of institutional resources.
- Objective A.5: Establish departmental/programmatic liaisons to work with institutional constituencies.
- Objective A.6: Provide training opportunities and necessary tools to implement innovative solutions.

Strategies include:

- Ensure that MSU Denver's tradition as an urban land-grant university that positively transforms the state's and region's urban communities is communicated to internal and external constituencies.

- Maintain an up-to-date inventory of existing partnerships/relationships with external community stakeholders through the Center for Urban Connections.
- Identify new mission-appropriate public/private partnership opportunities being proposed by community entities and/or implemented by other entrepreneurial institutions through other resources.
- Create and communicate a clear process for developing and implementing entrepreneurial opportunities— and provide faculty/staff training and support for that process— that includes a single entry point for ideas.
- Define the image of the MSU Denver Neighborhood as the entryway to the Auraria Campus. Promote MSU Denver as a strategic community resource with facilities and programs such as Center for Advanced Visualization and Experiential Analysis (CAVEA); Center for Innovation; One World, One Water Center for Water Education and Stewardship; Center for Visual Art;; Center for Urban Connections; Hospitality Learning Center; Applied Learning Center and Alumni Relations Center.
- Strengthen MSU Denver’s participation and leadership roles in the Downtown Denver Partnership, Denver Metro Chamber, South Metro Chamber, Hispanic Chamber, Black Chamber and other local and regional organizations.

Success measures include but are not limited to:

- MSU Denver is a participant in significant efforts to address community problems and plan for future development.
- Greater city and state recognition of MSU Denver as a viable partner.
- Increased number of MSU Denver partnerships with the community.

**Goal B: MSU Denver is regionally and nationally recognized as a high-quality university that contributes to the success of our students as well as the metropolitan Denver community.**

Objective B.1: Identify top academic programs based on current academic departments, employer needs, national trends as well as recognition received locally, regionally and nationally.

Objective B.2: Create a University-wide marketing and communications strategy to promote public awareness of top programs, University expertise, University engagement and external outreach.

Objective B.3: Cultivate and develop relationships that will lead to investment in and support of these regionally and nationally acclaimed MSU Denver programs.

Objective B.4: Secure external recognition of academic programs, engagement and external outreach.

Strategies include:

- Facilitate local, regional and national discussions among leaders in higher education, nonprofits, government and business focused on innovative solutions to workforce challenges.
- Gather quantitative data related to future employer needs in key areas of academic strength.
- Collaborate with Colorado's public and private sectors to meet state workforce needs through the integration of relevant MSU Denver academic programs, service learning projects, undergraduate research projects and internships.
- Utilize partnerships with neighboring cultural and educational institutions to broaden available activities for students outside the classroom.
- Ensure MSU Denver's story is communicated both internally and externally.
- Explicitly define how the University contributes to the economic, social and cultural development of Colorado.
- Launch an internal communications plan that will build on the great passion faculty, staff and students have for the University's role and mission.
- Utilize alumni to demonstrate the value and impact of an MSU Denver degree.

Success measures include but are not limited to:

- New programs developed in response to state and workforce needs and modify and/or eliminate programs that aren't addressing these needs.
- Growth in service-learning and internship opportunities.
- National rankings in select academic and program areas.
- Greater utilization of faculty expertise.
- Elevated public awareness of the importance of MSU Denver to the economic and social well-being of Colorado and its citizens, as measured by opinion and attitude surveys of stakeholder groups.
- Greater pride in the University among faculty, staff, students and alumni as measured by focus groups and quantitative research.
- Growth in the number of businesses hiring interns and recent graduates.
- Becoming a sought-after partner by the business community.

## **Institutional Culture**

Following a variety of studies over the last four years, institutional culture emerged as a strategic initiative for the next stage of MSU Denver's move toward preeminence. Strengths of the University such as *pride in the institution, individual contribution to the mission and a diverse workplace* are consistently identified as positive aspects of MSU Denver's culture. Of particular note are the positive impact and influence faculty and staff believe they have on students.

Under the umbrella of institutional culture are seven interrelated principles to which faculty and staff aspire: communication, valuing all employees, democratic workplace, management excellence, academic freedom, diversity and management innovation.

These basic tenets provide a solid foundation for a workplace culture that aligns with the University's brand and which permeates the collegiate experience for students.

### **Goal A: MSU Denver faculty, staff and students feel valued and engage in an environment of empowerment, trust and fairness.**

Objective A.1: Develop a workforce "personal" leadership and education-training program.

Objective A.2: Encourage and cultivate honesty, trust, innovation and open dialogue.

Objective A.3: Create a University-wide conflict resolution process.

Objective A.4: Establish a 360-degree type of evaluation process for employees that fosters clear behavioral and performance standards with close monitoring of adherence to democratic principles.

Objective A.5: Build on MSU Denver's institutional culture to enhance the student experience.

Strategies include:

- Develop University-wide training programs in the areas of self-understanding, cultural competencies, interpersonal interactions, managerial/supervisory skills, privilege, perspective and disability compliance.
- Develop an ombudsperson's office that facilitates an anonymous process to hear issues and concerns of the faculty, staff and students in order to resolve conflicts individually and to achieve resolution at the lowest level.
- Develop a 360-degree evaluation instrument based on higher education best practices.

- Execute a climate survey every four years to identify issues and concerns of the faculty, staff and students.
- Provide educational opportunities and the appropriate resources to improve the University's understanding, obligations and implementation of services to ensure disability compliance and multicultural competencies and understanding.
- Fully implement and assess a supervisory training program.

Success measures include but are not limited to:

- Decrease in University-wide grievances.
- Supervisors receive recognition for their supervisory expertise based on 100 percent participation in supervisory training. Improved student and employee experiences, as measured by future climate surveys.
- Progress toward the University's goal to become a "Great College to Work for" as identified in the Chronicle of Higher Education's "Great Colleges to Work for" program.
- The MSU Denver culture is a significant element in the student experience.

**Goal B: MSU Denver has an environment that has cross-functional dialogue and collaboration.**

Objective B.1: Establish a system-wide process to evaluate organizational structures and processes.

Objective B.2: Make all organizational processes transparent and accessible.

Objective B.3: Develop multiple modes of reciprocal communication throughout the MSU Denver community.

Objective B.4: Embed dialogue and collaboration capabilities and know-how through codified methods and procedures such as Web-based training manuals, standards of performance, etc.

Strategies include:

- Perform a comprehensive review of the technologies currently used and available technologies designed to improve large-organization communication.
- Identify a large-organization interpersonal communication expert to evaluate and make recommendations on current processes and infrastructures.
- Develop a University-wide program to train workforce on how to use and maximize existing and new interpersonal communication infrastructure.
- Create multiple listening opportunities at all levels of the University.
- Include more individuals at multiple levels regarding key University decisions.

Success measures include but are not limited to:

- Decrease in University-wide complaints related to communication, interpersonal and otherwise.
- Increased productive communication experiences among faculty, staff and students as reflected in satisfaction data in future climate surveys.
- University-wide dialogue shift that improves the platforms and communication opportunities.

## **Institutional Resources**

MSU Denver has a rich history of building success by wisely employing the historically limited financial, physical and intellectual resources available to us.

### **Goal A: MSU Denver has an effective, efficient and transparent institutional allocation resource process to accommodate the prioritization of the Strategic Plan goals.**

Objective A.1: Identify a representative group of individuals who will be involved in a transparent, inclusive prioritization process.

Objective A.2: Make recommendations for resource allocation to the president.

Strategies include:

- Seek active and engaged representation from all governance groups (Faculty Senate, Council of Chairs, Council of Administrators, President's Cabinet, Classified Staff Council, Student Government Assembly, Alumni Board, Foundation Board, deans and vice presidents).
- Recommend funding priorities for inclusion in the budget allocation process.
- Communicate effectively with all constituents.
- Assure transparent decision-making.
- Assure a transparent budget and budgeting process.
- Establish a budget for community outreach and engagement activities.

Success measures include but are not limited to:

- Achievement of Strategic Plan objectives.
- An engaged and transparent process that is recognized as a higher education best practice.

### **Goal B: MSU Denver has fiscally efficient and effective entrepreneurial practices in alignment with its vision.**

Objective B.1: Move and distribute responsibility and accountability to certain pilot units/programs for managing their budget. (Pilot is within the provost area.)

Objective B.2: Identify budget categories that will be retained centrally and those that will be transferred to the units/programs.



Objective B.3: Provide incentives for entrepreneurial departments that enhance their areas based on best practices.

Objective B.4: Identify any new and continuing technology-related enhancements, cost-saving measures and possible revenue-generating opportunities.

Strategies include:

- Ensure collaboration among provost, dean(s) and chairs in the pilot to facilitate the distribution of department and central budgets.
- Institute shared budgetary responsibility and accountability.
- Recognize and reward unique or innovative cost-saving or revenue-enhancing ideas.

Success measures include but are not limited to:

- Better stewardship of resources.
- Encouraging innovation, better planning and better decision-making.
- A better, broader understanding about what resources exist and how they are allocated (more transparency).

**Goal C: MSU Denver continues to seek, sustain and grow innovative institutional resources for the University (such as the Hotel and Hospitality Learning Center and the Franchise Opportunity Program).**

Objective C.1: Partner with the University community, including alumni, to expand public/private partnerships. (*See Community Engagement and Regional Stewardship, page 18.*)

Objective C.2: Identify efficient use of institutional resources.

Objective C.3: Establish departmental/programmatic liaisons to work with institutional constituencies.

Objective C.4: Provide training opportunities and necessary tools to implement innovative solutions.

Strategies include:

- Identify new public/private partnership opportunities being proposed by community partners and/or implemented by other entrepreneurial institutions.
- Create a culture of entrepreneurship.
- Establish and achieve annual benchmarks related to partnerships involving either

joint financial investment or joint investments of physical and human capital.

- Increase University-wide training to help identify entrepreneurial opportunities for faculty and staff to bring ideas to institutional leadership.
- Create and describe a clear process for developing and implementing entrepreneurial opportunities that includes a uniform entry point for ideas from all members of the University community.
- Develop criteria for assessing the potential of outreach and partnership opportunities meant to advance the University's mission.
- Provide regular updates on entrepreneurial opportunities and their implementation status.

Success measures include but are not limited to:

- Increased revenue/resources.
- Increased institutional public/private partnerships.
- Decreased dependency on state revenues and student tuition.