

FY17 Compact
Top Strategic Priorities for the University of Minnesota Crookston (UMC)

Student Success, Recruitment, and Retention – The top strategic goal continues to be to achieve and maintain a critical mass of students on campus, while continuing to grow online enrollment strategically. We are closely examining the viability of setting a target of enrolling 1,100 degree seeking students on campus by fall of 2020, and we are exploring additional online majors and retention information to grow online enrollment as well. With the addition of 15 new bachelor’s degree majors over the past 12 years, UMC now offers 34 majors, 39 areas of concentration, and 22 minors. Of the 34 majors, 14 are offered completely online as well as on campus. These programs build on our competitive advantages, our existing faculty strengths, and our reputation for excellence in online education and offer students a wider, more comprehensive set of choices—all supporting continued and increased recruitment and retention efforts.

The new Wellness Center, funded in part with state allocated dollars, is key to enhancing campus-wide retention, recruitment, and student success. The operational budget for the additional 37,700 sq. ft. in the new facility, set to open fall semester 2016, must be funded (including utilities, staffing, maintenance, and debt service).

Restructuring of Admissions, Student Affairs, and Academic Affairs has been completed. The restructuring of Admissions brings together staff members who have worked either with on-campus or online admissions (previously done through separate offices and processes) and offers efficiencies through cross training staff in both areas. Additionally, Student Affairs has been reintegrated with and will report to Academic Affairs. This reintegration is intended to strengthen UMC’s developing and ongoing retention efforts, which require very strong partnerships between faculty and staff.

Retention efforts have been redoubled in all departments. In summer 2015, new graduation rate goals were established by the Board of Regents via the progress card: the four-year target graduation rate for students entering in fall 2016 and graduating in 2020 is 45%; the six-year target graduation rate is 60%. Each academic department has developed strategies to improve student persistence and retention, aided by data provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. Academic departments and Admissions are working more closely to recruit additional students in programs with available capacity, and a broader international student recruitment effort has begun. Additionally, UMC will participate in the Higher Learning Commission’s Persistence and Completion Academy to enhance and focus retention efforts.

UMC continues to attract and support a significant number of transfer students—both on campus and online. Because of historically strong relationships with two-year colleges, UMC has developed a large number of articulation agreements with community and technical colleges across the Upper Midwest. In fall 2015, 54% of total degree-seeking students were transfers; 88% of online students are transfers (includes intra-university transfer students); and 27% of on-campus students are transfers. With such a significant proportion of UMC students being transfers, we will continue efforts to recruit, retain, and graduate transfers, all while being attentive to the different populations, modalities (online/on-campus), part-time/full-time status, and majors involved.

Scholarships and Financial Aid – This is vital to recruitment and retention efforts.

Merit-based Aid – **The recent expansion of the award cycle of UMC’s academic merit scholarships for new high school students has resulted in the annual award dropping to only \$500, a level that is not competitive.** The move was intended to increase four-year graduation rates, but working within current funding sources requires the same dollars be spread over four years rather than two. An additional \$240,000 will allow an increase in awards to a significantly more competitive annual level of \$1,000, which better supports retention efforts.

Need-based Aid – UMC students qualify for need-based aid at the highest rate within the University of Minnesota system. From fall 2015 data, **UMC students:**

- **come from families with the lowest average household income** for students who applied for and received financial aid: Crookston \$65,392; Morris \$88,928; Rochester \$91,429; Duluth \$98,746; Twin Cities \$99,098
- **receive need-based Federal Pell Grant at a higher percentage** than students at the other system campuses: Crookston 33%; Rochester 31%; Morris 30%; Duluth 26%; Twin Cities 23%
- **are significantly more likely to be first generation** college students: Crookston 46%; Rochester 42%; Morris 39%; Duluth 29%; Twin Cities 28%

Title IX Aid – Scholarship funding is also needed to comply with Title IX and to assist with the recruitment and retention of female student-athletes. Currently, enrollment on campus is 55% male and 45% female. Athletic participation is at 55% male and 45% female, however, 59% of athletic student scholarship awardees are male while only 41% are female. Based on the present tuition rate, an additional \$133,000 per year recurring is needed to meet the goal of Title IX compliance over the next three years.

There is also a need for an additional staff position in Financial Aid given the increasing importance of aid packages in recruitment and retention of traditional students and the increase in online students, which require significantly more time to process per student because they typically enroll as transfers with college credits and financial aid records from multiple colleges and universities.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion – In summer of 2015, UMC adopted this as a strategic priority to ensure faculty and staff are better prepared to support students of diverse backgrounds. Additional work is being done to reinforce efforts to diversify the faculty and staff. Among the initiatives undertaken:

- The Strategic Planning Leadership Team has completed the Intercultural Diversity Inventory (IDI) which assesses and aids in development of intercultural competence.
- In October 2015, campus professional development day for faculty and staff focused on this topic.
- Implicit bias training is now offered to faculty search committees, with 98% of committee members having completed the training in spring 2016.
- A minimum qualification of “demonstrated cultural competency” has been added for all new faculty searches, supplementing the existing “able to teach diverse students” qualification.
- Title IX compliance duties have been assigned to the associate vice chancellor for student affairs.

Continuing Strategic Priorities – We continue to work on additional priorities using existing resources:

- **Rural Economic Development** – Work to establish a Center for Rural Economic Development, which will provide an organizational home for the Center for Rural Entrepreneurial Studies and the state’s Economic Development Administration Center, both already located at UMC, as well as for the Northwest Region’s Small Business Development Center beginning in FY17.
- **Strategic Philanthropic Engagement and Regional Support** – Work to expand outreach to alumni (both on-campus and online) requesting their advocacy in the recruitment of prospective students; work to reinforce and enhance “town-gown” relationships; and work to promote the campus and its programs to regional youth organizations such as 4-H.

How UMC Has Directed/Redirected a Portion of Current Resources to Implement Strategic Priorities

Strategic Enrollment Management

- Redirected existing resources to fund an additional 1.0 FTE position in Institutional Effectiveness to aid in data management and data-driven decision making

- Redirected one-time resources to fund a 0.5 FTE position to aid Disability Services in meeting student needs
- Directed funds for a team of faculty and staff to participate in the Higher Learning Commission's Persistence and Completion Academy
- Redirected funding for Title IX compliance training and related materials for students, faculty, staff
- Redistributed staff time in the current effort of rebuilding UMC's website in the new Drupal environment, with assistance from UMTC's Office of Information Technology and with goal to launch in May 2016
- Received and allocated new recurring funds (FY17) and restructured Admissions to support a new director position and the reclassification of two other positions in order to unify on-campus and online recruitment; redirected College in the High School funds to hire an additional admissions recruiter for on-campus students
- Received and allocated new recurring funds (FY17) to support travel for international recruitment
- Received and allocated new recurring funds (FY17) for video promotional projects, the first of which will be work with a national firm to develop an interactive video tour of the campus for prospective students, with goal to launch in October 2016
- Received and allocated new recurring funds (FY17) and redirected existing resources and work streams within Student Affairs to expand the new student orientation program to support a more robust, integrated first-year experience program including the use of the Strengths program for all incoming students as well as the development of a peer mentorship program for student-athletes

Wellness Center

- Students voted to establish a student Wellness Center fee in FY13 and to increase the fee from \$25 to \$80 per student per semester for FY17 when the new facility is operational

Scholarships and Financial Aid

- Redistributed existing two-year academic merit scholarships to smaller annual awards as funds are now spread over four years rather than two; this lowers the annual award to only \$500

Center for Rural Economic Development

- UMC will fill an endowed chair, the Frank W. Veden Chair in Rural Economic Development, to oversee operations of the Center for Rural Economic Development

Strategic Philanthropic Engagement and Regional Support

- Added strategic projects through reprioritization to existing workload without additional staffing or funds