



University Design Team Charge and Process
April 24, 2020

Our Shared Goal

Over the past six weeks, the challenges posed by COVID-19 have required that we focus primarily on the day-to-day actions necessary to protect the health and safety of our UM Family while ensuring students make progress in their academic programs. Earlier this month, to ensure we proactively plan beyond the immediate moment, we formed a cross-sector, mission-based team to analyze the near- and medium-term steps we must take to prepare for summer and fall 2020. These efforts have been — and continue to be — essential in achieving our mission and meeting our students’ needs during the evolving COVID-19 pandemic. As the global community works to limit the spread of this virus and identify an effective vaccine and/or treatment, we will continue to adjust operations in the best interest of our students and our community.

Our proactive planning, however, must look beyond fall 2020. Distilled to its essence, UM exists to foster inclusive prosperity, expand the boundaries of human knowledge, and sustain American democracy. The vital importance of our flagship university for our community, our state, and our nation demands that we work diligently to ensure this institution’s long-term success. We are the fortunate beneficiaries of the work of previous generations who guided UM through numerous challenges across its 127-year history. Those who came before us have been good stewards of this institution through previous periods of change and adaptation, and it is now our turn to thoughtfully, strategically, and courageously design the continued and new characteristics that should embody a flagship university of the future.

To this end, we are forming a group — a University Design Team — that will deliberately explore how we can best position UM for long-term success and impact.

This group will help us to practice responsible stewardship by thinking deeply and boldly about UM’s future. Their work will include:

- Understanding our context by examining the national landscape for higher education and the lasting influences of COVID-19, the role of higher education in response to the evolving future of work, and the expectations and needs our society has of higher education;
- Identifying the strategies we are currently enacting — as well as activities we could be pursuing — that build upon our strengths and position UM for its greatest impact in a dynamic world;
- Testing and refining these strategies with students, community, and campus;
- Partnering with the Priority for Action teams to update the strategies under each to ensure we focus efforts on the activities that will have the highest impact for our students, campus, and community;
- Developing a mechanism that embeds strategic thinking into our annual processes, that allows us to continuously refine the Priority for Action strategies, and that aligns with our accreditation cycle.

University Design Team Charge

The University Design Team (UDT) will form an understanding of our context and, given this context, explore how we can best meet our moral obligation to best serve the needs of our students and community, now and into the future. The UDT will identify design principles and potential strategies to position UM as a flagship for America's future that fosters inclusive prosperity, expands the reaches of knowledge, and sustains American democracy. In doing so, the UDT will seek to understand the perspectives of the campus community, as well as of our external stakeholders, including community leaders, business leaders, admitted students, and prospective students.

University Design Team Process

To ensure an integrated approach to this work, the UDT will include members of our shared governance bodies; members of our cross-sector, mission-based team that is currently planning for summer and fall 2020; members of our Priorities for Action teams that are focused on making tangible progress in each of our five priority areas; and additional campus colleagues who will help us to think strategically and inclusively about UM's future. The group will also draw upon previous discussions, including the work done by the Strategic Planning Coordinating Council, the University Planning Committee, and the ideas emerging in the Communities of Excellence.

It is important to note that while the UDT includes a diverse range of university community stakeholders, each UDT member will participate not as a representative of their particular group or unit, but rather as an *institutional citizen* focused on the *collective future* of our university.

The UDT's work will be broken into four phases:

Phase I (May 2020): Initial research and generation of preliminary ideas for testing and refinement

- Review current research and conversations on the role of higher education and emerging models to best serve students.
- Identify possible strategies to enhance UM's distinction by building upon areas of strength that most effectively achieve our mission. This exploration of strategies should consider how UM can best:
 - Provide an education that prepares our students as both career-ready and tomorrow-proof.
 - Examine how UM can enable more robust experiential learning and career success programming across all disciplines and informed by Future of Work research.
 - Build upon the work started by the Communities of Excellence and explore the potential for more integrated UG majors/interdisciplinary thinking and programming to prepare our students for complex challenges of the future.
 - Expand our conception of education to include learners at all stages of life and career.
 - Expand the reaches of knowledge through research and graduate programs of national excellence and impact.
 - Balance its mix of programs/disciplines to achieve these ends.
- Formulate a set of possible strategic initiatives that reflect the above and that we see as potentially worth creating or expanding.

Phase II (June and July 2020): External engagement and feedback

- Perform a broader environmental scan to assess possible initiatives:
 - Review national conversations and research findings about the anticipated post-COVID environment for higher education;
 - Engage members from the external local, regional and statewide community to gather their input on the principles that should guide our efforts to shape the UM of tomorrow;
 - Review Burning Glass and LinkedIn research;
 - Review Future of Work research.
- Deliver to President Bodnar a summary of this environmental review and recommendations for possible principles that should inform our ongoing design of a flagship for the future (external research will be on-going).

Phase III (August, September and October 2020): Program/experiment design and campus engagement

- Educate campus about the UDT's summer findings; facilitate discussions around these findings.
- Gather input on programs/experiments/strategic initiatives identified as worth pursuing now.
- Based on input, develop plans to enact new programs/experiments/strategic initiatives that embody the university's strategic direction.

Note: the UDT may expand and/or divide into sub-groups to accomplish these tasks

Phase IV (Late October and Early November 2020): Deliverables

- Review strategic implications of external research.
- Deliver to Cabinet, Academic Officers, Priority for Action teams, and the wider campus community the findings and strategic implications of external research and campus engagement sessions.
- Integrate UDT work with Priority for Action teams: refresh membership and update strategies.
- Work with the executive leadership to develop an ongoing mechanism that embeds strategic thinking into our annual processes and continuous refinement of the Priority for Action strategies, and that aligns with our accreditation cycle.