

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FRAMEWORK

## *Distinctive Student Experience*

### **Define, market and deliver a student experience that distinguishes MSUM**

**Rationale:** Higher education faces profound demographic, social, economic and political changes. The population of traditional-age high school graduates will continue to shrink overall, with the only projected growth occurring in communities where higher education attainment rates have historically been low. There is an increasing public skepticism about the value of higher education and a corresponding interest in other post-secondary options. More students are choosing community and technical colleges, and many are forgoing higher education altogether. At the same time, public universities are increasingly dependent on tuition revenue. And, nontraditional students—including working adults—demand more flexible and responsive programs and delivery modes. In order to thrive, we will build on our strengths to create a distinctive student experience, inside and outside the classroom, that is designed to meet changing expectations and is perceived as valuable by students and their future employers.

#### **Priorities:**

***Academic Distinctiveness***

***Equity and Inclusion***

***Community Engagement***



MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY  
**MOORHEAD**

A member of the Minnesota State system

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

## ***Academic Distinctiveness***

We will define the distinctive attributes of our academic experience, building on the strengths that differentiate MSUM regardless of a student's academic major. We will also ensure that we offer the optimal mix of programs and delivery modes to achieve our enrollment goals and financial sustainability.

### **Rationale**

The cornerstone of our students' MSUM experience is their experience in their academic programs. Attracting and retaining both traditional and nontraditional students will require articulating and implementing an academic experience with high perceived value—and delivering it to diverse audiences via flexible and responsive learning modes. In addition, in order to meet our enrollment goals, MSUM must offer the optimal mix of programs—one that will serve both current and emerging student populations and their current and future employers.

## ***Equity and Inclusion***

We will continue to build our organizational capacity to achieve equitable educational outcomes for all students, recognizing that achieving equity will require changing our systems, policies, practices, assumptions, and campus climate.

### **Rationale**

Achieving equitable outcomes is first and foremost a moral imperative. Given the profound demographic shifts occurring in our country, it is also a practical imperative. Minnesota has among the largest educational attainment disparities in the nation. These disparities exist at every level of education and widen at each successive level. Both the state legislature and our own state system of colleges and universities have committed to eliminating disparities in higher education attainment within the next 5 to 10 years. Our attainment rates mirror those at the state and system levels and, despite decades of effort, have shown only modest improvement. In order to meet our attainment goals and ensure equity for every student, we will need to build organizational capacity in virtually every area of the university.

## ***Community Engagement***

We will build community partnerships that strengthen and sustain our academic programs, enhance students' educational experiences, and meet important community needs.

### **Rationale**

At a time when students, parents, employers, lawmakers, and the public are questioning the value of higher education, it is imperative that an MSUM education prepares students to solve real-world problems at work and in their communities. Furthermore, while community-engaged learning benefits all students, it is especially effective for low-income students and students of color—and is, therefore, essential to meeting MSUM's equity and attainment goals. To be meaningful and sustainable, engagement with the community must be embedded in students' academic and co-curricular experiences and must occur in partnership with businesses and community organizations. Such engagement will be a key differentiator of the student experience at MSUM.