

Igniting OPPORTUNITY

2025–30 STRATEGIC PLAN



Missouri State
UNIVERSITY

TABLE OF CONTENTS



INTRODUCTION	4
Message from the President	4
Higher Education Landscape	6
Strength and Area of Distinction: Public Affairs	7
Threats	10
About the University	12
History	13
Public Affairs	13
Current Facts	14
MISSION, VISION AND VALUES	16
Mission	16
Vision	16
Values	16
Ethical Leadership	16
Cultural Competence	16
Community Engagement	16

GOALS, OUTCOMES AND STRATEGIES 17

Goal One: Academic Opportunities and Innovation 18

Promote Experiential Learning	19
Promote Interdisciplinary Curriculum, Programming and Scholarship	19
Connect Curriculum to Careers and Outcomes	20
Increase Equitable Access	21
Promote the Public Affairs Mission	23
Foster Increased Research Productivity	22

Goal Two: Community Partnerships and Economic Development 24

Emphasize the Public Affairs Mission	25
Support Technology Commercialization and Entrepreneurship	26
Share Talent	26
Assess and Improve Staffing Structure	27
Develop a Database of University Expertise	27

Goal Three: Institution of Choice for Students and Employees 28

Develop and Implement a Plan to Increase Student Enrollment	29
Achieve Meaningful Gains in Student and Employee Satisfaction	30
Invest in Leadership Development and Talent Retention	31
Design a Culture of Connection, Recognition and Purpose	32
Elevate Missouri State's National Profile in Teaching and Research	32
Achieve Competitive Excellence in Conference USA	33
Position MSU as a Leader in Student Access and Success	33

Goal Four: Student and Alumni Experience 34

Increase Participation in Campus Events and Organizations	35
Promote Proactive Student Support	35
Increase Alumni Engagement	36

Goal Five: Branding and Identity 38

Refresh the Brand	39
Amp up Fans and Spirit	39
Centralize Academic Success Stories	40
Bring the Community In, Send the Campus Out	40
Invite People to Be Where the Bears Are	40
Connect Students and Alumni Through Stories	41

Appendix A: Strategic Planning Committee Membership 42


Appendix B: SWOT Analysis Small Groups 43

Appendix C: Goal Work Group Membership 44

Goal One: Academic Opportunities and Innovation	44
Goal Two: Community Partnerships and Economic Development	44
Goal Three: Institution of Choice for Students and Employees	45
Goal Four: Student and Alumni Experiences	45
Goal Five: Branding and Identity	46

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT





Welcome to the future of Missouri State University! At the beginning of our strategic planning process, we set out with a bold and unified purpose—to create “our” plan. A plan shaped not by a single voice, but by the collective insight and passion of our faculty, staff, students, administration, alumni and community partners. Over the course of nearly a year, we engaged in thoughtful and rigorous work, conducting a comprehensive SWOT analysis, clarifying our shared values, envisioning a bold and inspiring future, and identifying five strategic goal areas that will propel Missouri State University forward.

Hundreds of individuals contributed their time, energy and expertise to this endeavor. The result of those efforts is “our” plan, **Igniting Opportunity** — Missouri State University’s Strategic Plan for 2025–2030.

Igniting Opportunity lays out ambitious yet attainable goals, strategies and measurable outcomes that will serve as a blueprint for our university’s growth over the next five years. This plan reflects who we are and who we aspire to become. It reaffirms our commitment to the public affairs mission by embracing an exciting new vision:

“Missouri State will be the nation’s leading public affairs university, delivering on our mission by cultivating civic responsibility and igniting social and economic opportunity.”

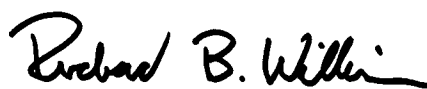
At the heart of this plan are five key strategic areas:

- Academic Opportunity and Innovation
- Community Partnerships and Economic Development
- Institution of Choice for Students and Employees
- Student and Alumni Experience
- Branding and Identity

Each of these areas represents a crucial pillar of progress and possibility, and together, they form a roadmap that is as visionary as it is practical.

As you read through the pages of this plan, you will see that the future of Missouri State University is bright. Great things are ahead. By working together to bring this plan to life, we will ensure that we will *Ignite Opportunity* for our faculty, staff, students, administrators, alumni and our community, reminding us that every day is a great day to be a Bear.

Sincerely,



Richard B. Williams, Ph.D., ATC
President
Missouri State University

HIGHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE



In 2025, the university celebrates its 120th year as an institution, its thirtieth year as the state's designated public affairs university, and its twentieth year as Missouri State University. These milestones come at a time of unique challenges and opportunities for all of higher education, as well as for Missouri State specifically. This plan charts a course for the university to meet those challenges and capitalize on the opportunities to achieve the plan's bold vision. The university's continued vitality depends on academic innovation; strong relationships with alumni, community partners, and elected officials; growing

enrollment; exceptional faculty and staff; an outstanding student experience; and a clearly defined and aggressively marketed institutional brand. This plan is grounded in feedback regarding the university's strengths, weaknesses, and areas of distinction, as well as external threats and opportunities. More than 500 students, faculty, staff, alumni, business and community leaders, and elected officials provided feedback. The top three threats identified include funding, the enrollment cliff, and public perception of the value of higher education.

Strength and Area of Distinction: Public Affairs

Missouri State University's public affairs mission sets it apart. The strategic plan process revealed how foundational the three pillars are to university life. A key need to clarify and fortify the public affairs mission — and what it means for the transformational future of the university — emerged as a core function of the plan.

Missouri State University's statewide mission in public affairs was granted 30 years ago, in 1995. The university submitted a Case Statement for a Statewide Mission in Public Affairs to the Coordinating Board for Higher Education (CBHE) in 1994. The university's proposed emphasis was the culmination of an 18-month move toward a public affairs focus, and the case statement grew out of discussions between the university and the CBHE pertaining to a routine review of the university's mission. The mission review focused on the university's strengths in four primary areas, including teacher education, business and economic development, health care, and the performing arts. The public affairs focus was the integrating theme that ran through and informed all disciplines in their relation to society.

On Jan. 13, 1995, the CBHE gave preliminary approval to the mission. At that time, university President John Keiser predicted, "Emphasizing public affairs will set SMSU apart in the 21st century." He added, "The ultimate victory will become manifest in a better community, state, nation and world. That is basic to SMSU's single purpose of developing educated persons."¹



When the CBHE preliminarily approved the new mission, it recommended that the new mission be reflected in legislation passed into law in the 1995 legislative session. The legislature then passed SB 340, which gave the CBHE authority to review the applications for statewide missions. SB 340 grandfathered in all requests for statewide missions approved before the bill's passage. As a result, Missouri State's statewide mission in public affairs took effect on the effective date of SB 340 — Aug. 28, 1995. The mission was not codified in state statute until 2005, when SB 98 changed the name of the university to Missouri State University and acknowledged that the university is a "public institution of higher education charged with a statewide mission in public affairs."

In 2008-2009, university leaders led discussions with students, faculty, staff and administrators to define what public affairs would mean for students, the university and the region. Based on those discussions, Faculty Senate adopted three defining goals on March 12, 2008:

- Ethical leadership
- Cultural competence
- Community engagement

The three goals became commonly referred to as the three pillars — the primary avenues to identify the public affairs mission. Integrated public affairs programming in and outside the classroom enhances Missouri State students' capacity to analyze and resolve contemporary problems in local, national and international contexts.

Today, the public affairs mission and the three pillars are woven throughout university life. From a visual perspective, two pieces of campus art celebrate the mission: The Citizen Scholar in front of Strong Hall and a bronze sculpture featuring the three pillars in the plaza west of the bookstore and Magers Health and Wellness Center. The pillars are also represented in the university's brand identity, in the form of three solid-colored bars used in standard university templates and print publications.

The annual Public Affairs Conference is another highly visible example of the university's connection to the mission. Each conference focuses on a theme, and planning is led by a committee chaired by a public affairs fellow. The conference includes a mix of in-person speakers and live, virtual panels.

¹"From the President: A statewide mission in public affairs." (1995, Winter). *Southwest Missourian*.

Another illustration of the extent to which the mission is part of university life is the connection between the university's rewards and recognition system and the public affairs mission. Two of the university's highest honors, bestowed by the Board of Governors, recognize excellence in public affairs: the Excellence in Public Affairs Award, which is presented to faculty and staff, and the Citizen Scholar Award, which is presented to students. Other recognitions linked to the public affairs mission include induction into the Missouri Public Affairs Hall of Fame and the Bronze Bear Award. There is also evidence that current students are aware of and positively impacted by the public affairs mission. Anecdotally, students performing in MoState Live skits during Homecoming routinely refer to the pillars. Students attending the university's birthday party recorded their personal "Missouri Statements" on a large banner. While their responses covered a range of ideas, public affairs themes clearly emerged. Thousands of students participate annually in community engagement-focused service-learning opportunities in extra-curricular and curricular programming. Those opportunities begin in students' first years, when they can complete service-learning projects through first-year foundations classes, and continue through their senior year, when many programs offer service-learning capstone courses. Students at every level participate in community service projects through student organizations. Many of these projects also provide opportunities to develop cultural competence and to observe and model ethical leadership.

The mission is also an important part of the university's assessment of the student experience. Undergraduate students complete exit surveys that include a prompt to write a short essay



reflecting on how one of the three pillars impacted their experience at Missouri State. Those surveys provide qualitative evidence that illustrates the breadth of practices and opportunities aligned with the public affairs mission. The responses also reflect a statement on the university's public affairs webpage: "The public affairs mission remains a 'live question' with many perspectives and limitless possibilities."

Finally, themes related to public affairs resonate with prospective students. In 2024-2025, the Office of Strategic Communication ran a year-long digital marketing campaign with messaging that targeted prospective students. The campaign was designed to answer the question, "How do ads with public affairs messaging compare to ads under our other messaging pillars?" Campaign results indicate that messages emphasizing value and affordability

resonate with prospective students, but messages related to public affairs — especially as related to career outcomes — receive significantly more engagement across platforms. For Google Search ads, public affairs messaging generated more than 100 additional clicks per ad compared to ads with other messages. On Snapchat, ads with public affairs messaging generated almost double the clicks of other ads. On Meta, public affairs messaging generated more engagement — especially for potential students from outside Missouri.

The public affairs mission also emerged as a strength in the SWOT analysis that kicked off the strategic planning process in fall 2024. Faculty, staff and students identified the mission as a top strength. Those groups also identified leveraging the public affairs mission as a top opportunity. The SWOT analysis also indicated that while the mission is viewed



positively, many members of the campus community believe that it could be more clearly defined, uniformly implemented, and relevantly framed.

Given these factors, the SPC acknowledged the importance of the university's public affairs mission — both as a component of our collective identity and as an opportunity connected to the future. As a result, the public affairs mission is a key component of the mission, vision and values that serve as the foundations of this plan.

The SWOT analysis also identified other themes the SPC felt were important to reflect in the plan's foundations. These themes were emphasized by board members, alumni, and community and business leaders, as well as members of the campus community. The themes were largely listed as threats, and they included concerns about public

perception of higher education and the return on investment of a college degree.

In response to this important input, the vision statement ultimately championed by the SPC emphasizes the opportunity to distinguish Missouri State University based on its public affairs mission, and to highlight civic responsibility, which is a central concept in the way the university carries out its public affairs mission. The committee also added a parallel component of the vision to acknowledge another important aspect of higher education: igniting social and economic opportunity.

The values adopted by the SPC also reflect broad feedback received during the SWOT analysis and subsequent interactive workshops. Based on that feedback, the values align with the pillars of the public affairs mission.



Threats

State and Federal Funding

Public higher education in Missouri has benefited in recent years from significant investments by elected officials. Between 2020 and 2025, the state funds appropriated to higher education increased from \$1 billion to \$1.3 billion.² This 25% change is especially extraordinary because it followed a decade during which state appropriations only increased in three of ten years.³ In addition to state support, Missouri legislators also appropriated \$40 million in federal stimulus funds between 2020 and 2025.⁴

Unfortunately, this trend is not likely to continue. Projections indicate that the state will experience slowing growth in general revenue collections, higher costs to fund other areas of the budget, and the exhaustion of federal stimulus funds. Missouri's general revenue collections will be impacted by reductions in the individual income tax rate and changes to the definition of taxable income.⁵ The legislature has also passed bills that are expected to require increased spending in other areas of the budget. Governor Mike Parson vetoed \$9 million in funding for higher education and workforce development projects in fiscal year 2025, citing in part the passage of SB 727 (2024), which he indicated is projected to increase funding for K-12 schools by \$400 million per year once fully implemented.⁶ In addition, the university will also likely receive less federal funding in the future.

In the past, the university has received federal funds to support research and provide student support programs. The university also received \$95 million in direct appropriations for the renovation of Blunt and Cheek Halls, faculty endowments, and improvements on the West Plains campus. Due to directives issued by the executive branch, such as terminating some current grants and capping indirect cost rates for federal grants at 15%, as well as members of the Missouri delegations' changing attitudes toward direct appropriations, the university anticipates decreased federal funding for the foreseeable future.

With the high probability that external funding will flatten or decline in the next five years, this plan introduces a bold enrollment goal that will generate revenue needed to fund strategic investments, mitigate upward pressure on tuition, maintain faculty and staff compensation, and support maintenance and repair of campus facilities. That enrollment goal is supported by strategies including increasing recruitment of first-time new in college and transfer students and increasing retention. Other strategies throughout the plan also support the goal, including increasing student satisfaction, providing proactive student support, positioning top revenue-generating sports teams for success and increasing attendance at athletic events, and refreshing the university's brand.

Demographics

For nearly a decade, higher education leaders have been discussing the "enrollment cliff" that will result from smaller numbers of high school students graduating from high school. That decline is projected to begin in 2026. At the national level, projections indicate that the number of high school graduates will decline 12.8% from 2023 to 2041. Only 12 states and Washington, D.C., are projected to see an increase. Five high-population states – California, Illinois, Michigan, New York, and Pennsylvania – are projected to account for 75% of the decrease. The number of Hispanic, multiracial, and Asian graduates will increase, while all other groups will decrease. The number of White high school graduates is expected to decrease by 25.0% and the number of Black graduates is expected to decrease by 22.3%.⁷

Significant differences exist at the regional level. The West is projected to see a decline of 20%, the Northeast a decline of 17%, and the Midwest a decline of 16%. Only the South is projected to grow, by about 3%.⁸

The number of Missouri high school graduates is projected to decrease by 12.0%, which is in line with the national number. With the exception of Tennessee, Missouri's neighbors are all projected to see decreases. Most notably, Illinois is projected to decrease by 32%.⁹

² State Higher Education Finance/State Higher Education Executive Officers. (2025). *Grapevine report on state support for higher education, fiscal year 2025*. <https://shef.sheeo.org/grapevine/?cn-reloaded=1>

³ Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development. (2021). *Strategic planning kickoff presentation* (slide 41). <https://dhewd.mo.gov/media/pdf/strategic-planning-kickoff-presentation>

⁴ State Higher Education Finance/State Higher Education Executive Officers. (2025). *Grapevine report on state support for higher education, fiscal year 2025*. <https://shef.sheeo.org/grapevine/?cn-reloaded=1>

⁵ Missouri Office of Administration, Office of Budget and Planning. (2024). *The Missouri budget, fiscal year 2026* (p. 21). https://oa.mo.gov/sites/default/files/FY_2026_Executive_Budget-updated_1_29_25.pdf

⁶ Missouri Office of Administration, Office of Budget and Planning. (2024). *House Bill 3 signed appropriation letter*. https://oa.mo.gov/sites/default/files/Fiscal_Year_2025_HB_2003_Signed_Letter.pdf

⁷ Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. (2024, December). *Knocking at the college door: Projections of high school graduates* (11th ed.). <https://www.wiche.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/2024-Knocking-at-the-College-Door-final.pdf>

⁸ Id.

⁹ Id.

Diving deeper into Missouri's numbers, the number of projected high school graduates is expected to decrease from 68,700 in 2025 to 60,500 in 2040. The number will be essentially flat in 2026, then down 2,700 in 2027, 2,000 in 2028, followed by five years of more moderate decline. The state is projected to see a slight increase in 2034, then continued decline through 2040.¹⁰ As at the national level, the number of Hispanic (+67.1%), multiracial (+26.5%), and Asian (+9.5%) high school graduates is projected to increase, while White (-18.8%) and Black (-28.5%) numbers are projected to decline.¹¹

As indicated above, this plan includes a bold enrollment goal. In addition to the strategies listed above, progress toward the goal will be driven by the development of new online programs, identification of new segments for enrollment growth, and more effective deployment of resources related to student success.

Perceived Value of Higher Education

A July 2023 Gallup survey found historically low levels of confidence in higher education. In 2015, a majority of Americans expressed confidence in higher education. By 2018, confidence had fallen among all respondents, with the largest decline (-17%) among Republicans. In 2023, the survey found that confidence had again fallen across groups. Thirty-six percent of respondents indicated that they had a “great deal”

or “quite a lot” of confidence in higher education, 33% said they had “some” confidence in higher education, and 22% said they had very little confidence.¹²

A May 2024 survey by the Pew Research Center found that about half of Americans say it is less important today than it was 20 years ago for someone to have a college degree to get a well-paying job. About a third say it is more important, and 17% say it has not changed. This view is more common among Republicans and Republican-leaning independents (57%) than Democrats (43%).¹³

The Pew survey also found that many Americans question the return on investment of a college degree. When asked if college is worth the cost, 47% said it's worth it, but only for students who don't take out loans; 22% said it's worth it, even with loans; and 29% said it's not worth it regardless of whether the student took out loans. Young adults were more likely to say the cost of college is worth it only if someone does not take out loans, but also less likely to say that the cost is not worth it at all.¹⁴

Central to Americans' concern about the value of higher education are perceptions of college costs. Media reports often highlight increasing college costs, such as a *U.S. News & World Report* finding that “in-state tuition and fees at public National Universities soared by about 133%” between 2002 and 2024.¹⁵ While college is expensive and affordability is a real issue for many students,

data indicate that many colleges and universities have taken steps to mitigate the negative impact of higher “sticker prices.” Average net tuition – the amount actually charged to students, which includes “sticker price” tuition less non-loan federal, state, and institutional aid – charged by public universities actually decreased by 2.1% between 2014 and 2024 at the national level. In Missouri, average net tuition increased 8.2% during that period. While the number for Missouri is substantially higher than the U.S. average, the rate of increase is still significantly below the rate of inflation for the same time period.¹⁶

This plan responds to threats related to perceived value of higher education with strategies including connecting careers to outcomes, promoting experiential learning, and developing a plan to achieve designation as a High Access/ High Earnings institution. Achieving that designation will require leaders to continue to focus on real and perceived affordability. The plan also includes strategies related to telling stories that illustrate the positive impact of a Missouri State University education, including university-branded alumni storytelling campaigns and improved data-collection on graduate outcomes.

¹⁰ Id.

¹¹ Id.

¹² Gallup. (2023, July 11). *Americans' confidence in higher education down sharply*. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/508352/americans-confidence-higher-education-down-sharply.aspx>

¹³ Pew Research Center. (2024, May 23). *Public views on the value of a college degree*. [https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2024/05/23/public-views-on-the-value-of-a-college-degree/#:~:text=The%20importance%20of%20a%20four%20year%20college%20degree,-Four%20in%20Dten&text=About%20half%20of%20Americans%20\(49,importance%20hasn't%20really%20changed](https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2024/05/23/public-views-on-the-value-of-a-college-degree/#:~:text=The%20importance%20of%20a%20four%20year%20college%20degree,-Four%20in%20Dten&text=About%20half%20of%20Americans%20(49,importance%20hasn't%20really%20changed)

¹⁴ Id.

¹⁵ Wood, S. (2024, September 24). *A look at 20 years of tuition costs at national universities*. *U.S. News & World Report*.

¹⁶ State Higher Education Finance/State Higher Education Executive Officers. (2025). *Grapevine report on state support for higher education, fiscal year 2025*. <https://shef.sheeo.org/grapevine/?cn-reloaded=1>.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY



Missouri State University is a public, comprehensive system with a statewide mission in public affairs, whose purpose is to develop educated persons. The university's identity is distinguished by its public affairs mission, which entails a campus-wide commitment to foster expertise and responsibility in ethical leadership, cultural competence and community engagement.

The academic experience is grounded in a general education curriculum that draws heavily from the liberal arts and sciences. This foundation provides the basis for mastery of disciplinary and professional studies. It also provides essential forums where students develop the capacity to make well-informed, independent critical judgments about the cultures, values and institutions in society.

The task of developing educated persons obligates the university to expand the store of human understanding through research, scholarship and creative endeavor, and drawing from that store of understanding, to provide service to the communities that support it. In all its programs, the university uses the most effective methods of discovering and imparting knowledge, and it employs appropriate technology in support of these activities.

The Missouri State University campuses are structured to address the special needs of the urban and rural populations they serve. Missouri State University-Springfield is a selective admissions, graduate-level teaching and research institution. Missouri State University-West Plains is a separately accredited open-admissions campus primarily serving south-central Missouri. Missouri State University-Mountain Grove serves Missouri's fruit industry through operation of the State Fruit Experiment Station.

The university also operates other special facilities, such as the Darr Agricultural Center in southwest Springfield; the Journagan Ranch in Douglas County; the Bull Shoals Field Station near Forsyth; Baker Observatory near Marshfield; and a branch campus at Liaoning Normal University (LNU) in Dalian, China. In addition, Missouri State's IDEA Commons includes the Roy Blunt Jordan Valley Innovation Center, Brick City, and the Robert W. Plaster Free Enterprise Center, which is home to the efactory, all of which are located in downtown Springfield. Finally, the operations and program offerings of one entire academic department, the School of Defense and Strategic Studies, are located near Washington, D.C., in Fairfax, Virginia.

Missouri State University is governed by a board of governors. A Missouri State student also sits on the board as a non-voting member. Members are appointed by the governor with advice and consent of the Missouri Senate.

The university's chief administrative officer is the president. The Missouri State University-West Plains campus is directed by a chancellor.

History

Missouri State University was founded as the Missouri State Normal School, Fourth District, by legislative action on March 17, 1905. Missouri State first opened its doors in June 1906. After undergoing multiple name changes through the years, Missouri State is a comprehensive state university system offering a wide variety of programs and services to its students and the citizens of the state.

During the 1995 session of the Missouri General Assembly, Missouri State received a statewide mission in public affairs, making it the only Missouri university emphasizing the development of aware, committed and active participants in tomorrow's society.

In a campus ceremony on March 17, 2005, the 100th anniversary of Founders' Day, Gov. Matt Blunt signed Senate Bill 98, which included changing Southwest Missouri State University's name to Missouri State University, the fifth and final name for the university. The institution was founded as the Normal School in 1905, then changed to Southwest Missouri State Teachers College in 1919, Southwest Missouri State College in 1946 and Southwest Missouri State University in 1972. Each new name has reflected the changed nature of the institution.



Public Affairs

Approved in 1995, Missouri State University's statewide mission in public affairs continues to evolve. With an emphasis on three specific components that reflect the public affairs mission — ethical leadership, cultural competence and community engagement — the university provides enhanced educational experiences.

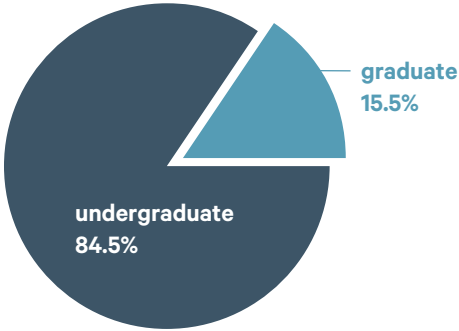
Each year, Missouri State hosts a Public Affairs Conference, which brings a variety of noteworthy speakers from around the country to the Springfield campus. During the conference, panels and keynote speakers present discussions that offer perspectives from business, entertainment, education, politics, religion, health and other subject areas. Throughout the year, many other events exist to get students involved with the public affairs mission.

High-impact educational experiences (HIEE), such as education abroad, service-learning and internships, offer students opportunities to put into practice the values of the public affairs mission.

Current Facts

Enrollment

Fall 2024 enrollment was **25,038** on the Springfield campus. Total enrollment has increased by 2,087 (9.4%) over the last 10 years. Undergraduate students comprise 84.5% of total enrollment, and graduate students 15.5%. Additional detail about the university's enrollment is provided in Appendix D.



Facilities

Missouri State University's main campus is located on **225 acres** in the heart of Springfield.

Type of buildings	Number of buildings
Education and general	76
Auxiliary	25
Buildings leased from others	7

Grounds	Size
Tunnels	1.6 miles
Paved roads	2.28 miles
Sidewalks	10.19 miles
Parking lots	58 acres

The university also owns 4,017 acres of farm/ranch land and 53 acres of other specialty land. The university's maintainable campus (excluding buildings leased from others) totals 6 million square feet.

The university's farm and ranch land includes Baker's Acres, Shealy Farm, Darr Agricultural Center, the Woodlands and Journagan Ranch. These locations are used as teaching and research properties. Specialty land includes the Bull Shoals Field Station and Baker Observatory.

In addition, the university has a Fruit Experiment Station in Mountain Grove, Missouri; a facility that houses the university's School of Defense and Strategic Studies in Fairfax, Virginia; a campus in West Plains, Missouri; and a site in Dalian, China.



Academic Programs

Missouri State offers 10 undergraduate degrees from 99 majors, with 180 options and 121 minors. The university also offers 114 undergraduate certificates.

At the master's level, the university offers 21 degrees from 59 programs, with 76 options. The university also offers 113 graduate certificates.

The university also offers eight doctoral degrees from three specialist programs and 11 doctoral programs, with 11 options.

The university is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. The university's academic programs are housed in Darr College of Agriculture; Reynolds College of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities; College of Business; College of Education; McQueary College of Health and Human Services; College of Natural and Applied Sciences; and the Graduate College.

Additional detail about the university's academic programs is provided in Appendix D.



UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES:

99

 majors with
180 options

121

minors

14

 undergraduate
certificates

GRADUATE DEGREES:

59

 master's
programs
with
76 options

113

 graduate
certificates

3

 specialist
programs

11

 doctoral
programs
with
11 options

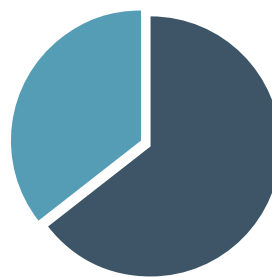
Degrees Conferred

Degrees conferred	Number
Bachelor's	3,154
Master's	1,393
Doctoral	143
Specialist	33
Undergraduate certificates	922
Graduate certificates	696
Bachelor's degree at the university's Dalian, China campus	167

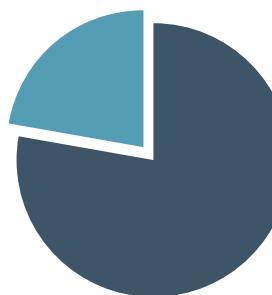
Additional detail about degrees conferred is provided in Appendix D.

Employee Characteristics

Appointment	Faculty	Staff	GA	Total
Full-time	699	1,334	0	2,033
Part-time	365	534	592	1,491
Total	1,064	1,868	592	3,524



Approximately **58%** of employees work full-time.



Approximately **77%** of full-time faculty members have a terminal degree in their field.



MISSION

Missouri State University is a community of citizen scholars committed to public affairs. Our innovative teaching, research and service create transformative experiences that benefit individuals and society.

VISION

Missouri State will be the nation's leading public affairs university, delivering on our mission by cultivating civic responsibility and igniting social and economic opportunity.

VALUES

As a vital component of our public affairs mission, Missouri State University has long embraced ethical leadership, cultural competence and community engagement as the three foundational pillars of our institutional identity. We reaffirm and elevate these enduring commitments by formally adopting them as our core university values.

Ethical Leadership

We value ethical leadership by making informed decisions and engaging with others through integrity and transparency to pursue our goals. As ethical leaders, we are citizen scholars who take action to contribute to the common good.

Cultural Competence

We value cultural competence by respecting and appreciating individuals for who they are. Together, we foster civil discourse, awareness and action to create a culture of connection and mutual understanding.

Community Engagement

We value community engagement by embracing our responsibility to act with courage and creativity to foster civic growth. We recognize the needs in the communities to which we belong, then contribute knowledge and work alongside the community to meet those needs.

We are committed to our public affairs mission, enacting these values by cultivating civic virtues and strengthening the bonds that unite people.



GOALS, OUTCOMES AND STRATEGIES



GOAL ONE

Academic Opportunities and Innovation

Advance academic excellence and innovation by embedding the public affairs mission across Missouri State's curriculum, promoting experiential, interdisciplinary and relevant learning opportunities and expanding access to high-quality educational programs.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

Enhanced student experiential learning opportunities

Connected curriculum to career success

Integrated public affairs-focused curricula

Increased interdisciplinary scholarship, programming, and curricula

Added new high-quality online programs

Earned R2 designation

Promote Experiential Learning

Enhance experiential learning by applying HIEE designations, developing evaluation procedures, recommending participation timelines, increasing financial support, ensuring global education access and leveraging digital tools.

Define, assess and promote experiential learning

- Each academic unit will define experiential learning and measure what is already being conducted (e.g., undergraduate research, internships, professional and entrepreneurial experiences [student teaching, clinical work, factory], community-based learning [service-learning, internships], classroom experience [case studies, project-based learning, labs, virtual reality], global engagement [study-abroad, other international experiences] and creative work [arts, performance, etc.]). Academic units will verify the following:
 - Review curriculum and identify opportunities to apply the high-impact educational experience (HIEE) course designations already in place as appropriate.
 - Develop a procedure external to programs for evaluating courses for HIEE designation (e.g., Weber University Academic Affairs: HIEE Attributes).

- Update or modify existing HIEE designations as needed.
- Each academic unit will share a recommended timeline for students to participate in experiential learning as part of program and career mapping.
- Each academic unit will implement a way to communicate the value or benefit of early participation in experiential learning to freshmen.

Expand experiential learning

- Academic units will find opportunities and resources to increase student and faculty engagement in experiential learning through the following methods:
 - Evaluate physical spaces within colleges and develop procedures for shared use across campus to maximize efficiency and identify where additional resources are needed.
 - Increase scholarships and other financial support for experiential learning.

- Ensure that all students have access to global education and engagement via expanded education abroad scholarships, virtual exchange (VE), collaborative online international learning (COIL) and contact with MSU's international community.
- Increase financial support for faculty and students for professional memberships, internal grants for research and equipment, and travel (e.g., conferences, education abroad and field trips).
- Increase paid experiential opportunities for students (e.g., paid internships, paid undergraduate research, paid service-learning and paid work-study opportunities).
- Leverage digital tools to increase access to experiential learning (e.g., virtual field trips and interactive technologies connecting students to others and the world).

Promote Interdisciplinary Curriculum, Programming and Scholarship

Explore the creation of an office or program to enhance interdisciplinary curriculum, programming and scholarship. This unit will increase engagement by establishing credit allocation formulas, incentivizing interdisciplinary activities, introducing awards, addressing internal barriers, hosting events and leveraging student organizations and faculty showcases:

Define, assess and promote interdisciplinary curriculum, programming and scholarship

- Academic units will study the feasibility and desirability of creating an office or program(s) tasked with increasing interdisciplinary curriculum, programming and scholarship at Missouri State.
- Potential models include discipline-area-focused programs (e.g. The University of New Mexico: Interdisciplinary Science Cooperative,

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign: Interdisciplinary Working Group for Integrative Scholarship in the Arts), problem-oriented initiatives (e.g., NC State University: Chancellor's Faculty Excellence Program) and institution-wide offices (e.g., Duke University: Office of Interdisciplinary Studies). Institution-wide offices could be housed in the Provost's Office or the Graduate College.

Increase student and faculty engagement in interdisciplinary activities

- Establish a new calculation formula for allocation of credits/funding to all contributing departments/schools/programs for interdisciplinary courses.
- Recommend that departments incentivize interdisciplinary education activities within tenure and promotion policies.
- Introduce university awards for interdisciplinary education.

Promote Interdisciplinary Curriculum, Programming and Scholarship *(continued)*

- Establish a new calculation formula for allocation of credits/funding to all contributing departments/schools/programs for interdisciplinary majors/minors/certificates. Create a university committee to address and evaluate internal barriers that prevent or disincentivize interdisciplinary and/or innovative new programs, courses and other efforts:
 - Resolve the dilemma created by the cost-center model, which incentivizes each program and college to maximize student credit hours by minimizing collaboration with others.
 - Establish a means of recognizing and compensating the costs of administering interdisciplinary programs.
- Incentivize hosting events such as workshops that feature experts from multiple fields and that demonstrate the benefits of working on interdisciplinary teams.
- Use the Student Organization Funding Allocation Council (SOFAC) and the Office of Student Engagement to incentivize student organizations to host interprofessional, service-learning and community engagement events.
- Include interdisciplinary teaching activities and practices as a part of the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL) showcase.
- Create interdisciplinary committees within colleges to enhance research and creative collaboration and pursue interdisciplinary grant funding within and across colleges.
- Host “beyond department” research and creative activity presentation events for colleges across the university.
- Recommend that departments incentivize interdisciplinary scholarship and creative activities within tenure and promotion policy.
- Introduce university awards for interdisciplinary scholarship and creative activities.

Connect Curriculum to Careers and Outcomes

Restructure the general education curriculum to emphasize transferable skills and align it with workforce demands. This includes leveraging data to monitor student outcomes, providing proactive personalized advising and helping students make informed academic and career choices through career maps, mentorship opportunities and enhanced support services:

Evaluate and restructure the general education curriculum

- Critically evaluate and restructure the general education curriculum in a way that emphasizes transferable skills (e.g., written communication, information literacy).
 - Seek funding to support a thoughtful and thorough initiative not entirely dependent on faculty service commitments (e.g., The Teagle Foundation: Call for Proposals).
 - Leverage the flexibility of a skill-based model to facilitate interdisciplinary teaching and learning in general education courses (e.g., a team-taught course on science writing instructed by faculty from chemistry and English).
 - Highlight the utility of the skills learned in each general education course because they contribute to the public affairs mission:
 - » Prepare students to be ethical, culturally competent, engaged citizens;
 - » Prepare students for advanced courses in a wide range of majors; and
 - » Prepare students for a variety of careers.
- Build curricular pathways that integrate a public affairs certificate into general education for most or all students (incorporate the recently approved certificate or a similar program).
- Build a curriculum not guided by the cost-center model, which incentivizes each program to create general education courses within as many categories as possible.
- Ensure that the general education curriculum can be aligned with the constraints imposed by Core 42, which emphasizes traditional disciplinary boundaries.
- Reduce the proportion of general education courses taught by per-course faculty to foster increased connections to programs and the campus community.

- Review first-year courses and IDS 120: Exploring Majors and Careers to ensure relevant content and early exposure to potential careers paths.
- Include major and career exploration in general education courses and curriculum.

Use data to align curriculum with workforce demands and monitor student outcomes

- Develop a program for longitudinal monitoring of student outcomes.
 - Increase interactions with alumni to facilitate community building, interactions with current students, data collection and fundraising.
 - Connect alumni with programs to expand mentoring and other opportunities for current students.
- Generate representative data on student outcomes at one, two, five and 10 years post-graduation.
 - Data will be communicated to programs for use in curricular evaluations and marketing.



- Use outcomes data to develop processes to evaluate the readiness of our graduates for the workforce, for example through surveys of employers.
- Utilize tools such as Gray DI and EAB Insights to evaluate curriculum and align it with current and projected workforce demands.
- Evaluate needs at local, regional and national scales.
- Ensure that evaluations capture the value provided by education in areas not traditionally viewed as career preparatory (e.g., soft skills and creativity fostered by the arts and humanities).

Provide effective proactive personalized advising

- Provide professional advising for students with fewer than 60 hours; each college identifies an appropriate advising and mentoring model for students with more than 60 hours.
- Assign advisors to programs and train them as needed.
- Evaluate the need for and increase the number of advisors; then, reduce the number of students per advisor as appropriate.

- With an appropriate number of students per advisor, leverage Brightspace tools (e.g., automated notifications when students miss assignments) to identify struggling students and to provide resources to increase the likelihood of academic success and retention.
- Develop targeted advising sessions:
 - Focus on majors and potential career paths for undecided students (end of first year, beginning of second year).
 - Focus on undergraduate-to-graduate programs with an emphasis on accelerated programs.
- Use AI to complement faculty and staff advising.

Help students make informed academic and career choices

- Incorporate information about discipline relevance into core courses.
- Develop career maps for majors and graduate programs, with suggested coursework and professional development milestones during degree completion and connections to a range of post-graduation career options (e.g., Inside Higher Ed: Degree and Career Map Improves Student Outcomes; Map the Future of Anthropology: A Guide for Optimizing Your Degree).

- Include information about student outcomes on program websites.
- Provide support to programs for ongoing website updates and maintenance.
- Request that the Career Center establish a database of staff and alumni for mentorship opportunities and guest speakers.
- Utilize Boomer Bot to ask sophomores if they have declared a major, and provide resources if they respond “no.”
- Review and update the website with resources for choosing a major: Missouri State University Academic Advising and Transfer Center: Undeclared Students.
- Identify majors, programs and career paths unfamiliar to beginning students and devote resources to enhancing awareness of those opportunities.
- Incorporate discussion of majors into SOAR and ensure relevant education for SOAR staff.
- Promote major and career exploration through the Career Center and the Office of Citizenship and Service-Learning.

Increase Equitable Access

Focus on launching new online programs, improving the quality of online courses, reducing course material costs and increasing accessibility for existing and additional student populations. Initiatives include expanding scholarships, enhancing support services, developing alternative learning pathways and providing resources for diverse student needs:

Launch 10 new online programs with potential for significant enrollment growth

- Use data to identify programs with growth potential in currently underserved markets.
- Connect with employers to identify workforce needs.
- Incentivize development of new online programs through launch funding.
- Develop marketing plans and recruitment strategies.
- Establish a brand presence for online strategy.

Improve the quality of online courses

- Increase the proportion of online courses and instructors that are Quality Matters (QM) certified.
- Incentivize Brightspace training for all instructors and training in online course design and delivery for those teaching online.
- Provide incentives such as course releases for faculty to develop QM-certified courses.
- Substantially increase pay for QM-certified per-course instructors.
- Build course shells that maintain flexibility for content but have some standardization of form and appearance.
- Evaluate existing facilities that allow for online, blended and high-flex education, and improve them as needed.
- Evaluate the need for teaching support to increase high-flex course offerings.

Reduce the overall cost of course materials

- Provide incentives for faculty to modify existing courses and develop new courses to use low- and no-cost materials.
- Expand awareness of and participation in the StreamlinED program.
- Expand awareness of and participation in OpenMSU.

Increase course accessibility for existing students

- Expand accelerated pathways for students to earn credit toward graduate degrees.
- Expand the StreamlinED program that partners with Access Technology Center to ensure all materials meet WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standards.
- Facilitate Access Technology Center accessibility reviews for all course materials, and support modification of existing materials or adoption of new materials as needed.
- Increase scholarships for education abroad to facilitate access for more students.
- Incentivize embedding virtual exchange (VE) and collaborative online international learning in courses in each department by connecting with international partners.
- Increase financial support and resources for academic success programs, including the Bear CLAW and other tutoring, mentoring and study skills programs.

Increase accessibility to MSU courses for additional populations

- Establish programs for micro-credentialing and alternative learning pathways for working professionals and others.
- Develop short-term, intensive learning opportunities such as credit-bearing bootcamps.
- Work with community partners to develop apprenticeship and work-based learning opportunities.
- Evaluate the needs of students who are parents, and devote resources to supporting them (e.g., drop-in day care).
- Identify additional populations the university could serve and devote resources to recruiting and supporting them through existing and new programs (e.g., age-friendly university, Spanish-speaking populations, veterans).
- Provide academic language and culture support for international students via I Succeed Center for International Students and prescribed first-semester courses for undergraduate and graduate international students. Create an English for Academic Purposes certificate to increase the value of these courses post-graduation.
- Offer credit hours for the English Language Institute's (ELI's) English for Academic Purposes program to expand access to MSU to those who are learning English prior to degree program admission.

Promote the Public Affairs Mission

Advance the public affairs mission by promoting the public affairs certificate and integrating it into the general education curriculum. The first-year seminar will be redesigned to focus on public affairs and practical skills, while public affairs courses across the curriculum will be identified and incentivized:

Increase public affairs credentials

- Promote the public affairs certificate recently approved by the Faculty Senate.
- Increase the prominence of public affairs in the general education curriculum; incorporate the public affairs certificate or variants, so most MSU students complete it.
- Develop alternative certificates targeting transfer students.

Redesign first-year seminar

- Create public affairs focus and incorporate the three pillars.
- Narrow goals to emphasize practical skills for college.
- Expand to full-semester 3-credit course.
- Reevaluate how GEP teaching is incentivized to ensure staffing needs are met.

Identify public affairs courses across the curriculum

- Determine what public affairs courses or course elements already exist within programs (including and in addition to existing public affairs capstones).
- Incorporate upper-division, public-affairs-designated courses into the public affairs certificate.
- Incentivize inclusion of an explicit public affairs component in newly created courses.

Foster Increased Research Productivity

Enhance research productivity by aligning research with curriculum, leveraging partnerships and facilitating international collaborations. Efforts will address external and internal barriers, increase funding, support student research, promote interdisciplinary activities and evaluate the feasibility of obtaining an R2 designation:

Identify opportunities for expansion

- Align research and creative activities with curriculum, so they are mutually reinforced.
- Leverage community and business partnerships to increase resources supporting research and creative activities.
- Facilitate collaborations between MSU faculty and faculty at our international partner institutions, including promoting existing programs.

Address external barriers

- Identify potential areas of research strength with a higher possibility of success in securing external funding and then develop strategies for investing increased financial and human resources.
- Establish a task force and devote financial resources to address publishing costs in high-quality journals.

Address internal barriers

- Increase internal funding allocated to research.
- Expand funding and other support for student research experiences at the undergraduate and graduate levels.
- Promote interdisciplinary research and decrease siloed research activities (address disincentives created by the cost-center model).
- Reconfigure award amounts for and increase financial resources devoted to the Faculty Research Grants (FRG) and Summer Faculty Fellowships (SFF).
- Encourage recognition of small grant achievements as a stepping-stone for larger funding.
- Evaluate teaching and research laboratory space and analogous spaces for creative activities; then, expand and update these facilities as needed. Develop procedures for shared use across campus.
- Evaluate financial and staffing needs for research compliance and increase as needed.

Assess the feasibility and desirability of obtaining an R2 designation

- Complete a study of the feasibility and desirability of earning a Carnegie R2 designation:
 - Evaluate which programs could expand to offer PhDs and market demand for those degrees.
 - Evaluate resources that would be necessary (e.g., reduced standard teaching loads, additional faculty lines, dramatically increased financial support for research).
- Increase lobbying efforts to remove legal barriers to an R2 designation based on outcomes of feasibility and desirability.



GOAL TWO

Community Partnerships and Economic Development

Advance a systematic, sustainable, university-wide culture that supports our public affairs mission through intentional collaboration among university, industry and community partners connecting students' real-world learning with employers and organizations seeking talent and expertise.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

Strengthened university-industry-community partnerships

Increased high-impact student educational experiences

Expanded academic college-based community partnerships and projects

Customized public/private professional development programs

Enhanced curriculum-based professional learning experiences

Emphasize the Public Affairs Mission

Launch a university-wide initiative that advances the public affairs mission, gives students professional experiences, and offers talent and expertise to employers and community organizations:

Institutionalize collaborative frameworks

- Establish a university-wide council composed of faculty, staff, students, industry leaders and community stakeholders to guide collaboration efforts.
- Create an accessible repository of partnership opportunities and engagement models to enhance transparency and participation across the university:
 - Inventory existing efforts noting the type of partnership and the scale of the partnership.
 - Provide a mechanism for evaluating and prioritizing future opportunities that regularly reviews external solicitations as well as the Community Focus Report, Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development Fast Track eligible programs, Southwest Missouri Council of Governments (SMCOG) reports, Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce reports, Leaders for Ozarks Regional Evolverment (LORE) reports, etc.
 - Investigate the feasibility of community partnerships and economic development customer relationship management (CRM) software, which tracks interactions between external organizations and internal units of the university, so we know who is doing what with whom.

- Develop policies and structures that incentivize faculty and staff engagement in industry and community-based projects aligned with the public affairs mission:
 - By 2026, develop model language for inclusion in tenure and promotion guidelines and appraisal and development plan (ADP) revisions that recognizes the type and scale of engagement in community partnerships and economic development in the areas of teaching, research and service.
 - By 2028, identify at least one department or school in each college to update their tenure and promotion guidelines with this model language adapted to their unique academic disciplines.
 - By 2030, ask each department or school to update their tenure and promotion guidelines with this model language adapted to their unique academic disciplines.

Expand practical learning experiences

- Integrate community-based learning and industry partnerships into academic curriculum:
 - Develop FCTL faculty learning communities for best practices in each of these high-impact practices: service-learning, community-based learning, internships and global learning.

- Develop a process whereby faculty who develop courses with these practices apply for and earn recognition for meeting the agreed-upon standards for each of the high-impact practices.
- Develop a process whereby the courses which meet these standards are recognized in Banner with new attributes.
- Expand internship, cooperative education and high-impact practice opportunities that connect students with meaningful, skill-building experiences.
- Develop and promote capstone projects and research initiatives that address community and industry challenges, fostering student innovation and civic engagement.

Expand co-curricular transcripts

- Continue to record student organization involvement.
- Add activities to include internships, service-learning, awards, etc.

Support Technology Commercialization and Entrepreneurship

Offer tours of efactory and Jordan Valley Innovation Center (JVIC)

- Integrate tours into new faculty and staff orientation programming.
- Offer customized college and division tours on a rotating basis, so existing faculty and staff can learn about these opportunities.
- Expand tours to student clubs and majors on a regular basis.

Expand access to university-owned equipment and resources

- Create a list of our current resources.
- Develop a process whereby relevant new equipment and resources are automatically added to the inventory as they are purchased, so the list stays current.
- Provide information about how to access equipment and resources.

Develop pathways for faculty, staff and students to apply for grants, start businesses and connect with employers

- Provide training for faculty and staff about how to be competitive in applying for large government or non-governmental organization (NGO) grants in the magnitude of \$10,000 or more.
- Develop model language for tenure and promotion documents to acknowledge large-grant applications as research output regardless of the final application success.
- Incentivize cohort or interdisciplinary large-grant applications across departments, schools, colleges, universities, external organizations and employers, perhaps through competition for course releases or other financial support.
- Investigate the return on investment for subscribing to a funding database like Clarivate's Pivot-RP.

Promote new product development

- Connect student and faculty expertise and university laboratories and equipment to develop prototypes and to provide research expertise for employers.
- Develop a list of existing products developed by students, faculty and staff.
- Partner with our experts at JVIC, efactory and elsewhere to offer internal and external training.
- Coordinate with the Office of Strategic Communication to highlight and celebrate new product development within and beyond the university community.

Assist with licensing and patenting activities

- Provide training for students, faculty and staff about how to license and patent new products, processes, etc.
- Develop model language for tenure and promotion documents to acknowledge licensing and patenting activities as research output.

Share Talent

Create a centralized access point for employers and implement a system to enhance communication and collaboration. Provide technical business support, deliver tailored talent development and training, and pilot initiatives to connect with partners and address industry needs:

Enhance external-facing communication processes

- Create a centralized front door for employers, such as a dedicated website and contact point, to simplify access to university resources and partnership opportunities.
- Implement an external-facing account-manager system to proactively engage with employers and serve as a consistent point of contact.
- Develop a robust framework that facilitates seamless internal collaboration between MSU academic departments and addresses external partners' needs.

Provide technical business support services

- Conduct feasibility analyses and provide market research to help businesses evaluate opportunities and make data-driven decisions.
- Establish and offer economic impact analysis, research and insights to regional businesses, economic development organizations and community partners.
- Assist companies with business formation and growth services, including business development strategies, marketing and sales

techniques, new product development analyses, and identification of new markets, including international markets.

Deliver talent development and training

- Support the regional talent pool through industry-led workforce development, professional and leadership development and core business training tailored to employer needs.

- Expand professional development opportunities via specialized certificates, alternative credential (micro-credential) courses and cohort programs that address high-demand skills.
- Develop lifelong learning pathways, such as the lifelong Bears concept, to integrate formal education and online education with ongoing professional growth.

Pilot initiatives to connect with partners

- Create initiatives, such as a technology education hub or alliance, to respond to talent development demands in high-growth sectors in technology.
- Integrate experiential learning for students to gain experiences addressing professional challenges.

- Explore new models for employer-sponsored education and training, fostering deeper collaboration between MSU and industry partners, such as creating co-teaching space between MSU and industry partners to deliver industry-relevant curriculum.

Assess and Improve Staffing Structure

Study the organizational structure of relevant offices, gather job descriptions, identify potential duplication and barriers to efficiency, and evaluate resource needs to achieve strategic priorities:

Map the organizational landscape of relevant offices

- Ask stakeholders for input about which offices to include. Places to begin include each of the academic colleges, the Division of Community and Global Partnerships, efactory, JVIC, the Academic Advising and Transfer Center, the Career Center, the Office of Citizenship and service-learning (CASL), the Office of Education Abroad, Office of Public Affairs Support, the

Center for Community Engagement, the Ozarks Public Health Institute, Environmental Management, Ozarks Environmental and Water Resources Institute, the Missouri State University Foundation, etc.:

- Gather job descriptions of positions.
- Identify potential duplication of efforts and possible barriers to efficiency.

Evaluate resources needed to achieve strategic priorities

- Evaluate whether personnel should be moved or reassigned to meet increased work demands associated with the strategic plan initiatives.

Develop a Database of University Expertise

Assess and showcase university expertise by identifying internship and practicum courses, updating the MSU Expert Sources Directory, and labeling entries for Community Partnership and Economic Development. Appoint experts to an interdisciplinary committee, which represents each college and promotes experiential-learning opportunities:

Assess and showcase existing university expertise across teaching, research and service

- Search course listings for internship and practicum courses. Make a list of instructors of record (the faculty who supervise the internships and practicums).
- Obtain a list of service-learning courses (integrated and component) from CASL. Survey the instructors of record to learn whether students consistently serve and study with the same organizations to identify current partnerships.

- Confirm current entries on the MSU Expert Sources Directory. Systematically solicit all MSU employees to update their expertise and become part of the directory.
- Create consistent labels in the Expert Sources Directory that indicate Community Partnership and Economic Development that MSU employees can indicate.

Create champions for this work throughout the university

- Identify these university experts to serve on the interdisciplinary committee that defines meaningful participation and regularly reviews and prioritizes new opportunities.
- Appoint one university expert from each of the six colleges to represent the model community partnership or economic development program.
- Task these university experts to define and promote experiential, interdisciplinary and relevant learning opportunities to their colleagues.



GOAL THREE

Institution of Choice for Students and Employees

Position Missouri State University as the institution of choice for students and employees.

3

DESIRED OUTCOMES

Enrolled 30,000 students	Attained “Great Colleges to Work For” Honor Roll status	Earned highest classification in Student Access and Earnings rankings
Achieved distinct student satisfaction score		

Develop and Implement a Plan to Increase Student Enrollment

Enhance enrollment management by conducting comprehensive reviews, developing targeted recruitment strategies, analyzing retention initiatives and increasing enrollment across various student segments. The plan includes optimizing scholarship programs, improving campus visit experiences, simplifying transfer processes, targeting adult learners, expanding funding opportunities for graduate students, and identifying new segments for growth through market analysis and targeted marketing:

Conduct a comprehensive analysis of enrollment management

- Conduct a comprehensive capacity review (not just classroom and academic program sizes) to help determine a realistic enrollment target, broken down by student segments.
- Identify academic programs to start, stop or grow that align with opportunities for enrollment growth.

Develop recruitment strategies

- Establish an appropriate international student enrollment goal.
- Perform a comprehensive environmental scan, which analyzes data trends – both internal and external to the university – that impact the enrollment and net revenue of the university.
- Strategically address enrollment mix (i.e., proportion of undergraduate degree seeking [first-time new in college (FTNIC)] students, transfers, readmits, continuing), graduate, international, precollege) and how the mix impacts both headcount and net revenue.
- Develop a more agile curricular workflow process that is aligned with the needs of students and emphasizes students with prior academic credits.

Analyze retention

- Conduct a comprehensive analysis of areas (e.g., student affairs, student success, advising) and initiatives (e.g., Boomer Bot, advising notes and ATLAS, high-impact practices, GEP 101, Bear CLAW) that contribute to student retention (Student and Alumni Experience).

Increase FTNIC student enrollment

- Assess and modify the university's scholarship program, particularly the way it affects headcount, budget and net revenue, strategically prioritizing those factors. Increase recruitment at all levels of the funnel of students by increasing resources for new sources of prospect FTNIC records outside of the current primary source, Encoura, and by expanding the geographic scope of our prospect record purchases (new and expanding markets).
- Increase recruitment mailing volume and variety of mailings to compete with competitors' mail volume. Send mailings to convert inquiries to applicants and admits to enrolls.
- Level up the campus visit experience by creating a more visitor-friendly campus map: incorporate the Advancement Center, improve Welcome Center branding and technology and include a visit to Great Southern Bank Arena.
- Increase overall campus understanding of and engagement with the campus visit process, including participation in one-on-one meetings with visiting students.
- Assess the communication of the to-do items required of admitted students and determine if improvements would make it easier and more understandable. Each step of the process after admission can be a barrier, deterring our admitted students. Analyze each step of the process to look for and remove barriers.
- Include strategies for maintaining or increasing FTNIC international student enrollment.
- Prioritize residence hall maintenance and repair.

Increase first-time undergraduate transfer student enrollment

- Simplify and support the transfer credit evaluation process for students.
- Increase connections and agreements with community colleges.
- Review current 2+2 and transfer degree plan processes and identify improvements.
- Develop a more robust transfer student orientation program.
- Assign designated in-person advisors to conduct office hours at high-transfer-rate community colleges.
- Reevaluate scholarship deadlines.
- Investigate the possibility of preadmission advising notes.
- Market residence life to transfer students.
- Include strategies for maintaining or increasing international transfer student enrollment.

Increase readmitted student enrollment

- Initiate marketing efforts to recruit adult learners to MSU, utilizing the Fast Track Workforce Incentive Grant.
- Employ a non-consumer campaign that will target some-college, no-credential students as well as true non-consumers.
- Coordinate a campaign to recruit MSU stop-out students (currently through ReUp).
- Develop employee partnerships. Assist adult learners using tuition reimbursement funds and visit employers to engage with human resources personnel and employees interested in attending MSU.

Develop and Implement a Plan to Increase Student Enrollment *(continued)***Increase graduate student enrollment**

- Develop and implement marketing strategies that target Missouri State undergraduate students to continue their education with a graduate program.
- Continue to expand community and business partnerships to increase funding opportunities for graduate students, including graduate assistantships and tuition reimbursement.
- Collaborate with Student Support Services and Adult Student Services to create a stronger sense of belonging

and resources for online graduate programs and students.

- Utilize deans' enrollment targets and the current influential factors identified in targets to allocate marketing resources, including search engine optimization and paid social media ads, toward graduate programs with the highest demand.
- Increase undergraduate-to-graduate conversion.
- Include strategies for maintaining or increasing international graduate student enrollment.

Increase non-degree-seeking student enrollment

- Increase dual-credit students through additional partner high schools.
- Increase international cohort programs.

Identify and pursue new segments for enrollment growth

- Conduct a market analysis about demographic trends and underserved markets.
- Use targeted marketing tailored for new student segments.
- Connect with employers and community organizations to address specific workforce gaps.

Achieve Meaningful Gains in Student and Employee Satisfaction

Improve student and employee satisfaction by conducting surveys to establish baselines, addressing key concerns and implementing targeted action plans. The university also aims to provide competitive pay, strengthen shared governance, improve work environments, and enhance employee well-being and work-life balance:

Measure and improve student satisfaction

- Establish a baseline satisfaction rate using the Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL) Satisfaction Inventory:
 - Launch an initial RNL Student Satisfaction Inventory to assess student satisfaction and identify key areas for improvement (i.e., very important, very dissatisfied).
 - Use a stratified random sampling to encourage student participation by undergraduate and graduate classification, academic college, gender, race/ethnicity, etc.
 - Increase student survey participation by incentivizing faculty to offer student incentives for participating (e.g., class participation as an element of university citizenship, extra credit).
 - Clearly communicate the purpose of the survey and how results will be used to drive meaningful change.
- Address key areas for student satisfaction improvement:
 - Identify and prioritize key concerns from survey results, such as

academic advising, campus climate, campus life, campus support services, concern for the individual, instructional effectiveness, recruitment and financial aid, registration effectiveness, safety and security, service excellence, and student centeredness.

- Develop and implement targeted, annual action plans to resolve institutional challenges and track progress.
- Explore the feasibility of leveraging HLC Quality Initiative Proposal (QIP) to enhance student satisfaction.

Measure and improve employee satisfaction

- Establish a baseline and communicate the survey's purpose:
 - Launch an initial administration of ModernThink's Great Colleges to Work For survey to assess current employee satisfaction levels and identify key areas for improvement.
 - Clearly communicate the purpose of the survey and how results will be used to drive meaningful change.

- Strengthen workplace culture and engagement:

- Foster a culture of transparency, recognition and inclusivity through leadership training, mentorship programs and employee appreciation initiatives.
- Encourage regular employee feedback through town halls, focus groups, or pulse surveys between full survey cycles.

- Address key areas of improvement:

- Identify and prioritize key concerns from survey results, such as workload balance, leadership effectiveness, career growth opportunities and workplace well-being.
- Implement targeted, annual action plans to resolve common challenges and track progress.

Provide competitive pay and compensation

- Provide starting pay for all positions above the relevant market rate.
- Move to a biweekly pay schedule for nonexempt positions and evaluate for exempt positions.

Achieve Meaningful Gains in Student and Employee Satisfaction *(continued)*

- Develop a comprehensive pay and compensation strategy that removes inconsistencies and redundant processes (e.g., library performance evaluation committee).
- Provide annual, automatic cost-of-living adjustments equal to inflation, including in vacant positions.
- Develop, implement and fund a merit-based pay system that rewards high performance with additional compensation.
- Develop, implement and fund a step-and-grade system that rewards longevity.
- Address salary compression created in lower grades due to the increase in minimum wage to \$15.00 per hour.
- Increase shift differentials and include annual increases commensurate with across-the-board raises.
- Conduct internal audits to identify and correct salary disparities, particularly for long-tenured employees who may have fallen behind market rates.
- Ensure pay adjustments account for experience, performance and job responsibilities.
- Increase affordable on-campus childcare and school opportunities for employees and give priority consideration.
- Evaluate parking permit cost as a percentage of employee salary.

Strengthen shared governance

- Evaluate areas of shared governance and identify opportunities.
- Evaluate the faculty's role for influencing departmental, college and university leadership selection.
- Develop policies to support faculty autonomy and decision-making.

Improve work environments

- Evaluate employee work environments to ensure work areas are functional and reflect the university's commitment to its employees and the mission of the university.
- Reduce the disparity in the physical work environments across campus.
- Evaluate the cost-center model of funding and whether other models provide greater opportunity for growth.

- Ensure facilities are well-maintained to provide a quality work environment.
- Implement the university's Facility Master Plan.

Enhance employee well-being and work-life balance

- Introduce or expand wellness initiatives, mental-health resources, flexible-work options and employee-assistance programs.
- Promote work-life balance policies for faculty and staff, and ensure they are accessible and equitably implemented.
- Conduct a comprehensive staffing analysis to identify under- and over-resourced areas; then, allocate resources to allow expectations to be met.
- Evaluate opportunities to leverage technology to enhance employee work-life balance.

Invest in Leadership Development and Talent Retention

Enhance professional development and career pathways by expanding skill development opportunities, offering leadership training and standardizing support across the university. Additionally, the university plans to increase leadership accountability and communication through regular engagement, transparency and establishment of certified ombuds roles:

Improve professional development and career pathways

- Expand opportunities for skill development, career advancement and internal promotions to enhance job satisfaction.
- Offer leadership training and mentorship programs to create clear career growth pathways.
- Expand the University Staff Ambassadors (USA) program and develop a faculty equivalent as well as another program that includes faculty and staff.
- Standardize professional development advocacy and support across all areas of the university.
- Implement mandatory supervisor training for faculty and staff, including skills to manage remote-work employees.
- Implement budget training that is appropriate for each level of position university wide.
- Offer professional development and training opportunities to support internal promotions.

Increase leadership accountability and communication

- Train supervisors and department heads to actively engage in employee satisfaction efforts and effectively address concerns.
- Implement regular communication from leadership about survey results, action steps and improvements made based on employee feedback.
- Increase budget transparency through town halls and educational sessions about resource allocation.
- Fill faculty and staff ombudsman roles with International Ombuds Association-certified organizational ombuds.



Design a Culture of Connection, Recognition and Purpose

Develop a culture of continuous improvement and recognition, and expand engagement opportunities for faculty and staff through participation in campus events and community initiatives:

Foster a culture of continuous improvement and recognition

- Recognize and celebrate areas where survey scores improve to reinforce positive change.
- Maintain a long-term commitment to employee satisfaction by embedding survey-driven improvements into institutional policies and practices.
- Provide resources and make policy adjustments to allow expenditures to demonstrate appreciation and recognition of employees.

- Create a common template and set of performance metrics for all academic colleges to use in the development of their strategic planning processes, which ensure alignment with outcomes and strategies outlined in the university's strategic plan.

Expand engagement opportunities

- Expand structured opportunities for faculty and staff participation in campus and community events (e.g., Welcome Weekend, Homecoming, athletics, Convocation, Commencement).
- Encourage faculty and staff involvement in initiatives like Giving Day, the MSU Way campaign and other opportunities to support the university through the Foundation.
- Create cross-departmental engagement initiatives to foster a sense of community

Elevate Missouri State's National Profile in Teaching and Research

Boost online education through mandatory faculty training, identify high-demand PhD programs, elevate prestigious programs, and pursue additional academic accreditations and national rankings:

Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to enhance online education

- Implement mandatory training for all faculty who teach online.

Identify and develop targeted PhD programs

- Use the EAB Market Insights Program Assessments and Gray DI to identify high-demand academic programs.

Elevate prestigious programs

- Review national program rankings.
- Identify programs that have received special accreditations and awards.

Pursue additional academic accreditations and national rankings

- Conduct a feasibility study to identify potential accreditations that align with our academic strengths and strategic priorities.
- Target meaningful national rankings and aggressively pursue recognition.



Achieve Competitive Excellence in Conference USA

Situate top revenue-generating sports teams for success, enhance NIL opportunities and transfer portal strategies, promote student-athlete academic achievement, and implement the Intercollegiate Athletics Strategic Plan:

Position top revenue-generating sports teams for success

- Ensure that at least two of the three highest revenue-generating sports teams (i.e., women's basketball, men's basketball and football) finish their regular seasons in the top 25% of Conference USA and receive an invitation to either an NCAA tournament and/or a Football Bowl Subdivision bowl game.

Enhance name, image and likeness (NIL) opportunities and transfer portal strategies

- Develop comprehensive support structures for athletes to maximize their NIL opportunities, including

partnerships with local and national businesses. Enhance scouting and recruitment processes to effectively use the transfer portal for maintaining or improving team competitiveness.

Promote student-athlete academic achievement

- Strengthen academic support services for student-athletes, including tutoring, career counseling and life-skills training. Set and monitor academic performance targets, aiming to exceed the Conference USA averages.

Implement the Intercollegiate Athletics Strategic Plan

- Roll out the recently revised Intercollegiate Athletics Strategic Plan, focusing on infrastructure improvements, fundraising, community engagement and enhanced training facilities.
- Regularly review and adjust the plan to respond to dynamic competitive challenges and opportunities.

Position MSU as a Leader in Student Access and Success

Establish a baseline for the Student Access and Earnings Classification, communicate its purpose, address key areas for improvement, and develop targeted action plans to enhance student access and earnings while exploring collaboration opportunities and leveraging the Higher Learning Commission's Quality Initiative:

Establish a baseline and communicate the Student Access and Earnings (SAE) Classification's purpose and relationship to institutional vision and mission

- Obtain MSU's current SAE classification and identify key areas for improvement.
- Clearly communicate the purpose of the SAE classification and how results will be used to drive meaningful change.

Address key areas of improvement

- Use the SAE technical report to identify and prioritize addressing classification dimensions that are concerning, such as student access and student earnings.
- Develop and implement targeted action plans to resolve any concerning classification dimensions and track annual progress.

- Conduct a comprehensive review of enrollment management, student affairs, student success and institutional research initiatives that are directly aligned to the SAE classification to identify opportunities for collaboration.
- Explore feasibility of leveraging the Higher Learning Commission's Quality Initiative to enhance our Carnegie classification.



GOAL FOUR

Student and Alumni Experience

Build a culture of enduring engagement by connecting students and alumni to the university through shared experiences and meaningful community.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

Increased alumni giving to 6% and donor retention by 5%	Improved post-graduation employment rates	Strengthened students' sense of community
Established 200 new endowed funds	Doubled Bears Fund donors	Attained record-breaking athletic attendance
Elevated student participation in university events	Created alumni-based mentoring and career guidance program in each college	

Increase Participation in Campus Events and Organizations

Develop communication channels and enhance campus experiences by centralizing event information, promoting diverse events and alumni and student engagement, and incorporating traditions into branding:

Create a streamlined communication channel that students, alumni and others can use to learn about events and opportunities on campus

- Consider an addition to the MSU app that highlights upcoming events, a video thread that shares resources and success stories of faculty and staff engagement with the community.
- Consider consolidating some MSU apps to centralize information.
- Promote a wide variety of events, including arts programming.

Enhance experience opportunities

- Identify ways to make the alumni experience unique at key events.
- Improve the vitality of student sections at athletic events.
- Continue to enhance the BearFest Village experience.
- Encourage more participation in Bear Crew move-in assistance and House Calls, including by athletes, coaches and other members of the Springfield and university communities.
- Expand and strengthen living-learning communities.

Use traditions to develop shared experiences

- Incorporate traditions into the brand of student life.
- Highlight traditions on the website and in marketing materials.
- Celebrate athletic wins across the university.

Promote Proactive Student Support

Train faculty and staff about student support services, establish customer service standards, improve communication with students, and increase external funding through grants to enhance student support and success:

Train faculty and staff about support available for students, including subgroups such as transfer students, adult learners and international students

- Catalog resources.
- Develop accessible tools that make it easy to understand and connect students to resources.
- Include training in onboarding for new hires. Follow-up after initial training to ensure information has been received and is being applied.
- Create a master campus ambassador training program that combines elements of University Staff Ambassador and Master Advisor trainings.

Develop a university-wide standard for customer service expectations

- Use the training described above to ensure that students are connected with the right resources on the first try.

- Implement a version of the training developed by the Disney Institute, which emphasizes courtesy and efficiency, empowers employees to make decisions and address needs in a timely manner, and maintains high standards.
- Establish consistent standards for tools like advising notes.
- Increase information-sharing across units by, for example, synching advising notes across different units that support students.

Communicate with students about resources that support student success and connection

- Create a central information hub students can use to get information.
- Create weekly toolkits.
- Create a student newsletter.

Use data to improve the student experience

- Implement the Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL) Student Satisfaction Inventory as described in the “Institution of Choice” section. Use this to supplement tools currently in use, such as the National Survey of Student Engagement.
- Bring student success data collected centrally and by different campus units together in a way that stimulates discussion and leads to the identification of actionable feedback.

Increase external funding for student success and retention

- Expand the capacity to identify, write and submit grants that will support student success activities.

Increase Alumni Engagement

Develop initiatives to support the University Advancement Strategic Plan by creating events, promoting curricular opportunities, building alumni benefits, and streamlining data collection to engage and educate every Bear:

Support the implementation of the University Advancement Strategic Plan

Develop initiatives to grow, strengthen and reimagine University Advancement programming to educate and engage every Bear

- Develop events and activities:
 - Expand Dinner with Eight Bears by adding a spring event and increasing the number of students and employees who participate by identifying and addressing barriers to participation.
 - Implement low-cost engagement opportunities such as Coffee with a Bear.
- Promote curricular and co-curricular opportunities:
 - Connect alumni to living-learning communities.
 - Offer opportunities for alumni to engage with students in introductory and capstone courses.
 - Encourage colleges to invite alumni to engage with students by delivering guest lecturers, hosting workshops, and serving as mentors; encourage colleges to report those engagements to the Foundation.
- Build alumni benefits:
 - Reinforce alumni connections and build relationships with the children of alumni by providing small gifts at key milestones.
 - Provide small gifts to current students as they complete milestones in their college careers.
- Use the MSU app and other tools to encourage alumni to participate in campus events.
- Offer discounts to alumni.
- Promote Bear-owned businesses.
- Streamline data collection
 - Consolidate efforts to track alumni information and increase access to that information.
 - Review the exit survey's utility as a mechanism to collect information about student outcomes.
 - Create more pre-graduation touchpoints to prepare students to keep in touch with the university, including providing non-university email addresses.







GOAL FIVE

Branding and Identity

Energize every Bear to be Missouri State’s biggest fan with branding that grows affinity with and promotes recognition of Missouri State University.

DESIRED OUTCOMES		
Built a strong, widely recognized brand identity and sentiment	Participated in first Bowl Game	Increased digital engagement
Embedded public affairs mission across campus and culture and brand	Incorporated a new athletic wordmark	Publicized and celebrated strong community partnerships and off-campus connections



Refresh the Brand

Implement a brand refresh to modernize, unify, and expand our brand's visual identity, voice, and assets to meet evolving audience needs and institutional goals. Partner with a research firm, establish a brand management strategy, strengthen brand standards, create a consultation process, and invest in user-friendly tools and systems.

Evolve the brand by implementing a brand refresh to celebrate the existing brand's strength and expanding it to meet future growth. The brand refresh will update our existing brand's identity. It will maintain the core elements while refining them to align with priorities. The brand refresh is a strategic update — not a rebrand. It unites our updated mission, vision and values with our visual identity, voice, tagline, and brand assets.

- Partner with a brand research firm to assess our current brand portfolio with an eye for growth.
- Based on brand research analysis, determine the scope of the refresh. Potential options include updated or adjusted logos, refined tone and messaging, clarified usage policies (including Mo State, the Bear Head, and spirit marks), established identity guidance for key offices (like the Office of the President), and cohesive representation of Public Affairs.
- Establish a brand management strategy coordinated in Marketing and Communications to work among stakeholders (alumni, planning, design and construction, academic units, etc.).
- Establish robust Public Affairs brand standards and toolkits.
- Establish robust athletics brand standards and toolkits. Create a comprehensive brand package supporting facilities, uniforms, merchandise, licensing, game entertainment and marketing.

Establish a “last look” process through which decentralized designers and marketers outside of the Division of Marketing and Communications can get a consultation to check brand usage

- Invest in systems and tools that make branded elements, templates and assets easy to use for decentralized designers and marketers across the campus community.

Amp up Fans and Spirit

Enhance fan engagement and school spirit by celebrating student athletes, expanding athletic traditions, strengthening community outreach and improving branded communication

- Improve fan experiences to set the stage for celebrations of pride.
- Invest in lighting and environmental design in athletics facilities to improve the sense of spectacle.
- Celebrate student athletes (not just athletics) through storytelling and elevating events such as the Maroon and White Banquet.
- Celebrate with all-athletics pep rallies and all-athlete campus celebrations.
- Highlight any athletics outreach to the community as a way of expressing our athletes' commitment to public affairs.
- Improve communication about events, successes and rivalries to encourage support from faculty, students and staff through branded channels.

Centralize Academic Success Stories

Develop a collaborative storytelling channel for building and sharing research and scholarship and highlighting opportunities for experiential learning

- Create a centralized storytelling channel to recognize faculty who lead courses that use experiential learning and recognize student participation in experiential learning.
- Use storytelling to drive digital engagement strategies, both paid and earned.
- Connect academic experiences with future success to inspire our campus community and recruit future students.

Bring the Community In, Send the Campus Out

Inspire with our public affairs mission and our existing connection to the communities we serve here and abroad to bring the community in and send the campus out for the mutual benefit of both entities

- Create a physical or virtual hub where businesses, nonprofits and agencies can initiate partnerships and where campus stakeholders can explore ongoing opportunities.
- Celebrate partnerships by elevating their visibility through brand resources, such as revitalized BearWear Fridays, and by implementing a “Powered/ Partnered by MSU” brand designation.
- Connect Ozarks food culture and MSU’s farm-to-fork strategy by cultivating a Missouri State food trail that encourages food and beverage industry partners from campus and across the city to feature menu items building pride around the city’s largest institution of higher education.
- Launch a Community Partner Recognition Program to honor organizations for contributions to academic and economic development.
- Host annual industry summits to engage stakeholders and to position MSU as a workforce development and innovation leader.

Invite People to Be Where the Bears Are

Proclaim Missouri State’s shared meaning — pride, community, the public affairs mission — to attract students and employees who want to be a part of our campus experience

- Leverage branding to communicate a bold vision for MSU’s future and to inspire stakeholders to invest in its success.
- Establish an admitted-student survey and a prospective-student survey to build future enrollment strategies.
- Invest marketing resources in key areas, including Conference USA, Illinois, Dallas metroplex and international markets.
- Use placemaking to encourage participation in our shared identity of public affairs.
- Elevate and celebrate the top three public affairs awards for students, faculty, alumni and staff to further underscore that Missouri State is the leading public affairs university. Reimagine existing awards and develop new ones as needed.
- Enhance the visual identity of Missouri State in Springfield by incorporating branded material to create a cohesive look that extends campus pride beyond the main campus.



Connect Students and Alumni Through Stories

Believe that building student belonging now encourages alumni connection later and increase cooperative storytelling among campus partners to prove the return on investment of choosing Missouri State

- Host admitted-student events in select markets (Kansas City, St. Louis, Bentonville) in partnership with companies and organizations with community partnerships or strong hiring pipelines from MSU, to connect future students to alumni.
- Use storytelling to highlight campus and industry connections; to support education abroad, faculty-student research collaboration and interdisciplinary co-teaching; and to highlight recent alumni success.
- Support the expansion of engagement and fan capacity for spirit events such as Homecoming, MSU's birthday and Fountain Day.
- Create more branded photo opportunities across campus, such as murals, sculptures or interactive installations, to encourage student engagement, boost social media visibility and reinforce Missouri State pride. Elevate the Value Proposition of Missouri State by Championing Public Affairs

Establish public affairs as a signature element of the MSU experience by integrating visual identity, storytelling and traditions across events, orientation, recognition and reporting

- Design a public affairs badge for use in promoting signature public affairs events. Use QR codes or other trackable metrics to gauge the growth in attendance.

- Establish a campus tradition that annually celebrates the university's commitment to public affairs, in part by recognizing the completion of the public affairs certificate.
- Launch an orientation campaign to establish public affairs as a defining feature of the MSU experience that is customized for use in SOAR, transfer orientation, and staff and faculty onboarding.
- Promote annual outcomes in public affairs impact reports with strong visual identity and clear storytelling.
- Reinforce goals through trackable engagement tools.

APPENDIX A

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Committee Co-Chairs

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Zora Mulligan

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APPENDIX B

SWOT ANALYSIS SMALL GROUPS

Small group discussions for the 2025-2030 Strategic Plan kicked off with meetings from Sept. 30 – Oct. 4, 2024. Meetings were held in person and virtually for the Springfield and West Plains campuses, and various groups of attendees represented those contributing to the project:

- Academic unit leaders
- Alumni and friends
- Business and community leaders
- Director-level administrators
- Elected officials
- Faculty
- Faculty Senate
- Staff
- Staff Senate
- Student Government Association
- Students

APPENDIX C

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