STRATEGIC PLANNING GOALS 2019–2027

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1 Modernize the student experience

An urgent task of our times is to invoke modes of collaborative leadership and forge transformative and resilient responses to the intensifying existential threats that challenge humanity and the planet. Publicly engaged universities can embrace their unique untapped potential to play a major role in bringing together communities across sectors to generate the knowledge, moral courage and creative powers that our times require. However, to do so, they must overcome the limits imposed by many standard practices of contemporary academia — including compartmentalized knowledge production, disconnection from broader communities, institutional inertia and a lack of imaginative problem-solving.

In order to modernize the student experience, UAF must serve as a hub of catalytic change for our community, the state, the country and the world. The objective is not merely to capacitate students by endowing them with knowledge and understanding, but to position students such that they can actively respond to load-bearing problems that they care about, problems they are invested in and engaged by.

In order to achieve this important goal, it is essential that students are empowered to become boundary spanners and change agents. Boundary spanners are visionaries. They see how traditional fields of knowledge can be integrated and transcended. Change agents are energetic innovators, and they set ideas in motion.

Modernizing the student experience at UAF is essential as the university continues to pursue excellence, recruit and retain students, and maintain its prominent status as a leading research institution in the Arctic and beyond. A modern student experience emphasizes 1) experiential learning, 2) a vibrant culture of innovation, research and active learning, and 3) campus environments that support the student's holistic well-being.

Given the complex, multifaceted nature of the student experience, the strategic planning team fostered a vision of what a modern, 21st-century university is. We allowed this vision to A) drive our process in establishing what the student experience ought to include, B) flesh out comprehensive metrics for student success, and C) foreground an understanding of how our suppositions connect to those of other teams participating in the strategic planning process.

A modern university enables access to education, enhances global engagement, drives economic development, promotes a sustainable future, empowers students through digital innovation, and advances inclusion, equity and diversity.

Flowing from this foundational understanding of what the modern university is, our team established the following key strategic objectives as UAF strives to modernize the student experience.

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