



Definition

Urban Research University Transition

ADAPTED FROM THE SENATE-APPROVED DOCUMENT

Youngstown State University contributes to the development and application of knowledge for the betterment of students and, thus, the communities in which they live and work. The University strives to improve the quality of life in the region and is the primary link to the global community. As an urban research university, YSU is guided by three core principles:

- Faculty research and scholarship are integrated into teaching and learning to improve graduate and undergraduate student experiences;
- YSU answers important questions and solves real problems by sharing information, expertise, and resources with the community;
- YSU invests in research, academic, and other programs that enrich the intellectual, cultural, and economic life of the community.

In the *Strategic Plan for Higher Education 2008–2017*, the Chancellor designated Youngstown State University an “Urban Research University.” Early in 2010, the Academic Senate at YSU affirmed the designation and described in detail what it entails (see **Appendix C**). Subsequently, the Urban Research Transition Cornerstone Committee—in recognition of the fact that the University has a long way to go to fully embrace and fulfill an expanded research mission—added the word “Transition” to the cornerstone name. The work of the cornerstone group produced three broad themes, as well as numerous priorities and initiatives, described in the following pages. It should be noted here that many of the initiatives, in particular, overlap with initiatives in two other cornerstones: Student Success and Regional Engagement.

The first Urban Research University Cornerstone theme is Innovation and Discovery, which addresses research needs of the region as well as basic and applied research activities for faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students. The Board Metric that tracks these activities is an index comprising total publications plus one-third of citations in a given year—the latter in recognition of the fact that citations come after publication and thus are a lagging indicator.

The second cornerstone theme is Funding to Support Research. Grants and philanthropic giving are critical to research endeavors of the institution, especially in lean budget times, and collaborative internal and external partnerships enhance our funding success. The Board Metric for this theme is total external research funding.

The third theme is Quality Academic Programs, a theme that entails an expansion of graduate programming, as well as academic relevance and rigor. While research enhances the education of undergraduate students, graduate students, especially, can be active and productive researchers. Further, academic relevance and rigor address the necessity that programs be relevant to “real world” careers and that they be challenging, so that students will be well prepared for life beyond the University and for the careers they enter. The two Board Metrics addressing academic programs are the ratio of graduate to undergraduate students and the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty.



To summarize, the Board Metrics are

Innovation and Discovery:
Funding to Support Research:
Quality Academic Programs:

An index of peer-reviewed publications and citations
 Total external research funding
 G/UG student ratio
 FT/PT FTE faculty ratio

INITIATIVES

- Provide technical support for grant-writing and statistical analysis.
- Re-engineer processes to reduce time, paperwork, and divisional barriers to research and scholarly activity.
- Implement changes to increase time for faculty research without reducing teaching capacity.
- Expand and enhance undergraduate research opportunities.
- Publicize research outcomes.
- Create an outreach office to provide research and consulting services to the community.
- Establish a reward system to facilitate faculty applied research in the community.
- Create opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration (e.g., “community of scholars”).
- Develop an assessment system to evaluate outcomes of collaborative and regional research projects.

THEME 1: INNOVATION & DISCOVERY

Institution/Board Metric: Index of Peer-Reviewed Publications, Citations

Priorities/Rationale

1. Collaborative research to address urban and regional needs

We have a special obligation to the city and the region in which the University is located to develop and apply research expertise to improve the quality of life. Poverty, crime, chronic disease, an aging and under-educated population, and economic revitalization present research problems that require interdisciplinary approaches. We can partner within the University and with other educational institutions, businesses, and organizations to address such issues. Working collaboratively will require removal of impediments, such as duplicative paperwork and outdated regulations. We must examine and streamline policies and processes to become more efficient and make it easy for the community to access the expertise of the University. The outcomes (e.g., job creation, partner satisfaction) of these collaborative projects will be routinely assessed.

2020 METRICS

1. Peer-reviewed publications
2. Citations
3. Creative works
4. Inventions, patents, and licenses
5. Number and outcomes of regionally based research projects

theme 1

2. Faculty and student scholarship

Creation and dissemination of knowledge are the essence of a university. Youngstown State University encourages the full spectrum of scholarship, including basic and applied research, creative works, and other intellectual contributions. An increased emphasis on research productivity will enhance, rather than detract from, teaching. We will carefully cultivate the relationship between scholarship and teaching by expanding undergraduate research opportunities and encouraging the scholarship of teaching and learning.

YSU will strengthen its capacity for research by providing ongoing training, technical support, and recognition of faculty and staff efforts. Disseminating research outcomes more widely to the general public will increase public understanding of the value of faculty and student scholarship and enhance the academic reputation of the University.



THEME 2: FUNDING TO SUPPORT RESEARCH

Institution/Board Metric: Total Research Funding from External Sources

Priorities/Rationale

1. Support for grant development and management

To transform YSU into an Urban Research University, limited resources must be redirected to research activities that are greater in scope than current research activities. YSU's four new Centers of Excellence need new funds in order to flourish. Expectations of research productivity from faculty and students are increasing. To address the economic-development and jobs-creation needs of the region, YSU's research and scholarly activities must be expanded. To that end, in these challenging times of significantly limited resources, the most prudent approach is to enhance external grants efforts.

The Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs drastically needs additional personnel to assist faculty in developing and managing grants. Given that no new money is available internally for this purpose, one solution is to increase grant activity to such a level that indirect costs will be able to support the additional personnel. In addition, faculty would benefit from workshops in grant development and management, so that they wouldn't depend so heavily on staff and might become more self-sufficient in this arena.

2. Philanthropic funding for academic initiatives

An additional source of revenue is from philanthropic donations directed to research enterprises, such as endowed chairs or a specific research program or project. Modest sums are occasionally given for such purposes; however, with more concerted efforts from the Development Office, these sums would expand. Further, fundraising workshops for the Academic Division could enhance philanthropic funding, since faculty, for example, might become effective at successfully soliciting donations for their projects.

The initiatives expand on these concepts.



2020 METRICS

1. Total external grant \$
2. Number of external grants funded
3. Philanthropic total targeted for academic initiatives
4. Academic endowments \$
5. Grants submission \$
6. Number of grant submissions
7. Funding received from for-profit organizations

theme 2

INITIATIVES

- Benchmark and apply best practices in grant management.
- Develop comprehensive policy re: start-up packages for new faculty to enhance their research activities.
- Provide training for faculty in grant development and management to develop self-sufficiency.
- Reevaluate indirect cost rate when eligible.
- Provide fundraising training for the academic sector.
- Reinvest funds from research into research.
- Design policies to work effectively with the Youngstown State University Research Foundation (YSURF) to enhance research accomplishments.

- Add/implement selected graduate programs.
- Develop combined bachelor's/master's programs.
- Create innovative mechanisms to fund graduate students.
- Develop marketing and recruitment strategies targeting graduate students and highly able undergraduate students.
- Examine admissions standards for graduate students.
- Conduct regional needs assessment.
- Examine/establish methods to regularly assess the quality of academic programs.
- Examine tenure and promotion guidelines to ensure quality faculty.
- Advance Centers of Excellence to national prominence.
- Review and revise General Education Requirements to address Higher Learning Commission issues.

THEME 3: QUALITY ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Institution/Board Metrics: Graduate/Undergraduate Student Ratio; FT/PT FTE Faculty Ratio

Priorities/Rationale

1. Expansion of graduate education

As noted in Ohio's *Strategic Plan for Higher Education* (p. 48), past practices in the state have restricted the growth of both undergraduate and graduate programs at Youngstown State University. State policy now encourages the expansion of programs at YSU, especially graduate education, to provide the "talent and research base" needed to attract new businesses and create jobs. Expansion of graduate programs will require innovative approaches at a time of scarce resources. We must build on our strengths and carefully select programs to be added, to maintain quality and to meet demonstrated needs. Systematic needs assessment will identify programs that are most likely to contribute to economic development. We can attract more graduate students by providing funding and offering combined bachelor's/master's programs, which may reduce the time and cost needed to earn a degree. Graduate students recruited from outside the immediate locale contribute to the economy, vitality, and diversity of the community and may remain in the area after graduation.

2. Academic rigor and relevance

A relevant education exposes students to diverse points of view and cultures. Students learn not only from their teachers, but also from one another. The quality of classroom interaction is affected by the abilities and backgrounds of participating students. Therefore, we must recruit a diverse and academically motivated student body. To attract high-ability students, we will effectively communicate YSU's quality, opportunities, and distinctive characteristics to the region and beyond.

One of YSU's distinctive characteristics is its general education program. However, the innovative design of the program has proved difficult to implement and assess, and thus the Higher Learning Commission has challenged us to address general education compliance/assessment issues.

We will ensure the quality and continued relevance of academic programs through assessment processes, such as learning-outcomes assessment, annual program planning and reporting, and accreditation reviews. Because a quality faculty is key to the design and delivery of rigorous academic programs, we must recruit effective scholars and teachers, provide them ongoing development and support, and evaluate them appropriately. To that end, departments and colleges will be encouraged to examine their tenure standards and promotion guidelines in light of standard practices (e.g., external review of candidates) at peer institutions.

2020 METRICS

1. Graduate/undergraduate student ratio
2. FT/PT FTE faculty ratio
3. Number of degrees awarded
4. Number of master's and doctoral students
5. Number of graduate students from outside the region
6. Number of master's and doctoral degrees awarded
7. Mean Graduate Record Examination (GRE) score

theme 3

