

Bemidji State University
Master Academic Plan, 2018-23

Explanatory Note: This Master Academic Plan represents the collective work of twenty-one individuals, representing faculty, staff, and administration as well as our unions. It seeks to identify directions through which the Academic Affairs unit can effectively support the priorities articulated in BSU's Strategic Plan, while pursuing in harmony with the University's plan the collective priorities of its own faculty, staff, and administrators. The MAP presented here is neither exhaustive nor focused on the details of its implementation but is intended to offer general guidance to those entrusted with designing and realizing its aspirations. Although not explicitly articulated in every instance, the endeavors envisioned below apply to all BSU students, including those who do not live on our campus, in the surrounding communities, or in our geographic region.

Priority 1: Strengthen Curriculum and Assessment Practices (for programs, departments, and Liberal Education)

Group Members: Season Ellison, Nicky Michael, and Randy Westhoff

Goals and Activities:

- Integrate BSU's Shared Fundamental Values into all curricular programs.
 - Ensure that the assessment cycle for academic programs includes review of the Shared Fundamental Values within the curricula. [SP Activity 4.2a]
 - Develop an assessment tool to review the infusion of the Shared Fundamental Values into the curriculum. [SP Activity 4.2b]
 - Develop assessment practices and standards to ensure that Liberal Education incorporates the Shared Fundamental Values.
- Create a New Liberal Education Program.
 - Form a task force charged with developing a proposed revision of the Liberal Education program.
 - Consider changing the name of Liberal Education to better reflect the program's learning outcomes and overall purpose in the education of BSU's undergraduate students.
 - Informed by current national best practices for general education, revise the mission, vision, and learning outcomes of Liberal Education to align with the university's Shared Fundamental Values as well as the program's overall purpose.
 - Use the newly revised mission, vision, and learning outcomes to revise BSU's explanation of the program to centralize Liberal Education as an essential learning component of the student experience, and to highlight Liberal Education's relationship to each student's major as well as its significance to interdisciplinary learning, vocational development, and continued growth.
 - Reimagine BSU's Liberal Education curriculum to align with current best practices in general education (e.g. AAC&U Leap Initiative) in ways that include pedagogically

sound, innovative, intentional, meta-cognitive learning experiences. The new design should effectively bridge the perceived divide between Liberal Education and professional programs or majors.

- Partner with the Community Engagement Council to identify and advance community engagement opportunities within the Liberal Education program.
- Create a task force charged with proposing a revision to BSU's graduation requirements.
 - Propose revisions to the current graduation requirements intended to enhance student skillsets in the following areas: written communication (e.g. writing across the curriculum), oral communication (e.g. communicating across the curriculum), analytical and creative thinking, understanding and engaging with diverse perspectives and peoples.
 - Generate a plan to provide training to faculty across BSU to better help them cultivate the teaching of these skills.

Priority 2: Infuse Themes of Place and Fundamental Values throughout the Curriculum and Learning Experiences

Team Members: Jim Barta, Debbie Guelda, Michael Lane, Tami Worner

Goals and Activities:

- Engage faculty, staff, administrators, and students in further clarifying what is meant by "a sense of place" (in terms of physical setting, university community, and the broader communities in which the university is situated) and Shared Fundamental Values (civic engagement and leadership, international and multicultural understanding, belief in the power of the liberal arts, environmental stewardship).
 - Form a task force charged with helping departments and programs to ensure that their work appropriately honors the spiritual, historical, emotional, and physical relationship of those who are American Indian with this place.
 - Form a task force charged with communicating clearly articulated place-based themes and Shared Fundamental Values across the university, for the purpose of increasing awareness and fostering strong interdepartmental relationships.
- Engage faculty and administrators in establishing a structure for evaluating the incorporation of place themes and values into existing and proposed programs, activities within academics, student life, and athletics. [SP Activity 1.1a/1.3a]
 - Provide training for faculty and staff in all academic departments and programs, as well as student life and athletics, on institutional recognition, understanding, importance, and methods of curricular and co-curricular inclusion of place-based themes and Shared Fundamental Values.
 - All academic departments and programs will identify and articulate themes of place and Shared Fundamental Values, taking into consideration their unique disciplines and perspectives.
 - Seek out opportunities for collaboration with other institutional units, such as student life, athletics, and enrollment management, to incorporate place themes and values in ways that enhance student learning.

- Work with the DAIP, Council for Community Engagement, the task force charged with re-visioning Liberal Education, and the Sustainability Office to accomplish these activities.
- Identify ways to expand, leverage, and/or connect place themes and values to maximize student learning and growth in internalizing the importance of place. [SP Activity 1.3a]
 - Each academic department and program will create a multi-year plan to indicate how values and place themes will be further incorporated into curricula.
 - A committee will be formed, or an existing committee will be charged, to ensure that each academic department and program stays on task with meeting this goal.
- Assess the impact of curricular initiatives on student comprehension and internalization of place themes. [SP Activity 1.1b]
 - Incorporate the development of assessment practices and standards into the new Liberal Education model and all departments and programs to ensure the incorporation of place-based themes and Shared Fundamental Values.
 - Informed by assessment results, all academic departments and programs will refine their curricular initiatives.
- Work with American Indian nations and communities to identify opportunities for internships, clinicals, practica, and student teaching for mutual benefit. [SP Activity 2.1a]
 - The Community Engagement Council, in collaboration with the surrounding American Indian communities, will assess potential connections with American Indian communities and communicate opportunities identified through this collaboration to faculty, staff, and administration.
 - The Community Engagement Council will assist in the cultivation and development of these reciprocal relationships.
- Explore integrating diversity and the Shared Fundamental Values into the curriculum in ways that advance “helping others” toward “understanding others.”
 - Develop a diversity graduation requirement that emphasizes cultural competence. [DAIP 5.2.1]
 - Design curricular means of meeting this requirement at both the lower and upper levels (e.g. proposal in DAIP 5.2).

Priority 3: Increase Diversity and the Depth to which Diversity is Understood, Honored, and Celebrated through Academic and Other Learning Experiences

Team Members: Julie Adams, Bill Blackwell, Jr., Bonnie Higgins, George McConnell

Goals and Activities:

- Increase the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge into the existing curriculum.
 - Academic Affairs will work in partnership with the Director of the AIRC and Indigenous Studies faculty to facilitate multiple listening sessions with regional Indigenous affinity groups including the Council of Indian Students and the External American Indian Advisory Council to discuss priorities and initiatives to support American Indian knowledge and experience into the broader curriculum.

- Academic Affairs will work with the Director of the AIRC, the Director of the Sustainability Office, Indigenous Studies faculty, and Indigenous faculty in other departments to foster strong interdepartmental relationships that will have begun to facilitate the addition of Indigenous knowledge sustainability perspectives into all degree programs.
- The faculty in the Indigenous Studies program and Indigenous faculty in other departments will serve as the resource experts for further integration of Indigenous knowledge into new and existing curricula.
- Academic Affairs will collaborate with faculty in the Indigenous Studies program and Indigenous faculty in other departments in establishing a website that serves as a resource for faculty and staff who are seeking to build Indigenous perspective into existing and new courses and activities.
- Coordinate efforts between AIRC staff, event programs and faculty to incorporate existing and new Indigenous events into coursework syllabi. (i.e., Days of Welcome, Indigenous Peoples' Day presentations, Indigenous Heritage month presentation.)
- Increase international outreach and integration.
 - Focus the work of the International Program Center on the recruiting of students and visiting faculty.
 - Incorporate the International Scholar Program into the curriculum through such activities as presentations and shared cultural experiences.
 - Identify and contract with reputable agents wherever their services are needed to facilitate international recruiting.
 - Recruit and market in countries whose academic institutions identify specific educational needs that align with specific BSU's academic programs.
 - Incorporate events from the Center for Diversity and Inclusion into the curricular activities across the university.
 - Expand the means through which BSU students can satisfy the requirements of Liberal Education Goal Area 8.
 - Expand language offerings on campus and establish articulation agreements with other Minnesota State universities that will collectively enable each institution to provide a wider variety of languages via Smart Classrooms.
- Strengthen civic engagement opportunities.
 - Schedule monthly lectures on the experience of populations to encourage the participation of community members in campus conversations.
 - Create opportunities for serving the community to be integrated into course-level curriculum.
 - Encourage faculty to incorporate more service-learning, civic engagement, and problem-solving assignments into their courses.
 - Create training opportunities that will enable faculty members to consider identifying and implementing ACUE (Association of College and University Educators) curricular modules as a means of making civic engagement more central to their courses.
- Ensure that BSU's additional diverse populations (e.g. women, LGBTQ, various cultures, disabilities) are central to the university's inclusion efforts.
 - Encourage faculty and staff to integrate awareness months into existing curricula and events.

- Academic Affairs, in collaboration with Student Affairs, will create a calendar of events (noted experts and speakers) that could be linked to student learning outcomes in the classroom and community.
 - i. September: Hispanic Heritage Month
 - ii. October: National Disability Month
 - iii. November: Native American Heritage Month
 - iv. January: LGBTQ Month
 - v. February: Black History Month
 - vi. March: Women’s History Month
 - vii. April: Diversity Month
International Fair
Asian Pacific American Heritage Month (celebrated in May, but could be incorporated into April events)
- Academic Affairs, in collaboration with Student Affairs, will invite speakers for select events who possess the expertise needed to address specific disciplinary issues within the classroom and to present at a larger campus forum.

Priority 4: Increase the Positive Impact of Interactions among Students, Faculty, and Staff on All Facets of the Learning Experience

Team Members: Colleen Greer, Patty Hartshorn, Jan Heuer, and Kelli Steggall

Goals and Activities:

- Academic Affairs will create and implement a formal training program for academic advisers. [SP Activity 3.3a]
 - BSU 101 training will help all new faculty members become familiar with the demographics of BSU students; this training will take place no later than three weeks after the beginning of fall classes (coordinated with, CPD, SDE, IR, Diversity Officer)
 - Academic Affairs will provide an annual training for all faculty and staff on campus climate, curriculum changes, procedures and processes related to advising, and early alert systems (Coordinated with CPD, SDE, IR, Diversity Officer).
 - Academic Affairs will identify “best practices” in advising and will work with academic departments and staff to incorporate those best practices into campus academic advising (e.g., National Academic Advising Association - NACADA Best Practices).
 - Academic departments will establish strategies for on-boarding new faculty that will better prepare them to advise majors (e.g., limit advising loads for first year, establish templates for departmental advising)
 - Academic Affairs will set up a mentoring program to support faculty and staff new to advising.
- Review existing academic advising practices, gateway experiences, and other essential non-instructional tasks, and identify new approaches that better support student success.
 - Academic Affairs will continue to support BSU involvement in the Gardner Institute – Gateways to Completion and will encourage departmental involvement as well.
 - Academic Affairs will review existing advising practices and will make recommendations for revision based on identified best practices.

- Academic Affairs will review professional development processes for faculty and staff and will establish criteria for review that reflect the importance of student engagement and reward individuals for their involvement.
- Academic Affairs will review assessment practices and make determinations regarding the need for assessment coordinators to support faculty and staff in their use of Taskstream and other reporting tools.
- Academic Affairs will review gateway practices, including FYE, and work with faculty and departments to create courses and programs that will better meet the academic needs of BSU's diverse student population (including, but not limited to women, minority, LGBTQ, and international students).
- Strengthen treatment of students and each other as a community.
 - Each semester, academic departments will schedule at least one talk or other event to which students are invited. [SP Activity 3.2a]
 - The Provost will establish an employee recognition process after soliciting the counsel of faculty, staff, and administrators as to how this process should be structured.
 - BSU will explore the possibility of creating professional development mini grants for staff that are not tied to collective bargaining agreements.
 - Academic Affairs will pursue opportunities for hosting additional social gatherings.
 - The Provost will consider adjusting the academic schedule to establish a 1-2 hour block of time each week for such activities as meetings, trainings, and community gatherings.
 - The Provost will consider developing additional incentives to promote involvement in Courageous Conversations and other trainings related to diversity and inclusion.
- Strengthen support for faculty, staff, and members of the broader community who engage with international students and visiting faculty.
 - Create additional opportunities, when appropriate, for faculty and staff to participate in the promotion of programs and recruitment of students.
 - The International Studies Program will develop a mechanism to encourage “host families” for international students and faculty.
 - The International Program Center will develop ways to increase involvement in the International Scholars Program.
- Strengthen student retention and persistence to graduation.
 - Student Affairs will explore development of a mechanism to encourage “host families/mentors” for students, for the purpose of helping students to feel more connected to BSU especially if “home” is geographically distant.
 - Student Affairs will lead efforts to continue enhancing communication after early alert reporting (i.e., use of Starfish) has occurred.
 - Academic Affairs will sponsor additional forums in which students, faculty, and staff learn about best practices associated with advising, persistence and retention, internship placement, and community engagement opportunities.
 - Student Affairs will consider creating opportunities for students to teach workshops offered to faculty and staff (e.g. athletics, cooking, crafts, traditional skills, language).
 - The Center for Professional Development will consider hosting faculty and staff seminars on creating self-regulated learners.

Priority 5: Increase and Strengthen BSU's Degree Program Offerings, Activities, and Events to Enrich Learning

Sage Davis, Lynn Johnson Dianne Narum, Sheila Paul, and Cory Renbarger

Goals and Activities:

- Add and strengthen academic programs with the aim of increasing quality, visibility, and enrollment at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.
 - Academic Affairs will collaborate with the Marketing and Communications unit to improve BSU's outreach and marketing of programs and events.
 - Academic Affairs will collaborate with the Marketing and Communications unit to strengthen marketing of the liberal arts as central to BSU's identity and focus.
 - Academic Affairs will consider additional competency-based opportunities for student completion.
 - Academic Affairs will create additional 2+2, 3+1, 3+2, 4+1, and other degree options.
 - Academic Affairs will explore the possibility of developing bridge programs.
 - Academic Affairs will consider developing as well other non-degree learning opportunities (e.g. continuing education for professionals, alumni events, music events, ElderHostel events).
 - Academic Affairs will collaborate with the Enrollment Management unit to develop a structure through which interested faculty ambassadors can more readily attend events for recruiting and community visibility.
 - Academic Affairs will examine existing programs that have unmet demand to determine if expansion is feasible (e.g. online psychology, blended-delivery Social Work)
 - Academic Affairs will enhance market research to better inform decisions on the creation, design, and delivery of new programs.
 - Prioritize the development of graduate programs that will foster the interaction of graduate students with undergraduates and members of the broader community.
 - Examine new graduate programs that will increase BSU's reputation as a regional destination for unmet graduate needs.
- Build internal and external partnerships in BSU's academic programming.
 - The Center for Extended Learning and Admissions will expand collaborations with high schools, including PSEO and Concurrent Enrollment.
 - The Center for Extended Learning and Admissions will work with high schools to make sure students have access to advising and resources they need to be college ready.
 - Academic Affairs will collaborate with the Enrollment Management unit to increase time allotted for faculty and staff contacts with high school and prospective students.
 - Academic Affairs will increase partnerships with Tribal Colleges in areas such as course and degree program offerings, joint marketing, and 2+2 articulation agreements.
 - Academic Affairs will increase the university's Minnesota State community college partnerships, with a focus on the metro area colleges.
 - Academic Affairs will collaborate with the Marketing and Communications unit to increase the marketing and promotion of university events to the local community by utilizing discipline-specific strategies and encouraging cross-promotion of disciplines.
 - Academic Affairs will research ways to enhance BSU's ability to utilize interactive technologies to augment the live delivery of academic programs.
 - Academic Affairs will research ways to increase enrollment in graduate programs among underserved populations.

- Increase inter-departmental teaching and learning opportunities by encouraging faculty to invite other departmental experts into their courses (e.g. bringing American Indian traditions into music and art courses).
- Seek out innovative ways of funding the development and delivery of new and growth programs.
 - Academic Affairs will improve its assistance to faculty for locating, writing, and managing grants.
 - The Provost will develop a new model for revenue sharing to support program development in a way that better balances departmental cost/revenue, staffing and resource needs, and institutional sustainability.
 - The Provost will collaborate with the Chief Financial Officer to review current budgeting, allocation, and revenue models with the aim of better encouraging cross-disciplinary learning experiences.
- Create a vehicle by which faculty can showcase and observe each other's work for the improvement of teaching.
 - Academic Affairs will work with the Center for Professional Development and the Teaching and Learning Center to explore options for sharing strengths.
 - Academic Affairs will explore ways to better encourage attendance at Honors Lectures.
 - The Center for Professional Development and Teaching and Learning Center will explore venues through which faculty can provide encouragement for each other's good work.

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