

# Cultivate an innovative and expanding academic environment

## Objectives

- Develop new academic programs and offerings while enhancing current academic programs.
- Develop programs and pathways to meet the needs of new types of students.
- Develop a teaching and learning community that fosters innovation.
- Foster a global mindset and development of intercultural competencies among members of the campus community.
- Develop interdisciplinary academic centers.

**Many of the in-demand career fields of tomorrow have yet to be discovered.** What does this mean for Mount Union and our students? First, it signifies that we must remain committed to academic offerings that are relevant and meet society's demands. The University has always excelled at providing an optimal combination of theoretical appreciation and practical preparation, which is vital to success in our rapidly-changing world.

Second, it implies that we must arm our students with transferable skills that will enable them to adapt in a progressive career landscape. Critical thinkers, effective communicators, compassionate citizens, and able leaders – these are the desired descriptors of our graduates. These are the criteria by which we measure our ability to develop the intellects of our students and prepare them for life after Mount Union.

The continual development of academic programs is at the very core of our ability to prepare students for success. It will be critical that we research, update and invest in existing undergraduate programs to maintain their attractiveness, academic experience, and post-graduate outcomes. We also must explore new undergraduate programs that will sustain a vibrant curriculum and enrollment. The continued growth of graduate programs – both residential and online – will remain a focus as well, especially in the areas of the health and medical sciences, education, social and behavioral sciences, and business management. Other curricular opportunities for the future include continuing education and professional and corporate training. All the while, the institution will further commit to incorporating program effectiveness measures and methods into the existing academic program review processes.

New academic programs and pathways will also be considered as a means of meeting the needs of new types of students. The utilization of new modes of program delivery, articulations, and programs with an abbreviated time to degree attainment all provide opportunities to attract students who may not have otherwise considered Mount Union as an option.

As we continue to develop a modern curriculum, innovation will remain at the forefront. Enhanced academic rigor and increased opportunity for experiential learning near campus and beyond will further prepare our students for career success. Our faculty will benefit from increased opportunities to advance innovation and engage new and changing student populations, and they will be recognized and rewarded for doing so. A robust endowment and charitable giving will provide further support for the innovative development of the academic curriculum.

Critical to the success of our graduates will be our ability to foster in them a global mindset and intercultural competencies. The integration of these principles into the curriculum and learning objectives

of each major will enhance classroom learning. Experientially, students, faculty, administrators, and staff can further develop their global perspectives through study abroad, campus activities, and overseas internship and research opportunities. Enhanced opportunities for faculty development and training will further propel these efforts, as will a commitment to rewarding and recognizing faculty and departmental initiatives to internationalize campus programs and the curriculum.

Additionally, new interdisciplinary academic centers will supplement learning in the major, minor, and Integrative Core. These centers will provide an additional pathway to fulfill our mission to prepare students for fulfilling lives, meaningful work, and responsible citizenship. The establishment of University Scholars programs for these centers will support recruitment of top students to Mount Union.