

The background features a large, stylized graphic element resembling a speech bubble or a large letter 'R'. The top-left portion of this shape is a solid red circle. The rest of the shape is white, set against a black background. A diagonal line separates a red triangular area at the bottom-left from the white area.

**RISE TOGETHER.
STAND APART.**

A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR
ROCHESTER UNIVERSITY
2019-2023

Rise Together, Stand Apart

A Strategic Plan for Rochester University (2019-2023)

June 1, 2019

Introduction

Rochester University (RU) will celebrate its 60th-Anniversary Year in 2019 and is an institution on the move. During the 2019-2020 academic year, the name change transition from Rochester College to Rochester University will be complete. This change reflects the significant growth experienced by RU in the past several years. Rochester University now offers over 25 baccalaureate degree programs, including vibrant professional training programs in Nursing, Teacher Education, Accounting, and Computer Information Systems. In addition, RU continues to lay the foundation for all of its undergraduate programs with a strong General Education curriculum emphasizing the liberal arts and sciences. Our Master of Religious Education degree in Missional Leadership has established a strong foothold for the institution in post-graduate education.

Rochester University's 80-acre campus is located in Rochester Hills, Michigan, a thriving community in Oakland County, recently named the safest small city in America. Situated within walking distance of downtown Rochester, Michigan, the beautiful campus is bordered by the Clinton River and features fifteen buildings and the lovely Lake Norcentra Park.

Beginning in the spring and summer of 2018, the president of the university met with over 100 employees in a series of small group lunch discussions focused around the development of a new strategic plan and the construction of a new planning process. In a related development and in conjunction with the name change from Rochester College to Rochester University, a committee representing faculty and staff from across the campus conducted a series of discussions throughout the fall semester oriented toward restating the mission, vision, and values of the institution - not to change the mission, but to state it more clearly and concisely and ensure that our vision and values are properly aligned with that mission. Finally, student focus groups and listening sessions were conducted as a part of this overall effort. The information gathered from all of these efforts, along with the data collected from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE,) and findings gathered from our programmed assessment of student learning have led to the development of the strategic initiatives presented and discussed in this document. The initiatives presented are designed to operationalize our mission and vision through our ongoing operations and strategic efforts. The Strategic Plan will be evaluated and revised annually, but will continue to project a basis for planning for the five succeeding years of the life of Rochester University.

MISSION - Rochester University prepares students for professional and personal success as they serve in God's world.

VISION – Rochester University will cultivate a diverse and welcoming community of learners among students, faculty, and staff for the sake of participating in God’s mission in the world. Learning together the way of Christ, we will serve in neighborhoods, businesses, and organizations with justice and mercy. Sharing life in the spirit of God, Rochester University graduates will contribute creativity, knowledge, and integrity to our rapidly changing world.

VALUES STATEMENT – Rochester University:

- (1) Welcomes students into a supportive community with personalized attention.
- (2) Calls students to discover and develop their unique gifts and abilities to participate in the redemptive work of God.
- (3) Engages students in a rigorous and holistic education for professional and personal success.

Academic Affairs at Rochester University will align processes and programs to the University’s newly implemented mission and key strategic initiatives. In union with the mission objective of student success, Academic Affairs will focus on strengthening academic program offerings, rigor, and support services to achieve the following priorities:

- Align offerings with mission and institutional strategies, taking carefully into account market research and workplace demand, along with assessment data.
- Improve institutional outcomes, including student persistence and graduation rates, student learning, and alumni employment.
- Equip students with the abilities to meet their goals and contribute to the area workforce.
- Create and solidify a culture of assessment and continuous improvement.

As an organization committed to the communities we serve and rooted in the teachings of Christ who values educating the whole person, RU will encourage students to discern their vocation through holistic general education experiences, and develop the creative talents that will serve themselves and others well in their chosen professions.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE I. - ADD KEY ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Strategy Leader – Provost

The addition of key academic programs positions RU to respond and contribute both to the economic and spiritual needs of the region. In order to establish firm sustainability for the long term. Rochester University must branch out and offer new academic programs that are consistent with its mission, within the resource capabilities and reach of the institution, and well-suited to the changing demands of the marketplace.

According to the Michigan Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives, the largest employment projection increases are in the following occupations:

- Architecture and Engineering (13.8%)
- Computer and Mathematical (14.2%)
- Community and Social Service (14.7%)
- Healthcare Practitioners (14.2%)
- Healthcare Support (22.7%)

The strategy and initiatives outlined below coordinate with these identified needs, along with our institutional mission and capabilities.

a. COMPUTER INFORMATION SYSTEMS (CIS):

According to the US Department of Labor, there is an expected 24% increase in the employment outlook of software developers through 2026, and a 13% expected increased need for employees in computer occupations. Two new program offerings position RU to respond to these needs. The BS-Information Systems is a traditional program with a focus on computer programming, and the BBA-Computer Information Systems is a baccalaureate completion program that will promote professional growth for students with a background in IT.

Responsibility – Dean, CPS; Director, School of Business

Timeline – Fall, 2019, Fall 2020

b. BSW:

RU has long offered a successful baccalaureate degree program in Behavioral Sciences with a concentration in Social Work, with the bulk of the curriculum taught by Psychology faculty and part-time and adjunct Social Work faculty members providing the courses in that

discipline. This program has attracted a good number of majors and its graduates have been very successful in admission to graduate programs in Social Work. However, the employment opportunities for graduates of the program are far too limited and as graduate programs in Social Work and other Behavioral Sciences become more competitive and specialized, the need for a full-fledged Bachelor of Social Work offering has become clear. According to the Michigan Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives, through 2026 there is 18.7% expected growth in healthcare social workers prepared at the master's level of education, and a 16.3% increase in the need for Social and Community Service managers educated at the baccalaureate level. Converting the existing track to a baccalaureate offering allows RU and students to contribute to decreasing the social determinants of health inequalities.

Responsibility – Provost; Dean, CAS

Timeline – Fall, 2021

c. MS IN PSYCHOLOGY:

Mental health problems have been associated with lower levels of human functioning. The growing body of literature demonstrates an increased need to address the needs of mental illness and mental healthcare. Building upon a strong BA Psychology program, where students are intentionally prepared for graduate work, the MS in Psychology will equip students to address the growing need for mental health services in the region. Psychology and Behavioral Sciences has the largest number of majors at RU outside of the School of Business (111 declared majors in fall, 2018). Additionally, our undergraduate psychology majors have achieved at a very high academic level, consistently having their senior capstone projects accepted for presentation at regional conferences (100% acceptance rate 6 years running.) A large proportion of these students pursue graduate studies at other institutions after they earn their bachelor's degree from RU. We have a strong, doctorally-prepared faculty in place and are well positioned to offer this program with a sizable internal pool of potential students. Reports, approvals, and a site visit from the HLC will be required before we can begin to offer or market the program.

Responsibility – Provost; Psychology Graduate Program Director

Timeline – Fall, 2021 (pending HLC approvals)

d. BUSINESS SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP/MARKETING/SALES:

The expected job growth for marketing professionals in Michigan is 24% through 2026. Building upon a strong BBA curriculum, the School of Business will explore the development of this degree program.

Responsibility – Director, School of Business

Timeline – Fall, 2020

e. HEALTH SCIENCES:

Given the expected job growth in Health Sciences and Health Care Management, RU will pursue a strategic partnership with Henry Ford College and the Medical Education Training Campus (METC) program connected with the US Armed Forces.

Responsibility – Provost

Timeline – Fall, 2020

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE II. – STRENGTHEN EXISTING ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Strategy Leader – Provost

To achieve its mission, Academic Affairs at RU will focus on talent development that prepares students to contribute to their professions and communities and will work toward developing programs that address work force needs. As RU has implemented a culture of assessment and incorporated both indirect and direct measures of student engagement, satisfaction, and learning, several key areas of concern have risen to the surface. Data obtained in our administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) highlighted the need for greater attention and resource allocation in some specific areas. RU students reported levels of engagement significantly below our peer institutions in the following areas:

1. Quantitative Reasoning
2. Collaborative Learning
3. Student-faculty Interaction
4. Supportive Environment
5. Overall academic rigor and emphasis

In addition to these findings, direct assessment of student learning through our academic program review processes has revealed some particular needs and relative deficiencies in some of our academic programs. Academic program review data are under ongoing analysis and review by the Board of Trustees, administration, and faculty. The administration cut and re-allocated approximately \$700,000 in our operations in order to address the concerns above in the 2018-2019 academic year. Key efforts now planned and being implemented, all oriented toward strengthening our programs, in response to identified weaknesses include:

a. EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDIES:

Addition of a full-time faculty member in Early Childhood Studies. This program had 147 declared majors in fall, and we will work assertively to better serve these students with full-time faculty resources.

Responsibility – Dean, CPS; Director, School of Education
Timeline – Fall, 2019

b. THEATRE:

The Theatre and Musical Theatre degree programs continue to grow in popularity (29 declared majors in fall, 2018.) These programs offer extensive “out of classroom” practical experience with numerous high-quality productions offered by the program each year. We will add a full-time Technical Director position, and a Special Programs Outreach Coordinator to this department in fall, 2019 in order to better serve the students working in these productions and to free up faculty in the department to be more focused on teaching, advising, student mentoring, and program recruitment.

Responsibility – Director, School of Humanities

Timeline – Fall, 2019

c. STUDENT ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES:

In order to help improve student success, particularly among the growing number of students admitted on academic alert, or with other significant challenges, we will add resources to student academic support. These resources include full implementation of the SmartThinking online tutoring application, a reimagined Writing Lab, and continued professional development for the Advising Center.

Responsibility – Director of Retention and Student Success;
Director of Advising and Vocational Services

Timeline – Spring, 2020

d. FACULTY DEVELOPMENT, SUPPORT, AND TRAINING:

– Grant funds will be pursued to help provide additional training for faculty. Additionally, the following efforts will be implemented:

- i. RU will affiliate with the Council of Independent Colleges’ NetVUE (Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education,) which provides training and support for faculty. (Spring, 2019, ongoing)
- ii. RU will continue its membership in the Michigan Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (MICU) after a multi-year absence from this organization. MICU provides

resources and development for both faculty and staff and the RU community will continue to avail themselves of these resources. (Spring, 2019, ongoing)

- iii. We will budget and implement a 2% across the board cost of living pay increase for faculty and staff. (August, 2019)
- iv. Increased grant-seeking will be enabled by the academic reorganization described below and the allocation of a full-time employee in the Office of Development for grant-writing. (Fall, 2019, ongoing)
- v. Academic reorganization – The move from RC to RU will bring with it a reorganization of our academic structure, moving to two colleges – The College of Arts and Sciences and The College of Professional Studies. Each of these colleges will be led by a full-time Dean. The end result of this move will be to reduce the overall number of high-level academic administrators and allow faculty members who had significant administrative duties under the old structure to now be more focused on teaching and student support. (Fall, 2019, ongoing)

Responsibility – Provost

Timeline – Beginning, fall 2019 and ongoing in response to continuing assessment.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE III. – ENRICH STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND RETENTION

Strategy Leader - President

The areas of Student Life, spiritual formation, vocation, mentoring, service learning, and student engagement must be addressed in response to the assessment data outlined in the previous section and as we move to continuously improve the work we do in the accomplishment of our mission. The following initiatives will be a priority for us in the service of that mission:

a. CENTER FOR STUDENT LIFE:

As we operationalize the university's mission, vision, and values our focus in the Center for Student Life will be to shape the student experience through programming centered around vocation and engagement. We believe that RU is uniquely situated in southeast Michigan to develop a distinct student experience around these core principles through co-curricular and extra-curricular programming. These programs will include the following:

1. **Campus Life Initiatives:** We will consider and implement new ways to engage today's student. The use of assessment data, including the NSSE, student panels, and surveys will continue to help us better understand the goals and needs of students in their RU experience. New CSL programs will be implemented targeting the specific needs of both commuters and residential students, as well students who are employed outside of the classroom.

Responsibility – Dean of Students

Timeline - Fall, 2019; fall, 2020

2. **Student Spaces:** RU lacks adequate spaces on campus for our students to spend time relaxing and interacting with their peers. This is especially true for our commuting students who often eat a meal, study, or relax in their cars. We will re-purpose and remodel campus spaces to improve these spaces. Efforts will include:
 - a. Remodel the CHILL as a student social space and keep it open later in the evening (fall, 2019 and ongoing)

- b. Remodel the Auditorium to better accommodate chapel, co-curricular meetings, and classroom need. We will begin this project in summer, 2019, and continue improvements through the 2020-2021 academic year.
- c. Complete the Lake Norcentra Park space including the Slater-Montgomery Family Chapel area, Recreation Gym, and Warrior Center exercise facility to maximize student use. (spring, 2021)
- d. Finish the east campus athletic fields (fall, 2022)

Responsibility – Senior Leadership Team
Timeline – As noted above

- 3. Student Care: All colleges and universities are facing challenges in ensuring that students receive adequate academic support services as well as support for their mental, emotional and physical well-being. We will improve our capability to meet these needs with multiple tactics, to include:
 - a. A solidified partnership with Neighborhood House, a non-profit human service organization that provides clothing, food, counseling and other resources. (Fall, 2019)
 - b. Pursuit of grant funding and clinical interns from area clinical training graduate programs for increased staffing of the MacKinnon Psychology and Counseling Clinic (Fall, 2020)

Responsibility – Dean of Students; Director, Psychology Clinic
Timeline – As noted above

- 4. Diversity Initiatives: A diversity blueprint was created to guide RU's efforts in this area in 2018. We continue to follow this blueprint as a guide for our efforts and strategies. Initiatives to be pursued during the next academic year and on an ongoing basis include:
 - a. Specialized Mentoring Program for students on academic alert, a group that disproportionately

represents ethnic minority and first-generation college students.

- b. Continued specialized Faculty and Staff professional development on diversity and inclusion issues
- c. CSL Programming, including film and discussion series

Responsibility – Dean of Students, SLT, Director of Retention and Student Success, Director of Intercultural and Spiritual Life

Timeline – Fall, 2019 and ongoing

b. FRESHMAN MENTORING PROGRAM:

A comprehensive and integrated new mentorship program for all incoming freshman and other students identified as at risk will begin in August of 2019. This cross-disciplinary program will include cohort training, small group meetings, and individual mentoring sessions led by faculty and staff. This program is designed to improve student persistence and provide a deeper opportunity for faculty and staff to embody their vocation in their work with students. (Fall, 2019; Spring, 2020)

Responsibility – Senior Vice-President

Timeline – Fall, 2019; Spring 2020

c. SPIRITUAL FORMATION:

In an effort to more deeply engage RU students with interdenominational approaches to spiritual formation, as well as help them to create deeper connections with area churches and spiritual communities, we will organize a President's Spiritual Formation Council, including area spiritual leaders. The communities led by these individuals will be encouraged to provide pastoral care, some chapel programming, as well as on-campus and community-based spiritual formation activities. The CSL, in partnership with the School of Theology and Ministry and under the supervision of the President, will

assess the quality and growth of this program beginning in the 2019-2020 academic year.

Responsibility – President

Timeline – 2019-2020 academic year, ongoing

d. CENTER OF VOCATION AND ENGAGEMENT/RU CALLED:

RU will establish The Center of Vocation and Engagement, which will provide guidance to all University stakeholders as we live into our mission, vision, and core values through the distinctives of Vocation and Engagement. The Center will be comprised of a group of Rochester University employees appointed by the President who will collectively:

1. Foster an environment of deepening commitment to and understanding of the distinctives of Vocation and Engagement on the campus of Rochester University and in the community.
2. Serve as a resource for all University stakeholders on matters regarding the incorporation of the distinctives of Vocation and Engagement into all academic, campus community, and extra-curricular programs of Rochester University.
3. Engage business and community leaders to partner with Rochester University for student internships, collaborative service projects, education on matters of diversity, vocation, and engagement, and investment in initiatives to improve our community and region.

Responsibility – VP Student Life, Dean of Students, Senior VP, Director, Center for Social Engagement

Timeline – Fall, 2019; Fall, 2020; Fall, 2021

e. ATHLETIC PROGRAMS:

RU has a strong tradition of educating outstanding student-athletes and the addition of athletic programs has consistently been a significant driver of enrollment growth. Most importantly, student success data suggest that RU's student-athletes overall have higher grade point averages and persist and graduate at a higher percentage than the rest of the student body. RU will complete the east campus athletic complex (see above and initiative 5) and add intercollegiate

teams in Esports, Men's Lacrosse, Men's Volleyball, and Men's and Women's Tennis.

Responsibility – Senior Vice-President, Director of Athletics
Timeline – Spring 2021, Spring 2022

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE IV. – ENHANCE MARKETING AND DEVELOP NEW STUDENT PROSPECT POOLS

Strategy Leader – Vice-President for Admissions and Marketing

Although Rochester College has served the kingdom of God and the surrounding community in profound and important ways for nearly 60 years, it remains largely a “hidden jewel” and an untold story in the larger marketplace of higher education in this region. The transition to Rochester University should help with this concern, but there a number of other strategic initiatives that will be undertaken to more widely and effectively tell our story and to establish new pools of prospective students.

a. BUILD ACADEMIC BRAND AND REPUTATION:

1. Develop new marketing materials under RU brand for Fall 2020 recruiting cycle beginning June 1, 2019, which will focus on the message of vocation and engagement, outcomes data, and career preparedness.
2. Messaging campaign for academic programming on social media and online advertising.
3. Targeted academic program recruiting, working with Directors/Deans in Business and Professional Studies, Nursing, and Humanities to execute specific strategies for recruiting to their academic programs.

Responsibility – VP of Admissions, Academic Deans
Timeline – Summer, 2019 and ongoing

b. RC2RU PROJECT: ROCHESTER COLLEGE BECOMES ROCHESTER UNIVERSITY

1. Complete changes in Rochester University visual identity. (December, 2019)
2. Launch “Rise Together, Stand Apart” Marketing campaign. (Spring, 2019)

3. Signage changes on campus and external signage (September, 2019)
4. Transition athletic program. (August, 2020)

Responsibility – VP of Marketing and Admissions
Timeline – August, 2020

c. FULLY INTEGRATED MARKETING PLAN:

RU's Admissions Office will fully utilize a CRM platform (SalesForce.) The capability for integration of email marketing, geo-targeting, social media, and data tracking capabilities will be completely implemented and executed. These new capabilities will impact student recruitment, public relations, digital marketing, and donor/alumni relations. Pardot marketing tool has been deployed. Phase one of the Salesforce implementation will be complete in May 2019.

Responsibility – VP of Marketing/Admissions
Timeline – May, 2019, January, 2020, ongoing.

d. ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS

1. RU will develop specific transfer alliances with area community colleges:
 - a. Partnership with Henry Ford CC "Success in 60" program for online BBA program was completed in Spring, 2019. Recruiting strategy and marketing plan will be executed in Summer and Fall, 2019.
 - b. Expanded offerings through the Macomb CC (MCC) University Center for Early Childhood Studies and Psychology, as well as a partnership with MCC in a Computer Information Systems BBA. We will also develop a Bachelor of Science degree completion program for Associate of Applied Sciences programs at Macomb CC. (January, 2021)
 - c. Shared leadership team meetings to discuss cooperative agreements and partnerships with Oakland Community College (OCC) administration will continue, with an eye toward creating specific partnerships in the following areas:
 - i. Nursing program transfer pathways
 - ii. Delivery of RU programs on OCC branch campuses
 - iii. "Reverse transfer" and technology offerings for RU students

- iv. Co-branding partnerships and a consortium agreement with OCC for residential students.

Responsibility – President, Provost

Timeline – Fall, 2020, 2021

e. IDENTIFY NEW STUDENT PROSPECT POOLS:

1. Partner with *Spry Ideas* to build a content and communication strategy for recruiting all prospective students using the Salesforce Pardot platform. (January 2021)
2. Select a new online student prospect search partner to replace the old method of buying tens of thousands of student prospect names from survey companies, which is ineffective and costly. (January 2020)
3. Continued focus on building relationships with area high school counselors by offering continuing education for them on the RU campus, as well completing visits to high schools, college fairs, community colleges, churches, and recruiting events. (2020 Academic year)
4. Establish new metrics to track the success of these new technologies and approaches. (Spring, 2020)

Responsibility – VP of Marketing/Admissions

Timeline – January, 2021

f. ALLIANCES TO SERVE DIVERSE AND UNDERSERVED STUDENT POPULATIONS:

1. Triumph Church – Develop a partnership with Pastor Solomon Kinloch and Triumph Church, multiple locations in Detroit and Metro area. (Fall, 2021)
2. Women of Tomorrow – Strengthen this partnership and increase the number of students connected with them who enroll at RU.
3. Gallup Thriving & Engaged Campus Resources
4. Malawi Project – Establish a formal relationship with the government of Malawi to bring students to RU.
5. Detroit Promise and Pontiac Promise – significantly increase the number of RU students from these initiatives.

6. Continue our growth trajectory in the recruitment of international student athletes.
7. Establish metrics to track success in each of these efforts.

Responsibility – VP of Marketing/Admissions, Provost
Timeline – Fall, 2022

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE V. – STRENGTHEN FINANCIAL INTEGRITY

Strategy Leader – Executive Vice-President

Rochester University has navigated some extreme financial challenges in the past 15 years. We have worked to build credibility with donors, upgrade our campus, solidify our standing with external accreditors and auditors, and operate with fiscal responsibility. These efforts will be redoubled in the years ahead and several specific strategies will be pursued. This strategic plan carefully integrates the elements of the financial plan that has been submitted to the Higher Learning Commission's Financial Panel. That detailed plan is at the core of the next three years of RU's strategic effort.

a. ESTABLISH SATISFACTORY DOE FINANCIAL RATIOS:

Using the metrics provided by the DOE Financial indicators as a guide, RU will –

1. Increase fixed assets, including execute a capital project – the completion of the east campus athletic complex. (May, 2022)
2. Increase cash reserves through operations (>\$1M)
3. Continue to operate with a positive financial margin (~4% of revenue)

Responsibility – Senior Leadership Team
Timeline – May, 2022

b. INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS:

1. Execute a detailed technology replacement and upgrade schedule, embedded within a comprehensive campus technology plan. (Fall, 2021)
2. Address campus deferred maintenance projects. (Ongoing)

Responsibility – Executive Vice-President

Timeline – Fall, 2021

c. EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION:

1. Implement annual cost-of living salary adjustments for employees (Beginning, Fall, 2019 and ongoing)
2. Provide at least one additional equity adjustment to faculty salaries (Fall, 2022)

Responsibility – President, Executive VP

Timeline – Fall, 2022

d. CAPITAL CAMPAIGN:

Formally launch Phase 2 of Capital Campaign for Rochester University – construction of a new academic and student services building, anticipated to cost \$5M.

Responsibility - President

Timeline – Spring, 2023