

Academic Implementation Plan, Fairmont State University

August 2026 through July 2029

Draft: May 6, 2026

Fairmont State University Mission Statement

Fairmont State University educates engaged citizens in a community distinguished by opportunity, growth, and achievement, delivering transformational impact for West Virginia and beyond.

AIP Support of University Mission With primary responsibility for the core educational function of the university, the Academic Affairs Division will deliver key components of Fairmont State's Strategic Plan. The plan aims to achieve a measurably stronger academic portfolio that is directly informed by regional stakeholders, improving program relevance and enhancing classroom experiences. Academic Affairs will focus on improving student academic support, with the goal of improving both student retention and persistence to graduation at the university. Faculty, administrators, and other staff will benefit from strengthened career training and support, improving the employee ecosystem. Together with its partners, Academic Affairs will seek to offer additional cultural events, while simultaneously improving both access to and attendance at such events. Finally, the plan seeks to improve community involvement through partner development and faculty engagement.

Lead Unit: Academic Affairs Division

Collaborating Units: Alumni Foundation; Athletics; Enrollment Management; Fairmont State Foundation; Finance and Administration; Human Resources; Information Technology; Institutional Research and Effectiveness; Student Affairs.

Framing Strategic Objectives through identified Focus Areas

The AIP Strategic Objectives were constructed from five Focus Areas, with each Focus Area being selected as elements of the Strategic Vision where the Academic Affairs Division has a leading responsibility. **Appendix A** lists the five Focus Areas and a set of conditions or attributes necessary to support growth in each area.

AIP Strategic Objectives, Key Results, and Mapping to Strategic Vision Goals and Priorities

AIP Objective 1: Academic Portfolio

By the end of fiscal year (FY) 2029¹, 100% of academic programs¹ will demonstrate alignment with regional workforce and/or community needs and support students' career aspirations.

AIP Key Result 1.1: Program to External Demand Alignment

By the end of FY2029, 100% of academic programs will document evidence of alignment with regional workforce and/or community needs through the five-year program review process.

AIP Key Result 1.2: Experiential Learning Participation

By end of FY2029, at least 85% of undergraduate programs will include structured experiential learning opportunities aligned with career preparation.

AIP Key Result 1.3: Career Preparedness

By the end of FY2029, at least 50% of academic programs will identify and communicate career pathways through experiential major maps¹, program webpages, or advising resources.

AIP Key Result 1.4: Lifelong Learning

By the end of FY2029, accessible, lifelong learning¹ opportunities, including certificates, stackable micro-credentials, professional development, and continuing education offerings result in a 50% increase in participation by alumni¹ and/or others who are seeking workforce upskilling or career advancement.

AIP Key Result 1.5: Quality of Instruction and Scholarship

By the end of FY2029, 100% of full-time, tenure-eligible, and adjunct faculty will be supported through a standardized institutional process that engages faculty in ongoing instructional and scholarly development.

¹ Defined in Appendix B

SO 1 Mapping to Strategic Vision Goals and Priorities

Aspirational Goal 1: Provide grounded educational experiences, fueled by personal relationships and holistic support, which contribute to all students' successful careers and lives.

SV Priority 1.1: Deliver outstanding academic programs in high-demand and foundational fields, with small classes taught by passionate and relatable faculty experts.

SV Priority 1.5: Prepare students for their careers and lives through comprehensive preparation, experiential learning, student employment, and civic rights and responsibilities programs.

Aspirational Goal 3: Create a vibrant campus, where everybody is welcomed, valued, and wants to spend time, which serves as a bedrock institution for North-Central West Virginia.

SV Priority 3.4: Cultivate alumni connections with the University, engagement as Falcons, and support of advancement efforts.

AIP Objective 2: Academic Student Success

By end of FY2029, a collaborative, well-resourced, and future-ready academic support ecosystem contributes to at least a 5% increase in student fall-to-fall persistence¹ and at least 3% improvement in academic progression rates across all programs.

AIP Key Result 2.1: Fall-to-Fall Persistence

Achieve at least a 5% increase in student persistence by the end of FY2029.

AIP Key Result 2.2: On-time graduation rates

Achieve at least a 3% increase in on-time (100% and 150%-time frame) graduation rates for all student populations by the end of FY2029.

AIP Key Result 2.3: Standardized institutional academic support practices and advising protocols.

Ensure that 100% of academic programs implement institutional academic support practices and advising protocols by the end of FY2029.

AIP Key Result 2.4: Funded professional development on pedagogy, technology and curricular innovation

By end of FY2029, achieve a faculty and academic staff completion rate of at least 85% will have 30 hours of funded, relevant professional development sessions related to pedagogy/andragogy, technology, and curricular innovation.

AIP Key Result 2.5: Review cycle for instructional and academic support practices

By the end of FY2029, a regular, periodic review cycle assesses all university-wide, institution-supported instructional and academic support practices. These reviews assess impact of support services on student progression; validate, refresh, revise, or re-envision these services; and evaluate workload and staffing models needed to sustain these services.

SO 2 Mapping to Strategic Vision Goals and Priorities

Aspirational Goal 1: Provide grounded educational experiences, fueled by personal relationships and holistic support, which contribute to all students' successful careers and lives.

SV Priority 1.2: Provide wrap-around student support services that promote physical and mental wellness, academic success, financial stability, and multiple paths to achieve individual goals.

SV Priority 1.4: Implement consistent, reliable, and predictable student processes that allow them to easily and successfully navigate their collegiate experience.

Aspirational Goal 2: Become the premier higher education employer in West Virginia for full-time, part-time, and student employees.

SV Priority 2.3: Develop supportive work conditions that foster employees' success and provide maximum flexibility.

SV Priority 2.5: Create a positive organizational culture in which employees' expertise is respected, collaboration is the norm, we don't start with "no," communication is ubiquitous, trust is universal, and adaptability is embraced.

AIP Objective 3: Work Environment

Engage at least 20% of employees in personalized career path support by end of FY2029.

AIP Key Result 3.1: Strengths-based awareness supporting teamwork

Improve by at least 20% employee self-awareness of how individual strengths and strengths of colleagues can increase teamwork and optimize institutional impact by end of FY2029.

AIP Key Result 3.2: Personalized career paths

Implement personalized career path plans for at least 25% of academic affairs full-time faculty and staff through the Center for Teaching and Learning Innovation (CTLI) by end of FY2029.

AIP Key Result 3.3: Faculty promotion, tenure, and review

By end of FY2029, ensure 100% alignment of faculty promotion, tenure, and review requirements with institutional annual reporting requirements within Watermark or other officially adopted system(s).

AIP Key Result 3.4: Satisfaction of training and development

Increase by at least 15% employee satisfaction of training and development opportunities by end of FY2029.

SO 3 Mapping to Strategic Vision Goals and Priorities

Aspirational Goal 2: Become the premier higher education employer in West Virginia for full-time, part-time, and student employees.

SV Priority 2.3: Develop supportive work conditions that foster employees' success and provide maximum flexibility.

SV Priority 2.4: Establish clear career paths, with professional development opportunities and support for every employee in all divisions.

SV Priority 2.5: Create a positive organizational culture in which employees' expertise is respected, collaboration is the norm, we don't start with "no," communication is ubiquitous, trust is universal, and adaptability is embraced.

AIP Objective 4: Cultural Enrichment

Enhance the reach and effectiveness of on-campus cultural programming and resources by 10% by end of FY2029.

AIP Key Result 4.1: Increase attendance

Increase attendance at events by 10% by end of FY2029, according to the baseline established by end of FY2027.

AIP Key Result 4.2: Increase community satisfaction

Increase attendee satisfaction with cultural enrichment opportunities by 10% by end of FY2029, according to the baseline established by end of FY2027.

AIP Key Result 4.3: Facilities safe and accessible

100% of campus cultural facilities will be safe and accessible by end of FY2029.

SO 4 Mapping to Strategic Vision Goals and Priorities

Aspirational Goal 3: Create a vibrant campus, where everybody is welcomed, valued, and wants to spend time, which serves as a bedrock institution for North-Central West Virginia.

SV Priority 3.1: Maintain beautiful, safe, accessible, and up-to-date facilities, with abundant intellectual, cultural, and athletic opportunities that attract both university and community members.

SV Priority 3.5: Serve as stewards of place, actively contributing to the preservation and celebration of Central Appalachian culture.

AIP Objective 5: Regional Service

Increase high quality community engagement by at least 20% through the division of academic affairs as measured in Master Academic Plan Map¹ (MAP-Map) by end of FY2029.

AIP Key Result 5.1: Faculty participation

Increase faculty participation in documented community engagement by at least 10% over baseline, supported by a centralized system for tracking and assessing activities such as the Annual Faculty Reviews (AFRs). (FY2029)

AIP Key Result 5.2: Alignment between academic programs and community needs

At least 10% of Academic Affairs programs will strengthen alignment between academic programs and community needs by formally engaging with a sustainable community advisory board, supported by the establishment and population of the board by end of FY2029.

AIP Key Result 5.3: Community Engagement

By end of FY2029, at least 30% of faculty community engagement efforts will meet academic affairs community of engagement scholarship standards¹.

AIP Key Result 5.4: Faculty-led mentoring and professional development on community engagement

By end of FY2028, increase faculty participation by at least 20% across colleges in a faculty-led mentoring and professional development program focused on community engaged teaching, research, and service.

AIP Key Result 5.5: Sustainable financial and labor plan.

Implement a sustainable financial and labor plan supporting faculty community engagement efforts by end of FY2029.

SO 5 Mapping to Strategic Vision Goals and Priorities

Aspirational Goal 3: Create a vibrant campus, where everybody is welcomed, valued, and wants to spend time, which serves as a bedrock institution for North-Central West Virginia.

SV Priority 3.3: Promote the civic engagement of students, faculty, and staff with a broad range of community organizations, contributing their expertise while learning from their experience

AIP Appendix A: Focus Areas and Conditions or Attributes

Necessary to Support Growth in Each Area

Focus Area 1. Academic Portfolio: Deliver strong academic programs that align with regional societal and career needs and aspirations. Relates to AIP SO 1.

Focus Area 2. Academic Student Success: Advance student success by creating a clear, consistent, equitable, and proactive academic experience that supports persistence, progression, and timely degree completion across all student populations and learning modalities. Relates to AIP SO 2.

Advancing Focus Areas and Strategic Objectives 1 & 2 Requires:

- Academic program quality and coherence
- Clear, purposeful, and effective academic support services and student processes
- Career preparation and workforce readiness
- Active, engaged industry advisory councils
- Clear and consistent ethical and academic guidance across programs
- Adequate resources (e.g., funding, professional travel, instructional support, additional staff for new initiatives)
- Student and faculty readiness for evolving curricular and technological demands
- Strategic use of market research and data to guide program design
- Transparency around facilities, space availability, and program capacity
- Cross-departmental collaboration to strengthen coherence and innovation
- Leveraging alumni as a resource
- Time for innovation

Focus Area 3. Work Environment: Foster rewarding, equitable, supportive, and sustainable work conditions. In collaboration with other units within the university, Academic Affairs will develop, advance, and support employment and work conditions that foster equity, innovation, trust, and professional growth for faculty and staff. Relates to AIP SO 3.

Advancing Focus Area and Strategic Objective 3 Requires:

- Clarity and transparency around promotion, tenure, workload, and compensation
- Healthy and sustainable workloads
- Clear career pathways and mentorship
- Respect for professional expertise and shared governance
- Trust and psychological safety that allow faculty and staff to take appropriate risks
- Measurable, discipline-appropriate outcomes for success, developed collaboratively
- Open and improved communication
- Respect for professional expertise and realistic understanding of colleague capacity
- Intentional faculty mentorship and support structures
- Financial results that support competitive compensation for all employees

Focus Area 4. Cultural Enrichment: Offer intellectual and cultural opportunities and advance the university's role as a regional steward of place. Relates to AIP SO 4.

Focus Area 5. Regional Service: Strengthen Fairmont State's role as an engaged public university by integrating civic engagement into teaching, learning, scholarship, and service, and by fostering sustained partnerships with a broad range of community organizations. Academic Affairs will partner with communities and organizations to address challenges and uplift strengths and characteristics of the region we serve. Relates to AIP SO 5.

Advancing Focus Areas and Strategic Objectives 4 & 5 Requires:

- Civic and community-engaged learning
- Valuing education for public good, beyond job placement
- Service learning and experiential education
- Strong, sustained relationships with community stakeholders and organizations
- A shared and consistent understanding of civic engagement across programs
- Institutional support for service learning and community-based experiences
- Recognition of innovative practices already occurring within academic units
- Ongoing assessment of community needs and gaps
- Commitment to service as a core educational value, not solely an outcome-driven activity

AIP Appendix B: Definitions

(In progress)

Academic credit/non-credit offering: defined as any course, program, minor, certificate, or microcredential that is offered by the university that could be for credit (transcriptable) or non-credit (badge earning).

Academic portfolio: defined as the collection of degree program offerings (which include concentrations, areas of emphasis, tracks, and teaching specializations), minor programs, microcredential (both credit and non-credit), Undergraduate and graduate certificate programs

Academic program: A degree program is defined by the combination of its degree designation (e.g., Bachelor of Arts) and a program title that represents the overarching area of study (e.g., English, History, Graphic Arts). Degree programs are approved by the institutional Board of Governors (BOG) and Higher Learning Commission and listed on the official West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission inventory of degree programs. The degree program completed would be listed on the student's diploma (from the University's Academic Definitions page).

Alumni: AIP is taking a broad perspective of Alumni. This definition considers any student who has taken a course at Fairmont State University. In this definition, an alum may not have completed a degree program at FSU (or anywhere).

Community of engagement scholarship standards: In relation to the Boyer's model, these standards connect university resources with community-engaged partnerships that produce, apply and integrate knowledge for the public good.

Experiential learning: In example, internships, clinical experiences, practicums, undergraduate research, co-op experiences, or applied projects.

Experiential Major Maps (EMM): EMM take the academic maps currently used by Fairmont State and magnify the career and academic skills information provided. EMM should provide students with information on what skills they can expect to master in their first year, middle years and final years including gaining experience in their career. See Lakehead University for an example EMM.

Fall-to-fall persistence: defined as students enrolling in courses in fall semester and persisting to enroll in the following fall semester in the AIP.

Fiscal Year 2029: defined as the budget year beginning on July 1, 2028, and ending on June 30, 2029. This allows for the AIP to cover more than the traditional academic year for faculty which is August-May.

Lifelong learning: defined as students with some college credit seeking more formal learning whether that be in a microcredential, certificate or graduate degree.

Master Academic Plan map (MAP-map): A GIS (geographical information system) database of information demonstrating and advancing connections between FSU's academic programs and regional needs, characteristics, and initiatives.

M.A.P is an acronym that stands for Master Academic Portfolio. 'Map' acts as a proxy for a Geographic Information System (GIS) which collects geographic information into a centralized location aware database, which is often articulated as a 'map'. The M.A.P-Map initiative is to join the academic knowledge and service available at Fairmont State University (M.A.P) to the region in which Fairmont State University exists (Map). The intent is to apply the skills and knowledge available at Fairmont State University to the region's challenges and characteristics. Moreover, it further provides a feedback mechanism such that the region can help inform faculty on regional opportunities.

Regional: For the purposes of this document, regional' is based within a geographic context. Regional has a scalar context and relates to a bigger geographic region. However, 'region' is not neatly defined by universally agreed upon boundaries. Consider Fairmont State University exists within the north central subregion of West Virginia. However, it also exists within a subregion of Appalachia, commonly called North Central Appalachia, including the majority of West Virginia and most of southeastern Ohio. However, the institution has close proximity to the Northern Appalachia region, such as eastern Ohio, the entirety of Pennsylvania, and the western portion of Maryland. The most important geographic principle is that near things are more closely related than things further apart. Therefore, region' starts at Fairmont State University and radiates outward from that centroid to encompass geographic areas as operationally useful to this document. (First draft definition by Frank LaFone)