

Planning Assumptions for Francis Marion University

1. Academic Focus

Francis Marion University is a comprehensive public institution offering students an advanced education in academic disciplines and professions based on a strong liberal arts foundation.

2. Student Body

While maintaining its commitment to educating students from the Pee Dee region, Francis Marion University must incrementally increase its enrollment from other areas of South Carolina, as well as nationally and internationally.

3. Resources

Appreciable resource growth for Francis Marion University will be dependent on (1) increasing student enrollment and retention, and (2) increasing financial support from the private sector.

4. Technology

Francis Marion University must develop and implement an institution-wide technology plan that addresses the future technology needs of students, faculty, staff and administrative personnel, and maintain the efficacy of existing technology systems.

5. Image

Francis Marion University must represent itself to others as an institution that provides quality educational opportunities for its constituencies and is committed to academic rigor through excellence in teaching, research, and service.

6. Athletics

Francis Marion University's athletic programs must garner greater community and campus interest while increasing reliance upon community resources. Francis Marion will maintain competitive athletic programs to benefit the student athlete.

7. Diversity

Francis Marion University must ensure the diversity of its students and achieve greater diversity in the hiring and promotion of faculty and staff.

8. Faculty, Staff and Administrative Development

Recognizing that Francis Marion University's faculty and staff are its most important and enduring assets, the University must cultivate the career growth and development of its employees, ensuring appropriate salary compensation and benefits, as well as adequate funding for research and development.

9. Physical Campus

Francis Marion University must maintain and expand its physical facilities to preserve their beauty and to enhance the viability and environmental sustainability of the campus.

10. Community Relations

Francis Marion University must strive to identify, understand and accommodate the community and foster collaboration to achieve University and community growth.

11. Campus Governance

Francis Marion University's future success depends upon the cooperation and cohesion of the faculty, staff, administration and students in collectively addressing needs and supporting its mission.

12. Student Development

Francis Marion University will maintain and expand a variety of student support services, as well as provide opportunities for students to develop interpersonal and leadership skills.

13. Arts and Culture

Francis Marion University will enrich the artistic and cultural experiences of its students and the surrounding community.

Francis Marion University Strategic Plan¹

University Objectives (in Bold) with Strategies (non Bold) aligned with Planning Assumptions (numbered in italics):

- I. **Maintain and expand quality academic programs and maintain academic accreditations as indicators of program quality.** *1., 5., 10., 11.*
 - a. Continue the University Accreditation Committee's supervision of accreditation efforts.
 - b. Regularly evaluate the University's general education program.
 - c. Study the feasibility of additional programs.
 - d. Familiarize faculty with accreditation standards and procedures.
 - e. Continue to improve self-study reporting and documentation.

 - II. **Improve student academic success rates.** *1., 2., 5., 12.*
 - a. Collaborate with state technical colleges and engage in articulation agreements to ensure that transfer courses, which meet FMU general education requirements, are comparable to FMU courses.
 - b. Coordinate the existing efforts of academic areas to work with local schools.
 - i. Involve academic disciplines in enhancement of school instruction
 - ii. Encourage qualified liberal arts students to pursue secondary education careers.
 - iii. Participate in statewide efforts to align high school and university curriculums.
 - c. Establish formal systems designed to improve graduation rates
 - i. Raise overall admission standards while continuing to ensure educational access for students in the Pee Dee.
 - ii. Expand tutoring and mentoring services.
 - iii. Expand services which promote academic success.
 - d. Engage in practices that support high acceptance rates into professional schools and graduate programs.
 - e. Provide for the needs of international students.

 - III. **Continue to build an excellent faculty.** *8., 5., 7., 11.*
 - a. Continue to recruit faculty with excellent teaching skills and scholarly potential.
 - b. Strive to recruit faculty from underrepresented populations.
 - c. Encourage FMU students from underrepresented populations to return to Francis Marion in a teaching capacity.
 - d. Continue the support/mentor system for new faculty.
 - e. The university will continue efforts to invest substantially in faculty and staff compensation, benefits and professional development.
 - f. Continue to address salary compression and discrepancies in compensation.
 - g. Encourage FMU faculty to participate in leadership-building initiatives.

 - IV. **Increase opportunities for all students and faculty to become aware of multicultural and global issues and to have international educational opportunities.** *1., 2., 8., 12.*
 - a. Develop educational opportunities in other countries.
 - b. Enhance curriculum that deals with international issues.
 - c. Promote and expand international exchange programs.
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d. Increase interaction between U.S. and international students.

V. **Develop the technology on campus to address future needs of students, faculty, staff and administrators.** *4., 8., 12.*

- a. Provide students with more opportunities to develop technological skills for a global economy.
- b. Develop and support the technology resources of the campus.
- c. Develop infrastructure for planning and developing online and hybrid courses.

VI. **Maintain investments in information resources and educational support services.** *4., 12.*

- a. Continue adequate funding for and updating of library resources.
- b. Continue adequate funding for and updating of support units on campus such as the Media Center, Writing Center, Tutoring Center, etc.

VII. **Increase student enrollment and retention** *1., 2., 3., 10., 12., 13.*

- a. Work with Pee Dee area high schools to ensure that graduates are prepared for higher education.
 - i. Swamp Fox Writing Project and Course Alignment projects make specific curricular connections between area teachers and FMU professors.
 - ii. Center of Excellence programs for teachers of children of poverty enhance understanding of student performances.
- b. Expand curricular offerings to non-traditional students and retirees and consider alternative delivery systems that might be more attractive to these groups.
- c. Ensure affordability of tuition and fees in order to maintain the University's focus on access and equity.
- d. Provide a vibrant campus life through a variety of artistic, cultural and recreational events.
- e. Identify at-risk students and provide strategies for their increased success.
- f. Increase number of University Life offerings and other support programs such as GearUp in order to improve students' academic success.
- g. Offer community outreach opportunities that will benefit area residents such as FMU's Arch Program and the Non-Profit Leadership Initiative.
- h. Continue to develop our marketing efforts to include our web presence.
- i. Continue on-campus scholarship interviews with faculty and staff members.

VIII. **Increase external funding.** *1., 3., 6., 8., 13.*

- a. Expand scholarship opportunities for top academic students.
- b. Explore external funding opportunities for faculty research and development.
 - i. Enhance a proactive Grants Office.
 - ii. Coordinate new funding efforts and initiatives across disciplines.
- c. Increase funding for the Francis Marion University Foundation.
- d. Solicit more support and assistance from alumni while strengthening their ties to the University.

IX. **Increase opportunities for student involvement within business, governmental, and public organizations.** *10., 12., 13.*

- a. Support efforts by faculty who plan, arrange, and supervise internships and other non-traditional educational opportunities.
- b. Explore cooperative work-study programs within the community.

X. **Emphasize career development and job placement services for all students of the University.** *2., 10., 12.*

- a. Improve effectiveness of current programs.
 - b. Develop formal job placement relationships with local business, governmental and public organizations.
 - c. Engage with businesses to identify and meet their employment and consulting needs.
 - d. Work with the Alumni Office and academic departments to develop a systematic alumni tracking system.
- XI. **Raise the quality, variety, and visibility of athletic, artistic, cultural, and other community-supported programs. 5., 6., 7., 10., 13.**
- a. Increase the attendance at home sports events, as well as at artistic and cultural events in the FMU Performing Arts Center and on campus.
 - b. Continue to explore opportunities for recruiting coaches from underrepresented populations.
 - c. Maintain and publicize high academic performance by students involved in these activities.
 - d. Provide support for artistic and cultural endeavors.
- XII. **Develop the physical facilities, natural resources and infrastructure of the campus. 9.**
- a. Maintain attractive on-campus housing.
 - b. Continue to develop and enhance the campus in a manner that will increase student involvement in campus life.
 - c. Engage in renovation, construction and modification of campus facilities including Founders Hall and Cauthen Educational Media Center.
 - d. Encourage environmental sustainability.
- XIII. **Enhance the University's image through an aggressive, focused marketing campaign. 2., 5., 10., 11., 13**
- a. Maintain and improve national status in terms of accreditation, success of graduates and faculty achievement.
 - b. Publicize the advantages of liberal arts, business, education, and professional degrees.
 - c. Increase publicity of the successes of the University's students, alumni and faculty.
 - d. Cooperate with industrial, business, healthcare and community non-profit organizations to understand and respond to their needs and concerns.
 - e. Continue to plan and market campus activities so as to attract the public to the University's campus.
 - f. Continue to plan and market off-campus events to attract interest in FMU.

Approved by the FMU Faculty, October 18, 2012

Ratified by FMU Board of Trustees, November 9, 2012