

UA ACTION PLAN

(2024-2026)

PROMISE I: Well-Being & Stewardship

To cultivate a culture and community where everyone can flourish and be responsible stewards of the University's resources and infrastructure.

1. Strategically grow and invest the University's financial resources and enhance our operational capabilities and infrastructure.

- a. Grow strategic and innovative partnerships and services that will diversify, expand and fortify the University's revenue-generation streams and reduce the University's debt burden.
- b. Continue to modernize and optimize the University's infrastructure, including achieving full implementation of Workday Student® and optimizing integration of Slate and Stellic.
- c. Intentionally and authentically connect with prospective students to increase FAFSA submissions and allow UA to offer the most competitive aid package.

2. Empower University employees and students to support one another.

- a. Inventory and analyze our existing systems and programs to best support the holistic well-being of our people.
- b. Leverage technology to connect students and employees with available resources.
- c. Optimize our employee engagement, professional development and performance management programs by leveraging Workday.
- d. Grow the skills of our workforce by assessing skills demand versus supply and developing training programs to bridge gaps.

PROMISE II: Academic Opportunity

To establish The University of Akron as a lifelong learning partner, recognizing and valuing diverse learning experiences and combining traditional classroom experiences with innovative approaches.

1. Focus on pathways that enhance lifelong learning.

- a. Leverage credit for prior learning (CPL) to reward real-world experience and recruit non-traditional degree-seeking students.
- b. Implement a comprehensive adult learner strategy that positions UA as the first choice for adults seeking lifelong learning.
- c. Offer flexibility and programming in course delivery via optimized pathways.
- d. Reduce time to a degree by exploring 3-year degree options.

2. Use skills-based stacking credentials to strengthen the connections between the classroom, the community and industry.

- a. Offer students the chance to earn a degree alongside an in-demand industry certificate through the Plus+ Path.
- b. Optimize enrollment processes to allow students to enroll in certificate programs directly, regardless of degree-seeking status.
- c. Explore the viability of creating stackable certificates as a pathway to degree completion and micro-credentialing within courses and programs to help students create a “skills wallet” to increase employability.

3. Become the primary provider of corporate, professional and traditional higher education to businesses in our region, creating new revenue opportunities.

- a. Implement a comprehensive employer relationship strategy in both the credit and noncredit space.
- b. Build a marketing plan for this audience throughout University communications, build an “employer” lens area of website with custom media and messaging.

PROMISE III: Inclusive Excellence and Belonging

To increase our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

1. Enhance students’ sense of belonging and their ability to work and live in a complex global environment.

- a. Establish baseline data on student engagement and belonging via administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).
- b. Expand opportunities for student engagement, including evaluating and enhancing the peer mentoring process and increasing the percentage of first-year students participating in learning communities.
- c. Support Undergraduate Student Government (USG) and Graduate Student Government (GSG) in efforts to enhance belonging by elevating the campus experience and sharing UA’s history and traditions.

2. Foster an inclusive and equitable educational and work environment.

- a. Revise academic policies to support student success.
- b. Leverage ‘Complete College America’ partnership to further close institutional performance gaps with a focus on developmental education, online learning, institutional research and four-year guided pathways.
- c. Improve training for employee awareness of and ability to engage with a broad variety of perspectives.

PROMISE IV: Research & Innovation

To nurture research and innovation as the anchor public urban research university in Northeast Ohio.

1. Promote and empower faculty research across the University.

- a. Use storytelling to share and instill a culture of research excellence.
- b. Support faculty in identifying and securing external grants by implementing new grants management and human subjects research software platforms.
- c. Support applied scholarly engagement by encouraging the faculty to review and revise Retention, Tenure, and Promotion (RTP) and merit documents.
- d. Support faculty in funding agency compliance by leveraging open access platforms.

2. Be a leader in the region's innovation economy.

- a. Revitalize the University of Akron Research Foundation as the vehicle for innovation at UA.
- b. Facilitate mutually beneficial partnerships between regional businesses and University stakeholders.
- c. Increase patents, entrepreneurship, technology transfer and licensing agreements.
- d. Work with partners in the polymer cluster to deliver top-flight research around sustainable polymers as articulated in the recent designation of Akron as a Tech Hub.

PROMISE V: Community and Connections

To proactively collaborate with our communities as a responsive and reliable partner to identify and meet the needs of the region and intentionally contribute to help economic and workforce development, and civic life flourish.

1. Map and grow community engagement across the institution.

- a. Achieve use of Collaboratory in at least 50% of academic units.
- b. Establish a baseline percentage of students who successfully complete a community-based curricular learning experience using a course tagging system.
- c. Develop institutional student learning outcomes for community and civic engagement.
- d. Enhance institutional pathways that support applied scholarly engagement for the benefit of our communities.

2. Grow our cultural corridor in the surrounding region through the arts and by connecting with downtown Akron.

- a. Leverage existing UA strengths to enhance relationship(s) with the City (of Akron) and partners (Greater Akron Chamber, APS, County of Summit, Downtown Akron Partnership).
- b. Increase opportunities for curricular and co-curricular engagement that intentionally bring UA and students to downtown and the community to campus.
- c. Grow the AkronArts initiative by continuing to assess and advance existing programs, facilities and relationships and create new ones.
- d. Engage stakeholders (students, faculty, staff, downtown stakeholders and the public) in conversations about the mix of uses in the building, programming, and design of the Knight Building project.