

UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

Division of Student Affairs

# Strategic Plan



# 2023-2028



The University of Mississippi has transformed the lives of many since 1848 and, as Mississippi's flagship institution, is proud to serve not only our community and state, but also the nation and beyond.

**Empower Now: Accelerating Discovery, Growth and Success** is the University of Mississippi's strategic plan. Launched in fall 2022, the plan reinforces the institution's commitment to equity and excellence.

The Division of Student Affairs shares the university's commitment to equity and excellence and strives to connect the work we do with the academic mission of the university. We work to identify pathways of student learning and success, make a difference in the lives of students, and provide a culture of care and support for all.

The Division of Student Affairs strategic plan was a collaborative effort derived from the thoughts and voices of the Ole Miss community. We invited stakeholders including Student Affairs staff, students, and a wide array of campus and community partners to be part of a bottom-up strategic planning process. Our strategic planning team, composed of staff, faculty and students, conducted listening sessions, meetings and surveys to gain insight and feedback from our campus community.

The team spent countless hours working to properly articulate who we are and who we want to be. I am pleased to present this new strategic plan that shares our new mission, vision, core values and what these mean for the Division of Student Affairs. As a result of this plan, you will see positive results in student success as evidenced by our key performance indicators.

I am excited about this plan and look forward to a bright future.



Charlotte Pegues  
*Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs*

THINGS FROM VICE CHANCELLOR PEGUES

## ABOUT THE

# University of Mississippi

The University of Mississippi, affectionately known as Ole Miss, is Mississippi's flagship university and is a member of the elite group of R1: Doctoral Universities – Highest Research Activity by the Carnegie Classification. Chartered in 1844 by the Mississippi Legislature, Ole Miss has a long history of producing leaders in public service, business, academics and the professions. Its 16 academic divisions include a major medical school; nationally recognized schools of accountancy, law and pharmacy; and an Honors College acclaimed for a blend of academic rigor, experiential learning and opportunities for community action. Acclaimed as one of the most beautiful campuses in the country, the University of Mississippi provides superior academic experiences that provide each graduate with the background necessary for a lifetime of scholastic, social and professional growth.

Ole Miss continues to attract the best and brightest students from all 82 of the state's counties and 85 countries around the world. In fall 2022, 22,967 students enrolled across the University of Mississippi's seven campuses, powered by a freshman class of 4,480, the largest in university history. Students and families across Mississippi and around the country are coming to Oxford in record numbers for academic excellence, a vibrant campus experience and life-changing opportunities. Student retention hit an all-time high in 2022 with 89.3% of last year's first-time students continuing their studies. The climbing retention rate offers clear evidence of the university's continued focus on providing a supportive academic environment for its students.

**Mission.** As Mississippi's first comprehensive public university and academic medical center, the University of Mississippi transforms lives, communities and the world by providing opportunities for the people of Mississippi and beyond through excellence in learning, discovery, health care and engagement.

**Vision.** The University of Mississippi aspires to be a preeminent public international research university and a leading force for innovation and opportunity in Mississippi, the United States and the world.

The University of Mississippi embraces its public flagship mission of inspiring and educating our diverse and vibrant community where all individuals are able to intellectually, socially and culturally thrive through transformative experiences on our campus and beyond.







# ABOUT THE DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

The Division of Student Affairs is essential to the mission of the University of Mississippi of “transforming lives, communities and the world by providing opportunities for the people of Mississippi and beyond through excellence in learning, discovery, health care and engagement.” Our talented team of professionals is committed to providing students at the University of Mississippi with a rich and impactful learning experience where they find purpose, support, a sense of belonging, and engage in experiences that equip and prepare them for success throughout their college and post-college experiences.

## Introduction to the Strategic Plan

Strategic planning processes are always an opportunity to reflect on what we do well, what we need to improve and future pathways to consider. Ultimately, a strategic plan should align with larger university strategic priorities. The Division of Student Affairs initiated a strategic-planning process in the summer of 2021, and the goal of the Student Affairs Strategic Planning Committee consisted of creating and implementing a transparent, collaborative planning process from the beginning, informed by feedback, the environment and data, that engaged a broad base of Student Affairs stakeholders and articulated directions that would guide Student Affairs into the future.

This strategic plan presents a student-centered vision of excellence for the future of Student Affairs. We consider this plan to be a guiding tool for facilitating student success and well-being, data-driven decision making, continuous collaboration and alignment with the strategic priorities of the University of Mississippi. The team that comprises the Division of Student Affairs plays a critical role in the success of students and will be instrumental in advancing the priorities of this plan.



The Division of Student Affairs at the University of Mississippi comprises 16 units with some 224 team members across the division in the following departments:

- Campus Recreation
- Career Center
- Center for Student Success and First-Year Experience
- Fraternity & Sorority Life
- Gertrude C. Ford Ole Miss Student Union
- Jackie and Faser Triplett Center for AOD Research
- Luckyday Scholars Program
- Office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct
- Student Disability Services
- Student Housing
- U Matter: Student Support & Advocacy
- University Counseling Center
- University Health Services
- University Police & Campus Safety
- William Magee Center for AOD & Wellness Education
- William Magee Institute for Student Wellbeing

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## OUR COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

A Strategic Planning Committee consisting of a broad representation of leaders from Student Affairs, Academic Affairs and the student body was convened by Vice Chancellor Charlotte Pegues in summer 2022. Developing this comprehensive strategic plan was a collective effort that involved several steps. First, we designed a process inclusive of feedback and perspectives from a wide array of campus partners to gain maximal participation and feedback. Second, a discovery phase was launched from August through December 2022, which gathered feedback on a number of topical areas including notions of student success, what the division did well and needed to improve upon, helpful and unhelpful policies and programs, student engagement opportunities, and looking down the road toward our future.

We utilized surveys, focus groups and individual meetings to gather information and analyze perceptions, comments and trends to be incorporated into a set of divisional priorities that represented the future direction of the division and aligned with the University of Mississippi's strategic priorities. The final step occurred during spring 2023 in which the committee reviewed all feedback and drafted a set of strategic priorities and objectives. Several iterations were developed that ultimately led to this transformational five-year strategic plan.

This living, guiding document represents a path toward enhancing the university's educational mission, ensuring the success of Ole Miss students and advancing the direction of the division.

# EGIC

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Strategic goals stem from the mission of the university and are operationalized in the context of Student Affairs' vision, mission and core values, and provide long-term guidance for the division. These strategic goals were designed with several things in mind and include measures designed to advance student learning and engagement, promote health and well-being, further develop its network of strategic partnerships, enhance communication across the campus, and be a responsive organization and premier leader in the field of student affairs. The objectives associated with each goal reflect a broad array of student success initiatives, as well as a range of operational excellence initiatives in keeping with the standards of excellence in our field and contribute to the overall advancement of the goals. The six strategic goals include:

### GOAL ONE

**Academic  
Excellence  
and Student  
Engagement**

### GOAL TWO

**Health and  
Well-being**

### GOAL THREE

**Strategic  
Communication**

### GOAL FOUR

**Strategic  
Partnerships**

### GOAL FIVE

**Organizational  
Effectiveness**

### GOAL SIX

**Divisional  
Excellence**

## Strategic Goal One:

### STIMULATE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE and STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

*(Supports Empower Now strategic priorities 1, 2, 4, 7)*

Work purposively to enrich the student experience at Ole Miss by advancing student-centered programs and services that contribute to positive relationships, improved retention and graduation rates, academic success and a vibrant, engaged campus experience.

#### OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 Articulate and integrate the role that departments play in the recruitment of students.
- 1.2 Create connections within departments that reinforce faculty and student engagement.
- 1.3 Pursue strategies through campus partnerships to address financial barriers that impede student success and graduation.
- 1.4 Collect and evaluate retention and persistence information, design strategies to enhance students' continued enrollment, and share ideas for continuous improvement.
- 1.5 Identify promising practices that prepare students for postgraduation success and employability, graduate school readiness, and lifelong success in a diverse world.
  - Identify partnerships with the Graduate School, local community and Career Services that support graduate assistant and graduate student success and skill development.
  - Utilize workshops, job placement resources, internships and networking opportunities to enhance student skills and connections.
- 1.6 Pursue inclusive community building strategies that support campus populations less likely or able to engage in campus events and programs.
- 1.7 Promote and support student leadership and engagement opportunities toward assisting students in creating positive change in their communities.
- 1.8 Implement High Impact Practices and evidence-based strategies that support student learning, engagement and persistence.





## Strategic Goal Two: NURTURE HEALTH & WELL-BEING

*(Supports Empower Now strategic priority 1)*

Nurture a comprehensive campus environment that infuses holistic well-being and healthy behaviors into everyday operations where healthy students and community members flourish.

### OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 Cultivate an environment of well-being at Ole Miss that empowers the campus community to establish and sustain healthy behaviors.
  - Increase education, access and connections to campus well-being resources.
  - Collaborate with University Health Services to effectively meet the needs of an increasing student population.
  - Develop strategies to promote healthy habits and encourage students and staff to live balanced lives.
  - Encourage and share benefits of walking meetings throughout the division.
  - Create a wellness working group to develop and coordinate well-being initiatives.
  - Identify and implement evidence-based programs that promote healthy behaviors by utilizing the Okanagan Charter, the Healthier Campus Initiative, and the Partnership for a Healthier America.
- 2.2 Become a premier model for responding to students' basic needs through strategies that create a culture of care and support.
  - Identify areas where students' access to basic needs resources can be enhanced.
  - Implement strategies to address financial insecurity.
  - Increase campus awareness of college basic needs issues and resources at Ole Miss.
  - Launch a survey of basic needs to gather data on food, housing and financial insecurity.
  - Explore the development of a wellness living-learning community.
- 2.3 Enhance mental health support and well-being across the Ole Miss community through supporting The Chancellor's GROVE Well-Being Initiative.
  - Utilize and enhance campus partnerships with the William Magee Institute.
  - Expand peer-based education resources and networks.
  - Incorporate Mental Health First Aid training to enhance capacity.

## Strategic Goal Three:

### ENHANCE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

*(Supports Empower Now strategic priorities 1, 9)*

Develop an integrated communication plan that shares important information, builds campus partnerships, increases visibility and elevates our brand as a division.

#### OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 Create an awareness of campus and divisional resources for internal and external partners that builds strong, lasting partnerships.
- Redesign and enhance the Student Affairs website including pages for parents, well-being, basic needs and a divisional FAQ for incoming students.
  - Regularly communicate Student Affairs achievements and our impact on the Ole Miss student experience with campus stakeholders.
  - Identify information and venues to effectively communicate with Academic Affairs partners.
  - Create a divisional calendar to share events and important information.
  - Identify pathways for the consistent sharing of information between Student Affairs departments to foster increased communication, awareness and support.
- 3.2 Develop a Student Affairs infrastructure for effective communication and information sharing toward broad and targeted populations.
- Utilize ForUM, UM Today, The Powder Blue and The Red & Blue newsletters, and social media platforms to broadly share information and facilitate partnerships across the campus.
  - Create an active Student Affairs presence on social media platforms, as well as utilize emerging trends in social media.
  - Develop communication strategies to regularly keep parents informed of campus and divisional events and engage parents as strategic partners.



## Strategic Goal Four:

### CULTIVATE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

*(Supports Empower Now strategic priorities 1, 2, 3, 8)*

Work collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders to deepen the network of strategic partnerships to achieve divisional goals, positively impact student learning, and enhance programs and services.

#### OBJECTIVES

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| <p>4.1 Foster effective and consistent engagement and partnerships with parents to support student success.</p> <p>4.2 Cultivate strong, vibrant partnerships between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs to support the student learning experience and enhanced divisional interactions.</p> <p>4.3 Partner with the Office of Development to identify philanthropic and grant opportunities to generate funding</p> | <p>opportunities, invite donors to divisional events, and share information regarding Student Affairs events to show appreciation, communicate program achievements and cultivate donor relationships.</p> <p>4.4 Collaborate with external community members to share information and enhance cross-divisional and community partnerships.</p> |
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## Strategic Goal Five:

### MAXIMIZE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

*(Supports Empower Now strategic priorities 5, 9)*

Maximize organizational capital and resources to accomplish our mission, ensure a responsive organization, and fully serve students while holding onto the specialness of the Ole Miss experience.

#### OBJECTIVES

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| <p>5.1 Evaluate existing facilities and operational resources for flexibility, efficiency and effectiveness to ensure that current and future campus expectations are met.</p> <p>5.2 Enhance financial resources and create a long-term plan to keep pace with continued enrollment growth in which existing and expected levels of service can be maintained.</p> <p>5.3 Evaluate human resources to effectively respond to a changing student demographic and meet student needs.</p> <p>■ Benchmark peer institutions and market intelligence to evaluate</p> | <p>salaries, structural aspects, cost of living and other data markers.</p> <p>5.4 Develop spaces where students can meet and work collaboratively to engage others.</p> <p>5.5 Implement technology solutions to enhance divisionwide collaboration, interactions with students and parents, and the overall delivery of programs and services.</p> <p>5.6 Facilitate a CAS review for departments to improve programs and services.</p> <p>5.7 Provide annual budget training to Student Affairs team members.</p> |
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## Strategic Goal Six:

### ADVANCE DIVISIONAL EXCELLENCE

*(Supports Empower Now strategic priority 9)*

Leverage our best efforts to advance professional excellence and be a premier leader in the field of student affairs through building a national reputation as a high-performing division that engages in strategic thinking, exceptional customer service and innovative programs.

#### OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 Recruit, develop and retain talented student affairs professionals.
- 6.2 Provide a robust professional development program that invests in staff members and creates opportunities for staff to display their talents, enhance skill sets, and expand divisional knowledge of higher education issues.
- 6.3 Partner with the Office of Sustainability to explore areas in which departments can implement sustainability practices.
- 6.4 Implement benchmarks and standards using CAS and other guiding documents, as well as peer institution data, to align Student Affairs priorities and efforts.
- 6.5 Revise, update and share existing departmental and divisional policies and procedures.
- 6.6 Utilize Campus Climate Study results to foster communities of inclusivity and respect for students and employees of the University of Mississippi.
- 6.7 Raise the profile of the division and strengthen Student Affairs engagement through various venues including regional and national conferences and organizations.
- 6.8 Enhance assessment capacity within Student Affairs to improve program effectiveness through data-driven decision making, and align departmental assessment initiatives with university strategic priorities.





## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

In July 2022, Charlotte Pegues, vice chancellor for student affairs, convened a committee with broad representation across the division, as well as student and faculty representation. The committee was charged with developing a five-year strategic plan for the division. This committee included:

**BRADLEY BAKER**, *director,*

*Gertrude C. Ford Ole Miss Student Union*

**SHANNON BAKER RICHARDSON**,

*assistant director of Wellness Education*

**LAUREN JONES**, *director, Center for Inclusion*

*and Cross Cultural Engagement*

**ALEX LANGHART**, *director, University Health Services*

**GEORGE McCLELLAN**, *professor,*

*Department of Higher Education*

**PATRICK PERRY**, *learning specialist,*

*Center for Student Success & First-Year Experience*

**PETER TULCHINSKY**, *director, Campus Recreation*

**LORNE TURNER**, *student leader*

**JOHN YAUN**, *assistant vice chancellor for Student Affairs*

*and director, Student Housing (committee chair)*



# DIVERSITY INCLUSION

**D**iversity is a defining feature of our university and society and challenges us to extend beyond our comfort zones and consider the experiences and perspectives of those different from our own. The Division of Student Affairs is committed to creating an inclusive community where all are welcomed, valued and respected through actions and programs that enrich all aspects of student life at the University of Mississippi. To that end, this strategic plan and its goals were developed by looking through the lens of diversity, equity and inclusion to infuse these into all aspects of our divisional work, interactions and priorities.

We believe in the benefits and importance of diverse learning environments in higher education, which include preparing students to live in intercultural communities, valuing a multiplicity of perspectives, and engaging with others different from themselves.

The following goals lay the foundation for the 15 departments within Student Affairs and represent the division's commitment to the advancement of diversity, equity, and inclusion through these



# STUDENT

interconnected priorities, which are applicable to the University of Mississippi broadly, as well as each division and department.

- Advance Institutional Capacity for Equity (Infrastructure, Information, Systems, Education and Process)
- Cultivate a Diverse and Equitable Community (Recruiting, Retaining, Advancing and Succeeding)
- Foster an Inclusive Campus Climate (Support, Value and Belonging)

These divisional priorities directly engage Pathways to Equity and provide a foundation for creating a positive campus experience that guides our work with students, informs our organizational climate, raises awareness and increases knowledge of diversity and inclusion, informs recruitment and retention efforts, and cultivates authentic campus partnerships. We believe these principles and priorities foster an environment of lifelong investment and engagement with others and learning within a climate of inclusiveness.



# MISSION VISION, V

## OUR MISSION

The mission of Student Affairs is to facilitate a holistic, student-centered experience that nurtures the growth, dignity, development and talents of every student in preparation for a lifetime of learning, leadership and success.

## OUR VISION

Student Affairs will be nationally recognized for its excellence and innovation in supporting the success of students, its leadership in the profession, and as a premier destination for student affairs professionals.

## OUR VALUES

### Community

We foster caring, inclusive and celebratory communities where all students, regardless of background, identity or experiences, feel welcomed, valued and supported. We cultivate a culture of campus collaboration and responsibility built on trust, respect and open communication, supporting the tenets of the UM Creed.

### Respect

We promote respect by treating members of our community with dignity. We value the contributions and perspectives of others through our behaviors and sense of shared purpose.

### Excellence

We champion ethics, excellence and innovation in our daily work. We deliver programs and services with pride and distinction that enhance the student experience and reputation of the University of Mississippi. We strive to be leaders in the field of student affairs through continuously expanding our knowledge through active professional engagement and scholarship.

### Empowerment

We empower students to navigate, actively participate and problem solve within the university and their communities so they can advocate for themselves and have their voices heard.

### Development

We commit to the holistic development, learning and well-being of students and Student Affairs staff by cultivating a supportive environment that fosters self-reflection, self-discovery and personal development.

# VALUES

## OUR CREED

The University of Mississippi  
is a community of learning  
dedicated to nurturing excellence  
in intellectual inquiry  
and personal character in an  
open and diverse environment.  
As a voluntary member  
of this community:

I believe in respect  
for the dignity of each person.

I believe in fairness and civility.

I believe in personal  
and professional integrity.

I believe in academic honesty.

I believe in academic freedom.

I believe in good stewardship  
of our resources.

I pledge to uphold these values  
and encourage others  
to follow my example.



THE UNIVERSITY of  
**MISSISSIPPI**

**Division of Student Affairs**  
[studentaffairs.olemiss.edu](http://studentaffairs.olemiss.edu)