



NEWS RELEASE

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DAVENPORT UNIVERSITY ANNOUNCES VISION 2020 Plans include partnerships with community colleges

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., July 16, 2015 – Davenport University today publicly announces its Vision 2020 long-range strategic plan, setting the direction for the University for the next five years. The new Vision, building on the successes of Vision 2015, calls for accelerated continuous quality improvement across Davenport’s operations to generate student outcomes that compare favorably with those of the upper half of Michigan’s public universities.

“Over the past five years, we have dramatically transformed the culture and the outcomes at this University,” stated Dr. Richard J. Pappas, President of Davenport. “Vision 2015 was about creating internal competencies in market research and data analytics, applying those skills against our processes, and making targeted changes to improve student outcomes. Since we began on that journey, our graduation rate has improved 110 percent, our student and graduate satisfaction rates are at all-time highs, and fundraising is at the highest levels ever in this institution’s history.”

Over the past five years, Davenport has launched more than a dozen new programs – most at the graduate level – and is in the process of developing its first doctoral program in Physical Therapy. This past year, classes began for the first Master’s degree cohort in the new College of Urban Education and DU graduated its first Accounting students covered by the Davenport Employment Guarantee. Through Vision 2020, Davenport will see that guarantee extended to additional academic programs, signaling the University’s confidence and accountability in its preparation of students for the workforce.

Vision 2020 will see further campus expansion at the Grand Rapids-based W.A. Lettinga Campus, where a new facility for the Donald W. Maine College of Business will be constructed and the Farmers Insurance Athletics Complex will be completed, paving the way for the launch of DU’s football program in 2016. “Our Grand Rapids campus serves a broad variety of students,” said Dr. Pappas, “but the addition of football and continued development of residence halls and a vibrant campus life will help us to increase our traditional student enrollment.”

The University also is exploring the potential for a new campus in the metropolitan Detroit area. “We have a long history of serving that region and, with a resurgence of business, technology and health industries in southeast Michigan, plus the continuing need for well-prepared teachers who will make a difference in urban school districts, we believe our career-focused education model can be an important part of that region’s renewal.”

Across the state, Davenport is partnering with community colleges to become part of existing University Centers or to establish new ones, providing opportunities for students to continue their education at Davenport after obtaining their associate degrees. These partnerships support the healthy operations of Michigan's community colleges and create operational efficiencies for Davenport. "This truly represents a win-win-win situation for the institutions involved and for students," said Dr. Pappas. "Efficient operations help us control costs and keep our tuition rates among the lowest of all private universities in Michigan."

With new partnerships in place, Davenport's current campus operations in Flint and Kalamazoo will shift to Mott Community College and Kalamazoo Valley Community College, effective this fall. Further details on these shifts in Flint and Kalamazoo will follow in the coming weeks. Also, Davenport will be announcing additional community college partnerships in the weeks and months ahead. Davenport's campus operations in Saginaw will be merged into the Midland Campus during the upcoming fiscal year, with an exploration to be conducted to determine the feasibility of a new campus to serve the entire Tri-Cities region of Michigan. Davenport's Battle Creek location will be closed, as most students served by that facility had already shifted to Davenport's online Global Campus.

"We will continue to serve students in every market where we currently have operations, and hope to add more locations through this new strategic direction," said Dr. Pappas. "Michigan needs more partnership between institutions of higher education, and we believe this model will yield outstanding results for Davenport and for our community colleges. We believe that students will be better served with these changes and succeed at even higher rates."

Vision 2020, developed through the collaboration of Davenport's employees and leaders with input from students, donors, alumni and its board of trustees, helps to establish a bold direction for the University's progress in academic offerings, student and graduate services, employee engagement, diversity, fundraising, operational efficiencies, and more. "This Vision helps Davenport continue to move forward and become a model for what a career-focused education should look like," said Dr. Pappas. "We're excited about the possibilities that lie ahead for this University and its students."

About Davenport University

Founded in 1866, Davenport is a private, non-profit university serving nearly 9,000 students at campuses across Michigan and online. With tuition among the lowest of all private universities in the state, Davenport provides high academic quality, small class sizes, conveniently located campuses, faculty with real-world experience and more than 50 dynamic undergraduate and graduate programs addressing in-demand careers in business, technology, health professions and urban education.

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