

TALENT STRATEGY

SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN FIRST
and
WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY PROPOSAL
PRESENTED TO THE
SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN
REGIONAL PROSPERITY
INITIATIVE



southwest michigan 
THE GREATEST FORCE FOR CHANGE IS A JOB



SUMMARY: TALENT STRATEGY

Of our 13 peer regions (determined in partnership with the W.E. Upjohn Institute), Southwest Michigan is the only region losing its millennial population. This statistic when combined with the fact that we have a workforce where 40 percent of participants can retire in the next decade, means our only strategic moves to remain relevant and competitive can be the growth, development, retention and attraction of educated people to our communities.

Western Michigan University (WMU) sits in the midst of the seven-county region of Southwest Michigan as one of the most powerful tools to address this situation. Southwest Michigan First (SMF), in partnership with WMU, proposes to house SMF staff on the WMU Campus in 2019. The SMF staff will work with WMU staff to further enhance existing programs that link students and faculty to regional employers with whom SMF has strong relationships. Services would include connections to internships, talent and strengths assessments, returnships, corporate engagement, alumni education and post-graduation employment.

In addition, Southwest Michigan First will develop strategic relationships with the regions 5 community colleges and multiple private colleges to further enhance opportunities through internships and apprenticeships.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Our region’s survival, within possibly a decade from now, depends on leaders making systematic changes to how we look at growing an economy. We are at or very near full employment. Based on our current trajectory, we will not have enough population growth to keep up with inflation, the cost of public services or the needs of employers. According to Brad Hershbein of the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research in Kalamazoo, after the baby boomers retire, those approximately ages 51 to 70 as of 2016, “Millennials are the largest demographic entering the workforce to fill this important workforce gap.” Indeed, the Pew Research Center confirms that millennials surpassed not only Baby Boomers but also Generation Xers in the workforce during the first quarter of 2015, with the only hope of adding to Generation X to be through immigration. ⁱ

As previously stated, we are the only region with negative growth in millennial-aged residents, now the largest cohort of the nation’s workforce. While there are many reasons for this, the primary one is a result of two factors: the loss of families in Michigan’s so-called “Lost Decade” and decreasing college enrollment and retention. If we are to have the basic raw materials to grow our region’s economy in the future, we must focus on target customers, or residents, who are 18-36 in age and fall into three key areas: college students, local and relocating college graduates and young families.

HOW DOES SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN COMPARE TO ITS PEERS? ⁱⁱ					
REGION	PEER TYPE	TOTAL POPULATION	MILLENNIAL POPULATION		
			NUMBER	PERCENT	GROWTH 2009-2013
Austin, Texas	Aspirational	1,782,032	502,630	28.2%	5.2%
Springfield, Missouri	Actual	441,050	111,308	25.2%	2.5%
Omaha, Nebraska	Aspirational	876,355	211,524	24.1%	4.1%
Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota	Aspirational	3,391,191	800,146	23.6%	2.1%
Boise, Idaho	Aspirational	628,966	145,631	23.2%	1.6%
Huntsville, Alabama	Actual	424,543	98,057	23.1%	11.8%
Greenville, South Carolina	Aspirational	834,277	192,543	23.1%	5.3%
Greensboro, North Carolina	Actual	730,342	166,885	22.9%	4.7%
Rochester, New York	Actual	1,081,126	246,737	22.8%	6.8%
Akron, Ohio	Actual	704,979	160,883	22.8%	3.5%
Southwest Michigan		778,205	176,062	22.6%	-1.5%
Knoxville, Tennessee	Aspirational	843,268	186,708	22.1%	1.7%
Peoria, Illinois	Actual	380,163	82,594	21.7%	1.1%

If we do not dramatically reverse this trend, we will enter a cycle of economic decline in which we will not have the resources, people, earning power or economic capacity to reverse. Thus, basic civic services will become out of reach for most citizens.

Regional companies must fill the gap if we are to realize our vision is that Southwest Michigan will be a region that leads the nation in economic and social sustainability.

Why must we act? We have achieved full employment: 3.7 percentⁱⁱⁱ in Kalamazoo County and 4.1 percent^{iv} in the region, with more than 9,994^v jobs listed for our region on the state's talent website with consensus of 3-4 times that amount currently unfilled. Despite having 51,285^{vi} college students in the region, we are the only peer region losing millennial population.^{vii} Over the next 10 years, more than 40 percent of the region's working age population will be eligible to retire.^{viii} Because of our one-state recession, Michigan lost families with children which has created a 10 percent^{ix} drop in state-wide high school graduation rates, increasing the competition for college students.

We must act. And we must act now. Our projected net workforce loss of 35,000^x over the next date will translate into a loss of jobs and economic capacity for our region. Population loss, the changing nature of work and job locations and civic costs which will out-pace acceptable revenue options mean that our region will not have future financial and human resources to stem the tide of loss. This is dire news as it is projected that by 2020, the U.S. will fall short five million workers with post-secondary education.^{xi}

The global competition for students and graduates is at a critical point. If we are to gain a sustainable advantage, we must act to gain increased community market share of our domestic and international college and university graduates. Doing so has the potential for tremendous impact. Consider this: college student residents come with discretionary spending of \$10,000^{xii} per student. For example, the addition of 3,000 new students at WMU would mean 400 new faculty/staff positions^{xiii} and \$30 million in annual local spending. If more college and university students found jobs in the region upon graduation, we would realize increased population aged 25+ with college degrees. This is especially important to local companies with open jobs as 95 percent of net jobs created since the recession have gone to people with college degrees.^{xiv} And more so in the future as, by 2020, it is predicted that 65 percent of U.S. jobs will require post-secondary education: 11 percent will require a master's degree or better, 24 percent a bachelor's degree, 12 percent an associate's degree, and 18 percent some college.^{xv} The strategy that we propose to be executed will also increase our region's technical educated workforce as we enter a time when 30 percent of employment requires some college or an associate's degree.^{xvi} Finally, it will develop our region's capacity to lead through all sectors—for-profit, philanthropic, local government, education, and faith-based—and lead to strategic alignment of community assets and asset managers.

As a private economic development organization, Southwest Michigan First focuses on living out our belief that the greatest force for change is a job by working tirelessly to attract new and expand existing employers and simultaneously growing our location and human resources. To meet our responsibilities, we must increase our target. To this end, Southwest Michigan First, in partnership with WMU, has created a strategy to keep people tied to our community rather than seeking jobs and residences outside of our borders.

WMU affords our region a great opportunity with its enrolled diverse student population of 23,529^{xvii} (of which the greatest proportion hails from our seven-county region). WMU's College of Engineering masters programs are 78% international students and Kalamazoo Valley Community College has recently hired a director of international students, hoping to increase their enrollment. WMU has begun to recruit in California, Texas and Florida. This changes the dynamic of who we employ, and how we employ these students, especially if we want to keep them in the region.

WMU provides access to a large, raw talent pool that must be tapped into to fill the job pipeline at our regional companies. WMU's responsibility is to educate its students so that they may contribute to world knowledge and discovery upon graduation.

To increase regional competitiveness, Southwest Michigan First must take on the added responsibility of what happens to those students afterwards. Southwest Michigan First stands uniquely positioned to create opportunities for the students because of our relationships established by our team which annually averages 500 one-on-one relational meetings with existing employers (companies that ship or supply customers outside of the region with more than 51 percent of goods or services produced) and 300 meetings with small businesses (those providing local retail and commercial goods and services solutions).

Southwest Michigan First, in partnership with WMU and the regions other higher educational institutions will focus these efforts around:

- **Internships:** Companies who hire interns from their own programs retain 89 percent of them as employees after the first year, with 73 percent still employed there after year five.^{xviii} Through our one-one-one meetings with employers, we will identify local internship opportunities, catalog these opportunities, and educate qualified candidates on those opportunities, thereby establishing a direct conduit from the end user (businesses) to product (students).

We propose to enhance the MIInternship.com website to allow for greater connectivity with Handshake, MiTalent.org and other websites utilized by employers to promote internship opportunities.

The partnership will provide quarterly trainings for employers on how to design internships that provide the greatest benefits to both the employer and the student to further enhance the experience.

- **Apprenticeships:** Apprenticeship will help to mobilize our region's workforce with structured, on-the-job learning in traditional industries such as construction and manufacturing, as well as new emerging industries such as health care, information technology, energy, telecommunications and more. Registered Apprenticeship connects job seekers looking to learn new skills with employers looking for qualified workers, resulting in a workforce with industry-driven training and employers with a competitive edge. Companies who offer apprenticeships can train retain 89 percent of them as employees after the first year, with 73 percent still employed there after year five.^{xviii} In partnership with Michigan Works Southwest, the US DOL, our region's community colleges and area ISD's, SMF will educate our region's employers on how to design a successful apprenticeship program, identify candidates and grow their own workforce.
- **Talent and strengths assessments:** Gallup®'s data show that simply learning their strengths makes an individual 7.8 percent more productive, and teams that focus on strengths every day have 12.5 percent greater productivity.^{xix} WMU and SMF both have Certified Gallup Strengths Coaches who will work with students to identify, understand and learn how to use their strengths so students can maximize opportunities by seeking the right job for them.

WMU will offer Strengths assessments to approximately 1,000 freshman and follow-up coaching.

- **Alumni Relations:** Where appropriate, the SMF team will partner with WMU and other area colleges at their alumni events throughout the U.S. and abroad to attract experienced talent back to Southwest Michigan.
- **Returnships:** For trailing partners, individuals returning to the workforce or those looking to recharge their careers, our services will include mentoring, matchmaking and, if needed, facilitating introductions to the WMU admission office and those of the region's colleges. This will include sharing of resumes where appropriate.
- **Corporate engagement:** The SMF team will actively encourage involvement and expand local employer presence on WMU's campus in university activities.
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- **Faculty relationships:** The SMF team will actively foster relationships with area employers to understand faculty research and consulting capabilities and to understand student programming that directly relates to the employer talent needs. In addition, SMF will assist WMU and other area colleges to identify potential business advisory board members, schedule company tours and identify potential classroom speakers.
- **Post-graduation employment:** Looking to build upon our internship strategy as 61 percent of students with internships have a job offer in hand by the winter of their senior year,^{xx} we will support WMU Career and Student Employment Services to increase the number of opportunities made known to graduates seeking employment locally.

What if our student population continues to choose places like Chicago, Austin and Omaha over Kalamazoo, Coldwater, St. Joseph, Three Rivers or Southwest Michigan's numerous attractive small towns? What if Southwest Michigan employers can't find the millennial talent they need to continue producing, serving customers and innovating as the Baby Boomer workforce retires? We look forward to your partnership and support to facilitate these proposed efforts as we believe only by pursuing targeted strategies such as our business office on the WMU campus can our region address its future talent needs to remain globally relevant.

ENDNOTES

- i “Millennials surpass Gen Xers as the largest generation in U.S. Labor Force,” May 11, 2015, Pew Research Center
- ii U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2009-2013, Analysis by Bridge Magazine.
- iii Michigan DTMB, Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), June 2017. Data is preliminary, not seasonally adjusted.
- iv Michigan DTMB, Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), June 2017. Data is preliminary, not seasonally adjusted.
- v Jobs with 50-mile radius of the city of Kalamazoo, Pure Michigan Talent Connect, August 14, 2017.
- vi Total 2016 Enrollment at Albion College, Andrews University, Glen Oaks Community College, Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Kellogg Community College, Lake Michigan College, Southwestern Michigan College, and Western Michigan University, CollegeSimply.com.
- vii U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2009-2013, Analysis by Bridge Magazine.
- viii Claritas Pop-Facts Premier 2017.
- ix 2014-2016 Special Ruffalo Noel Levitz Report: 2014-2014 Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity, Based Primarily on Data from WICH; U.S. Census Bureau.
- x Claritas Pop-Facts Premier 2017.
- xi “Recovery: Jobs Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020,” Georgetown University.
- xii Refuel Agency – 2017 Study of College Student Discretionary Spending.
- xiii Western Michigan University Staff FTE Census.
- xiv Georgetown University: America’s Divided Recovery, 2016.
- xv “Recovery: Jobs Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020,” Georgetown University.
- xvi “Recovery: Jobs Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020,” Georgetown University.
- xvii Total 2016 Enrollment Western Michigan University, CollegeSimply.com.
- xviii National Association of Colleges & Employers, 2014 Internship & Co-Op Survey.
- xix “How Employees’ Strengths Make Your Company Stronger,” February 20, 2014, Gallup.
- xx Undergraduate Business School Rankings, Bloomberg Businessweek 2014.

ORGANIZATIONAL DESCRIPTION – Southwest Michigan First

In 1989, the CEO Council was founded in Kalamazoo to address the growth needs of private industry and, in 1999, that council was re-launched as Southwest Michigan First, a privately funded economic development organization to address poverty reduction and lessen the burden of government in Southwest Michigan through the creation of jobs and wealth.

The organizations that led the transition efforts from the CEO Council to Southwest Michigan First, and whom we consider our “founding fathers” included: Borgess Health, Bronson Healthcare Group, Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Monroe-Brown Foundation, MPI Research, PNC Financial Services Group (National City), Pfizer (Pharmacia-Upjohn), Stryker Corporation and Treystar Holdings.

During our 19-year history, we have achieved international recognition for our outcomes. In our work with over 350 companies, we’ve announced the creation of over 15,490 direct jobs with an additional 23,235 indirect jobs as of December 31, 2016. The annual total wages and salaries associated with those jobs and benefitting the population at all economic levels equates to an estimated \$1.74 billion. Private investment by those companies has exceeded \$3.1 billion. Over 5 million square feet of industrial and commercial space and 1,500 acres of land have been successfully reused or developed.

We know that job growth in the current economy is still a big challenge facing our region; after many jobs were lost during the Great Recession, much of our talent was lost along with those jobs. As the region has regained many of those jobs lost during 2008-2011, our companies are now stretched to fill open positions, especially those requiring skilled labor in the manufacturing sector. Companies now compete for available talent. Oftentimes, workers are merely “attracted” from another regional company as attracting talent from outside the region is a challenge. Why? Another leftover from the Great Recession is that our median household income lags that of regions with which we compete. In 2000, Michigan’s median household income of \$44,667 was \$2,673 more than the national average – a position of strength in the Midwest. Ten years later, it is \$45,035 and ranks 9th among our peer regions, of which the average household income is \$52,416. The good news is that during the period 2010-2014, according to the U.S. Census American Community Survey, Southwest Michigan realized the greatest growth versus our peers at 1.89%.

Unemployment numbers offer positive trending as they have moved downward since their 2011 annual average high of 10.4%. As of July 2017, the regional unemployment rate holds at 5.2%, which parallels our 30-year average unemployment rate of 5.2%. The unemployment rates by county are: Kalamazoo County | 4.8%; St. Joseph County | 5.1%; Cass County | 5.1%; Berrien County | 5.3%; Branch County | 5.5%; Calhoun County | 5.6%; and Van Buren County | 5.7%

At Southwest Michigan First, we believe the most powerful force for change is a job. The greatest equalizer of our time is self-sufficiency; a job is the pathway there. A job is the beginning of a cycle of self-respect and self-determination. Jobs and employment can change the quality of life for generations. If a father and mother can provide for their family today, their children will be ready, in turn, to someday take care of the next generation.

Some organizations seek to remedy one or more tangible results of a problem. Those types of entities hand out clothes, food and medicine to those with immediate needs. Other organizations aim to address one issue that is a contributor to the problem. Those groups address social issues like child care for those without the means to pay, teen pregnancy or adult literacy. A few organizations take a stab at solving the root of poverty itself. All three types of entities are vital when need is great.

As a 501(c)3 not-for-profit economic development organization, Southwest Michigan First has always categorized itself as the third type of benevolent organization and puts its attention on addressing poverty at its core: the ability of our community to create jobs. With a job, an individual can provide themselves and their family with the essentials necessary for life: food, clothing, healthcare, shelter and education; and perpetuate a cycle of self-sufficiency and self-respect.

Since our inception, we have operated on the principle that job creation exponentially affects the region's future sustainability. Southwest Michigan First has functioned as an organization of privately funded economic development advisors who act as the catalyst for economic success in Southwest Michigan. We work across primary industries throughout Southwest Michigan and our goal is this: To create jobs in the region – at all levels for all individuals.

Our approach is a bold and collaborative one that leverages the region's world-class research and academic institutions, historical legacy of innovation and entrepreneurship and diverse industries to become the nationwide economic development leader. Our goal is to improve the economy by ensuring that our region's existing companies are expanding and thriving, that the world's leading companies are attracted to the area, and that innovators and entrepreneurs are cultivated and supported to thrive. We believe our distinctive open, young and diverse culture is a key competitive advantage, ensuring that Southwest Michigan is the place where talented people want to live, work, play and innovate.

You will consistently see the theme of “jobs” when working with our team. That is the reason we were founded, the reason we have succeeded in the past and the reason we get up every day to ensure we succeed in the future. We have stitched our mission into our heart and soul: The Greatest Force for Change is a Job.

On behalf of Southwest Michigan First, the lead for this effort will be **Jill Bland, Managing Partner**. A lifelong resident of Michigan and graduate of Western Michigan University, Jill has been part of the Southwest Michigan First team since its inception in 1999. As a Certified Economic Developer, Jill has been contributing to the region's economic growth efforts for over 33 years in various local government and economic development roles. Executing projects with start-ups to Fortune 100 companies, announcing jobs creation ranging from 2 to 800 positions and developing incubation space to 2 million square feet of manufacturing/logistics space, Jill's versatile and collaborative approach compliments her commitment to grow the Southwest Michigan economy well. In addition to accelerating the region's existing company base, Jill is focused on creating governmental collaborations and leading on the region's talent strategy. Her excellent leadership at Southwest Michigan First and throughout the community was recognized in 2016 when she was named a Silver Stevie Winner in the category of Female Executive of the Year by the Stevie® Awards for Women in Business.

As part of her responsibilities, Jill serves on the boards of the Michigan Economic Developers Association, International Economic Development Council Education and Certification Committee, BC/Cal/Kal Foreign Trade Zone, Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee and Western Michigan University Community Outreach and Engaged Scholarship Advisory Council. In addition, she is a member of the Michigan Works Southwest Workforce Development Board, the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport Air Service and Retention Committee and Region 8 Regional Prosperity Initiative.

This work will also draw upon the support of our partners or companies led by members of our Board of Directors on the following page.

PARTNERS

The Southwest Michigan First Board of Directors is comprised of C-level executives, a high standard that we have continued to keep since our inception 19 years ago. Not only does it allow for high-level thinking, dreaming and conversation, but it shows existing companies, potential companies and our partners at all levels, that this community is serious about creating jobs. Our Board has received two briefings on this project in June and August of 2017 and voted unanimously to support its execution. Representing all seven counties, here are the members of our Board and their respective companies:

- **Danielle Anderson**, Miller Canfield
- **Dean Bergy**, Stryker Corporation
- **John Broschak**, Consumers Energy
- **Fritz Brown**, Treystar
- **Tom Burt**, Duncan Aviation
- **Joe Cekola**, Imperial Beverage
- **Lynn L Chen-Zhang**, Zhang Financial
- **Jamie Clark**, Clark Logic
- **Troy Clay**, Mno-Bmadsen
- **Fred Corbus**, WWMT
- **Annette Crandall**, Quality Assured Plastics
- **Ken Davis**, Eaton Corporation
- **Greg Dobson**, AVB
- **John Gallagher**, Gallagher Uniform
- **Tom Georgoff**, Miller-Davis Company
- **Bjorn Green**, TowerPinkster
- **Jorge Gonzalez**, Kalamazoo College
- **Stacey Hamlin**, CTS Telecom
- **Robert Hammond**, Hammond Roto-Finish
- **Kevin Hanley**, Special-Lite
- **Dan Hinkle**, National Flavors
- **John Irwin**, Huntington Bank
- **Dan Jaqua**, Jaqua Realtors
- **Andy Johnson**, Graphic Packaging International
- **William D. Johnston**, Greenleaf Companies
- **Mark A. Jones**, AmeriFirst Mortgage Banking Group
- **Gary Kirtley**, Owens Products
- **Ron Kitchens**, Southwest Michigan First
- **Kevin Lobo/Dean Bergy**, Stryker Corp.
- **Rich MacDonald**, The Hinman Company
- **Dave Maurer**, Humphrey Products
- **Brian McConnell**, Burr Oak Tool
- **Brian McDaniel**, American Axle & Mfg
- **Todd McDonald**, CSM Group
- **Russ McFee**, GHS Strings
- **Kenneth V. Miller**, Millennium Restaurant Group
- **Kurt Miller**, Southern Michigan Bank & Trust
- **Matthew Molitor**, Western Diversified Plastics & Mol-Son
- **Edward Montgomery**, Western Michigan University
- **Scott Nykaza**, Kalsec
- **Jeffrey C. O'Brien**, WSI
- **Greg O'Niel**, O'Niel LLC
- **William U. Parfet**, Northwood Group
- **Vince Pavone**, Lakeview Ford Lincoln
- **Shawn Premer**, Consumers Credit Union
- **Kelly Presta**, Sturgis Molded Products
- **Patricia Provot**, Armstrong International
- **Sophia Quinn**, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan
- **Michael A. Roeder**, Fabri-Kal Corporation
- **Brad Saar**, Stryker Medical
- **Frank J. Sardone**, Bronson Healthcare Group
- **Gary Schultz**, Edwards Garment
- **Marc Schupan**, Schupan & Sons, Inc.
- **Mike Sharpe**, AAY's Rental
- **Michael Stoddard**, BASIC
- **Chris Tracy**, Honigman
- **Fred Upton**, U.S. House of Representatives
- **Lee Utke**, Whirlpool Corporation
- **Natalie Valentine**, Peregrine Company
- **Erik VanAllen**, Get man Corporation
- **Von Washington Jr.**, The Kalamazoo Promise
- **Thomas J. Webb**, Consumers Energy Corporation
- **Mark Welch**, Flowserve
- **Sean P. Welsh**, PNC Financial Services Group
- **Kurk Wilks**, MANN+HUMMEL USA
- **Aaron J. Zeigler**, Zeigler Auto Group

ORGANIZATIONAL DESCRIPTION – Western Michigan University

Western Michigan University is a learner-centered, discovery-driven and globally engaged public university that stands out among America's more than 4,600 higher education institutions. Founded in 1903, WMU has grown to become a major national research university enrolling nearly 23,000 students from across the United States and 96 other countries. It is based in Kalamazoo, a friendly, top-rated college town situated close to large urban centers, great jobs and abundant recreational areas.

WMU combines the resources of a major research university with the personal attention and warm atmosphere often found at a small college. Taking full advantage of that combination gives students the edge they need to succeed in school, the workplace and life.

Faculty members have been trained at the world's leading universities and bring a global perspective to the classroom. Many of these scholars have a passion for research as well as teaching. They not only share their cutting-edge work in the classroom, but also welcome undergraduate and graduate students alike into their research laboratories and creative studios.

The University offers 152 bachelors', 76 masters' and 33 doctoral programs, along with one program leading to a specialist degree and several others that lead to graduate-level certificates in innovative or high-demand areas of specialization. These programs are offered through seven degree-granting colleges: arts and sciences, aviation, education and human development, engineering and applied sciences, fine arts, Haworth College of Business, and health and human services.

In addition, the Lee Honors College serves as an intimate home for some 1,750 high-achieving undergraduates, while the Graduate College assists some 5,000 students pursuing advanced degrees.

Many academic programs rank among the top of their kind in the country, giving WMU a national or international reputation as one of the best places to study in fields as varied as accountancy, aviation, clinical psychology, creative writing, earth sciences/geosciences, engineering management technology, education, evaluation, integrated supply management, medieval studies, occupational therapy, physician assistant, public affairs, sales and business marketing, and the performing arts.

Whenever possible, instruction is designed so graduating students are job-ready, immediately adding value to their employers. Plus, the University's public-private partnerships and exchange agreements with organizations around the globe provide countless opportunities for students to obtain internships, conduct research, gain field experience and study abroad.

WMU researchers are advancing knowledge across the state and around the globe. A growing amount of their funded research is the product of partnerships with business, industry and government in areas such as advanced engineering and manufacturing, homeland security, information technology, the life sciences, and nanotechnology. These basic and applied collaborations enhance classroom instruction and career opportunities for students, as well as foster economic development in Michigan while expanding the 21st-century knowledge base.

WMU creates a learning environment that is not only challenging, but also supportive and inclusive. A wide range of resources and services focus on academic and career success, with several dedicated to meeting the special needs of specific groups, such as first-year students, transfer students, military veterans and youths who have aged out of the foster care system.

Students come to WMU from around the world, with representatives of minority groups making up 23 percent of the student body and international students more than 7 percent. They enjoy a vibrant campus atmosphere featuring some 370 student organizations, including fraternities and sororities, professional associations, faith-based groups, club sports and hobby groups. The University also provides acclaimed arts programs, a lively cultural calendar, and numerous intramural, health and fitness programs.

The University's robust academic environment is bolstered by some of the best instructional and cultural facilities in the Midwest, and ongoing improvements are reshaping the housing and dining system, so it remains in tune with the needs of today's students. Meanwhile, WMU consistently earns national awards for sustainability as well as praise for the beauty of its park-like campus.

Among the University's notable facilities are a world-class aviation campus; a state-of-the-art science complex; new buildings devoted to education, chemistry and the visual arts; a high-tech home for health and human services programs; a cutting-edge engineering campus that includes the thriving Business Technology and Research Park; a large, well-equipped student recreation center; and one of the nation's top-10 theatres.

Many residence halls, as well as apartments, provide a variety of areas where students in similar programs or with similar backgrounds can live next to each other. Apartments offer a more independent on-campus living arrangement preferred by upperclassmen who previously lived in a residence hall and still want the convenience of living on campus. Such housing also is appealing to students who have families, come from overseas or are studying at the graduate level.

Innovation, engagement with the communities it serves and outreach to enhance economic development are University hallmarks.

For instance, the aviation campus and Business Technology and Research Park are components of Michigan's economic development zones. In addition, WMU joined with community partners during the past decade to develop the WMU Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine, which graduated its inaugural class in May 2018 and is stimulating economic growth as well as life sciences innovation in the region and state. Also, the University affiliated in 2014 with one of the most diverse private law schools in the United States to form the WMU Thomas M. Cooley Law School.

The University has focused on supporting life science research and commercialization in a way that has helped launch more than 30 startup companies that have brought some 225 high-paying technical jobs to the state. In addition, its successful Business Technology and Research Park is expanding after having attracted more than \$150 million in investment and generating more than 800 jobs and hundreds of internships for WMU students in the 42 private companies already located there.

Meanwhile, WMU is placing increased emphasis on bringing entrepreneurship into its research, academic and collaborative initiatives. The University now has a well-established student business accelerator called Starting Gate. This accelerator gives students rich and valuable resources to develop their own startup companies, providing a fast-track to business launch. And the University continues to support scores of research centers and public-service clinics that work in tandem with partners near and far to make new discoveries and improve the health and well-being of the citizenry.

At the same time, WMU has long met the state's regional needs for higher education and career development programs and continues to serve thousands of Michigan residents annually through its Online and Lifelong Learning offices, as well as its 10 regional locations. The University has Michigan sites in Auburn Hills, Battle Creek, Benton Harbor, Clinton Township, Grand Rapids (downtown and the east side), Lansing, Muskegon and Traverse City. It also has a site in Punta Gorda, Florida.

On behalf of Western Michigan University, **Lynn Kelly-Albertson**, serves as the executive director of professional and career development in the Division of Student Affairs at Western Michigan University and will be lead on this effort. In this capacity she leads the office of Career and Student Employment Services. Lynn has worked at WMU for more than 25 years and served in roles including: chair of the campus-wide United Way Campaign; lead on the establishment of GoWMU, the WMU student portal; chair of the Student Affairs Professional Development Team; and a variety of committees and teams.

She holds a bachelor's and a master's degree in communication from WMU, as well as some doctoral coursework in higher education administration. She is a member of the National Student Employment Association, National Career Development Association, the Michigan Career Educator and Employer Alliance, the Midwest Association for Colleges and Employers and the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

ADDITIONAL PARTNERS

This effort will likely involve many partners from across the seven counties of Southwest Michigan including the following:

Michigan Works-Southwest

Kinexus

Kalamazoo College

Kalamazoo Valley Community College

Kellogg Community College

Glen Oaks Community College

Lake Michigan College

Southwestern Michigan College

Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph and Van Buren ISD/CTE Programs

Southwest Michigan Adult Literacy Council

Cornerstone Alliance

Southwestern Michigan Growth Alliance

Cass County Economic Development

Van Buren County Economic Development

City of South Haven Economic Development

Battle Creek Unlimited

Branch County Economic Growth Alliance

BUDGET

Expenditure Category	RPI Request	Funds from Other Sources	Total
Wages			
2.0 FTE Alumni/Intern/Return Coordinators/Navigators	\$60,000	\$40,000	\$100,000
1.0 FTE Talent Director	\$0	\$75,000	\$75,000
Space/Lease (partial in-kind)	\$8,000	\$10,000	\$18,000
Strengths Testing (1,000 Freshman)	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
Equipment	\$0	\$7,200	\$7,200
Communications/Marketing (Includes enhancements to MIInternship.com)	\$37,000	\$15,000	\$52,000
Travel	\$0	\$9,000	\$9,000
TOTALS	\$110,000	\$161,200	\$271,200

PROJECT BREAKDOWN

Project Component	Target Dates	Component Cost
Phase 1: Build Relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin implementation strategy with WMU personnel • Meet with key personnel from regions other colleges • Educate company leadership on project • Hold first Internship 101 training program for business 	10/01/18 – 3/30/18 10/17/18	\$25,000
Phase 2: Build Team and Implement Strengths Testing and Coaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire talented individuals to execute key roles • Implement Strengths testing and coaching 	10/01/18 – 06/30/19	\$185,200
Phase 3: Make Improvements to MiInternship.com website	10/01/18 – 12/31/18	\$37,000
Phase 4: Build Communications Plan	10/01/18 – 9/31/19	\$15,000
Phase 5: Engage in Alumni Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend alumni events 	10/01/18 – 10/31/19	\$9,000

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