

Aspirations and Key Results (AKRs ... Making progress the AKRon way)

The AKRon way is a means to establish goals that bring needed change and do so urgently.

These Aspirations should advance the mission or purpose of The University of Akron. These Aspirations are bite-sized steps that, when built one on the other, bring substantial benefit to the University.

The Aspirations are what we need to do in the next semester.

The Key Results are measurable benchmarks or outcomes that affirm that the desired Aspiration has been successfully completed.

Things to think about when writing AKRs:

Do not list Business as Usual (BAU) as your Aspiration. AKRs should seek the change that you believe needs to happen to move beyond the current

Your Aspirations should be meaningful, audacious and inspiring to your team and stakeholders. There are some cases where you will purposefully choose less assertive Aspirations since just maintaining or incrementally improving is a momentous task in that moment (e.g., delivering classes in a pandemic).

Your Key Results should be specific and time-bound, aggressive but possible, and measurable so that completion of the key result can be verified by others.

Tips to Draft your Aspirations

Reflect on The University of Akron's vision statement and the Strategic Action Plan. Now, within your area, think about these questions:

What are the most important things that we need to get done?

What do we need to start doing or changing?

What does success look like?

You should develop your list of Aspirations with your team and coworkers, get plenty of feedback before committing to a final draft. They should be significant, concrete, action-oriented and inspirational. You should limit Aspirations to 3-5 per semester. Some Aspirations will be *Stretch Aspirations* done. Others will be *Committed Aspirations*, where success only comes if 100% of the key results are met.

Connect to the business model for The University of Akron (probably worthy of some discussion).

Why does our enterprise exist? Who are our customers? What inspires our employees to come to work? How do we pay for this work? Who are our competitors? We sustain ourselves by _____ in order to _____.

When reviewing these Aspirations with your team, address these questions

1. Does your Aspiration ask for incremental change, a leap or a discovery? (any of these may be appropriate given circumstances)
2. Can you make your Aspiration more specific?
3. Do you need to make your Aspiration more action-oriented?
4. Can you state the Aspiration in a simpler, more concise way?
5. How can you make your Aspiration more memorable? Can you tie it to your culture?

Tips to Draft Key Results

Look at each Aspiration statement and imagine what things will measurably change at the end of the semester if this Aspiration is fully implemented. Ideally, these measures can be continually checked over the course of the semester so that you can assess if you are making progress (called leading indicators). Key Res

We will start by seeking informal agreements between groups to pursue AKRs that are working together to meet the UA Strategic Action Plan as well as the goals of the Board of Trustees and President.