

Drake University Strategic Plan 2001-2006

October 2001

I. Mission & Vision

The 2001-2006 Drake University Strategic Plan, and the strategic goals upon which it is focused, are guided by the University's *Vision Statement* and *Mission Statement* as articulated in the *Operational Vision/Mission Document* of the Program Review Initiative (January 2000):

Mission

Drake University is a *community of learners*. Thus, the mission of the University is to encourage and support the acquisition, application, and transmission of knowledge, the appreciation of the joys of discovery and the liberating power of knowing, and the development of abilities and perspectives that enable members of the community to pursue their goals and to make meaningful contributions in their personal and professional lives.

Thus all activities, resources, and structures are focused to the greatest extent possible on: the support of inquiry and the discovery of knowledge; the creation, implementation, and management of learning opportunities; the provision of guidance and support from recognized experts; the maintenance of an environment that is conducive to learning, personal growth, and community engagement; and the assessment and certification of learning outcomes.¹

Vision

Drake University shall maintain and enhance its position as the premier comprehensive university in the Midwest. At the same time, the University shall play a national leadership role as one of a select group of institutions (Associated New American Colleges) committed to the development and implementation of more effective paradigms for learning, faculty roles, and public service in higher education. Thus the activities of the University shall be concentrated on carefully selected liberal arts and sciences and professional programs. While global in its vision, outreach, and impact, Drake also shall serve its immediate community as an educational resource in the economic, cultural, and social development of Des Moines and Central Iowa.

¹ Cf. the *Drake University Strategic Vision Document* (November 1999) for the complete narrative regarding the University's mission and essential characteristics.

II. Core Values

Drake University's mission, vision, ongoing operations, and strategic planning are all informed by a set of core values that, in essence, define who we are—and what we want to be—as a University. These values derive explicitly from several months of discussions about what is important to us as a community of learners, and to some extent implicitly as we examine a one hundred and twenty-year tradition of excellence in teaching, learning, and service to the community. It is critical that they guide us in the small choices that we make on a daily basis, and in the large choices that we make in crafting the future of the institution—these values determine *what* we do and *how* we do it:

- *Excellence*: we must strive for the highest levels of excellence in everything that we do, and in everything that we aspire to;
- *Learning*: the purpose of the University's very existence, emphasizing the intrinsic value of knowledge, the importance of critical inquiry, and preparation for life-long learning—grounded in an integrative, interdisciplinary approach;
- *Integrity*: our actions and interactions must be informed by fairness, equity, honesty, accountability, justice, and mutual respect;
- *Citizenship*: preparation for participation in all of the communities in which we live—local, regional, national, and global; a commitment to public service and the common good; personal growth;
- *Fiscal responsibility*: the University operates with funds that have been entrusted to us by others—we have a moral and ethical responsibility to ensure that those funds are used in ways that are consistent with the University's priorities; the importance of organizational efficiency, financial strength, and effective stewardship of the University's resources.

III. Challenges

All too often in higher education, strategic plans have been defined as a concrete “thing;” a document that, once completed, will signal the culmination of a difficult process and announce to the campus community that all that remains to be done is to fulfill the plan, and the institution will be “there”—i.e., that having achieved the next level, everyone can reap the abundant harvest that the plan has yielded. Equally often, those plans comprise complex and jumbled compilations of the dreams and aspirations of an institution's constituent parts, with only a token nod (if that) to the external realities within which the institution must function.

From the very start, we have emphasized two critical aspects of a successful strategic plan: 1) the ultimate end result is not simply a finite plan, but the implementation of an infrastructure and an institutional behavior that is strategic in nature, and that manifests itself in an ongoing planning process (of which a specific plan is in essence a “freeze-frame” of that process); we recognize as well that while no community can endure a continuous process of revolutionary change (in which we should engage periodically), we must accept and embrace the necessity of a culture of evolutionary change for the health and vitality of the University; 2) our perspective cannot be focused solely on the internal – more than anything, a successful plan must not only take into account a set of critical factors that affect the institution’s ability to achieve its goals and prepare the institution to respond to changes in those factors, but ideally it must comprise a set of strategies to *manage* those external factors to the greatest extent possible, and to *exploit* them in ways that bring benefit to the University.

In that context, then, we have identified the following challenges (both internal and external) as the most urgent, and that must serve as the foci of our planning efforts:

- *budget* – we must bring the operating budget into alignment, so that expenses are consistent with income (at a 5% drawdown from endowment income); we also need to ensure that our resources are allocated in a manner consistent with the University’s goals and priorities;
- *student demographics* – there are several critical issues here: the number of high school graduates in our primary geographic area will remain relatively flat over the next decade (in those few areas where the numbers increase significantly, the increase is driven by population groups that have not traditionally gone on to private higher education in large numbers, and whose financial aid needs are likely to be high); the vast majority of undergraduates in the United States attend an institution within 250 miles of their homes; and, there are significant changes in the learning backgrounds and learning aspirations of students;
- *increasing competition* – it is certain that the competition for students – traditional (18-22 year old, full-time undergraduate), full-time graduate, and non-traditional – will continue to escalate dramatically. In Drake’s particular case, we will see increasing intensity of competition from in-state public institutions, more aggressive behavior on the part of our perceived peer institutions in the Midwest, in-house corporate “universities,” and from the explosion of alternative learning opportunities (both profit and not-for-profit);
- *diversity* – the racial and ethnic profile of America – and of the Midwest – is changing rapidly; we have a moral and social responsibility to ensure academic and financial access to a Drake education for all who are

- qualified, and we have an equal responsibility to prepare our students (and ourselves) to embrace difference of all kinds, and to negotiate the barriers that it often creates;
- *campus environment/quality of student life* – while Drake has considerable physical plant assets of which we are justifiably proud, we also recognize that we have significant needs in the area of residential accommodations, in the absence of a student center, and in the appearance of the campus. Further, there are indicators that many students feel that campus life is lacking in vibrancy, and in alternatives to the Greek social scene;
 - *technology* – it is imperative that we have both the infrastructure and the expertise to provide the highest possible support to both the teaching/learning process and the administration of the University; in addition, we must be prepared to meet the challenges of technology-based learning provided by other institutions and organizations;
 - *local environment* – while the City of Des Moines is a considerable asset to the University in many ways, the immediate neighborhood, in both perception and in reality, is an impediment to our ability to recruit and retain students in particular, but faculty and staff as well; it is also essential that the leadership of Des Moines (political, business, neighborhood) recognize that a vital, healthy Drake University is essential to the future vitality of the City, and that the community must take greater ownership in supporting the University's future;
 - *the philanthropic environment* – while Drake has long enjoyed the financial support of its many alumni and friends, changes in the stock market, in tax laws, corporate giving policies, and in the "giving culture" all threaten our ability to generate needed funds to support the annual operating budget and to enhance the University's endowment and physical plant. In the short term, a number of competing fundraising projects in the Des Moines area (a new library, the Art Center campaign, the Science Center, etc.) are of particular concern.

There are, of course, many other challenges that we will have to face, and to manage, on an ongoing basis, but it is those listed above that serve as the primary drivers (i.e., the planning assumptions) for our strategic planning efforts. It also bears emphasizing that while these challenges do pose threats to Drake's stability and vitality (though none of them is unique to Drake), all of them also present considerable opportunities that can and should be exploited to enable the University to better serve our students and the community as a whole.

IV. Goals²

- *Goal I: Ensure the excellence, currency, and appropriateness of academic programs*

Objective 1³: Implement University-wide policies and procedures to ensure excellence, currency, and appropriateness to mission of existing and proposed programs

Strategies⁴:

- a. implement system of annual data reporting on key indicators (based on evaluation approach designed for Program Review)
- b. implement systematic external peer review of programs
- c. establish University-wide Curriculum Committee
- d. develop and implement long-range plan to address facilities and equipment needs in support of teaching, learning, and research

Objective 2: Increase emphasis on interdisciplinary, integrative learning

Strategies:

- a. assess Drake Curriculum to ensure that it is meeting stated goals; design and implement ongoing assessment mechanism for Drake Curriculum
- b. establish interdisciplinary centers specified in Program Review
- c. establish selected new interdisciplinary programs
- d. establish faculty development fund
- e. create "venture-capital fund" for program innovation
- f. establish faculty development resource center/faculty development committee

Objective 3: Further strengthen the learning experience, including increased attention to the connections between classroom and non-classroom learning

Strategies:

² *Goals* state what the organization will do to carry out its mission. They derive from the mission and vision statements, and from the challenges that the institution has decided it must address in order to realize the vision.

³ *Objectives* are broad courses of action that the organization will pursue over a multiyear period in order to achieve its goals.

⁴ *Strategies* are specific, concrete statements of what must be achieved to implement an objective, specified in terms of measurable results.

- a. expand/enhance Learning Communities
- b. enhance student/faculty research fund
- c. enhance and support formal mentoring role of faculty; strengthen advising
- d. restructure academic support programs
- e. implement DULAP – Drake University Language Acquisition Program (also addresses Goal IV, Objective 3)
- f. implement student leadership development program
- g. expand service learning initiatives (Campus Compact, etc.) and internship opportunities that enhance on-campus learning
- h. evaluate the role of athletics (intercollegiate Division I; intramural; wellness programs, etc.) in contributing to the learning experience; make recommendations for strengthening

Objective 4: Provide technological leadership, support, and infrastructure necessary for the highest levels of teaching and learning

Strategies:

- a. appoint chief information officer
 - b. develop strategic plan for educational technology and distance learning
 - c. develop and implement strategic plan to address needs for information access in teaching/learning/research (including the role of the University Library)
 - d. establish Center for Technology Studies to provide leadership and direction for technology-based teaching/learning
- *Goal II*: Improve and sustain the financial strength of the University

Objective 1: Increase operating efficiencies; reduce costs

Strategies:

- a. achieve financially viable student/faculty ratio
- b. implement zero-based budget system
- c. reduce operating costs at school/college level by \$400,000
- d. reduce overload pay
- e. develop and implement payroll classification system
- f. develop and implement performance management system
- g. explore incentive/merit-based pay system

- h. set net revenue targets for auxiliary operations⁵; ensure that auxiliaries are self-supporting
- i. develop a capital budget and plan for future maintenance needs (5-year deferred maintenance plan)
- j. implement new Campus Information System
- k. conduct work-process analyses to simplify and streamline procedures, paperwork
- l. conduct ongoing financial ratio analysis and key indicator comparisons with appropriate peer groups
- m. develop and implement employee incentive plan for cost savings
- n. exploit opportunities for Des Moines Area Higher Education Buying Cooperative

Objective 2: Increase operating revenues

Strategies:

- a. increase net tuition revenues consistent with educational price index (EPI)⁶

a1. increase tuition annually at a rate not to exceed the CPI

a2. stabilize EFR (entering freshmen) at current level +31 (total of approx. 800)

Activities:

- i. continue Noel/Levitz partnership
- ii. identify, strengthen, and publicize truly distinctive aspects of Drake education
- iii. develop and implement strategies to respond to changing demographics in core geographic areas
- iv. explore increased admissions efforts in selected non-core areas
- v. increase on-campus programming for high school students (programs; competitions; courses; sports camps, etc.)
- vi. explore accelerated admission program for outstanding H.S. juniors
- vii. explore scholarship partnerships with Iowa communities for selected areas of study (e.g., education)
- viii. reevaluate strategies for high school counselors in key areas
- ix. reduce undergraduate discount rate

⁵ Auxiliary operations include residence halls, athletics, dining & catering, etc.

⁶ The EPI is a composite index that tracks cost factors that play a major role in college/university budgeting (e.g., benefits, materials and equipment; book and periodicals costs, utilities, etc.)

x. increase retention/persistence

a3. increase transfer admissions to ___ per year (Tom?)

a4. improve freshman to sophomore persistence to 85% and 6-year graduation rate to 70%

Activities:

- i. renovate first floor of Olmsted as student center
- ii. develop and implement annual study of students who leave to understand reasons students do not persist
- iii. develop comprehensive plan for residence life, including residence hall improvements/renovations
- iv. conduct assessment of first-year experience
- v. conduct Board-directed study of Greek system (Student Life Committee)
- vi. implement enhancements to non-Greek social programming
- vii. develop communications strategy to enhance students' understanding of the University
- viii. develop strategies to encourage greater student engagement in student activities
- ix. identify and implement strategies to connect students to key constituencies in the DSM community (business, community, political leaders, etc.)
- x. connect students to service opportunities in the community

a5. increase non-undergraduate net tuition revenues

Activities:

- i. increase enrollments in selected existing graduate programs
- ii. develop net revenue-sharing incentive plan for faculty/staff, departments, and colleges for program development
- iii. develop and implement adult (non-traditional) student recruitment strategy; i.e., expand initiatives of Center for Special and Professional Studies [Connie Sanderson's strategic plan for the CSPA should be inserted here]
- iv. identify, develop, and expand distance learning opportunities

b. increase endowment support

- i. successfully conclude Campaign Drake
- ii. review investment strategies

- iii. develop post-campaign strategies (major gifts, annual fund, etc.)
- c. set benchmark standards for gifts and cost of fundraising
- d. increase Annual Fund contribution to operating budget to \$_____
- e. increase revenue-producing use of physical plant
- f. increase grant and contract income
- g. expand Drake/Des Moines Corporate Partners Scholarship Program
- h. develop scholarship partnerships with Iowa communities for teacher education
- i. increase external support of Athletics

Objective 3: Increase institutional flexibility, responsiveness, and agility; enhance ability to manage change and exploit appropriate opportunities

Strategies:

- a. create contingency response plan for budgetary shortfall
- b. identify and build strategic reserve fund
- c. support initiatives of Center for Special & Professional Studies
- d. conduct a community-wide discussion of tenure and its impact on the institution
- e. flatten administrative decision-making structures
- f. simplify and streamline faculty (academic) decision-making structures in key areas
- g. create revenue-sharing incentive program for new initiatives
- h. implement "customer-service" training for Drake employees
- i. identify and implement cultural change strategies
- j. design and implement administrative sabbatical program

Objective 4: Implement and support technological infrastructure necessary to achieve operating efficiencies

Strategies:

- a. implement new Campus Information System
- b. develop a strategic plan for administrative technology
- c. explore and implement technological convergence strategies to lower telecommunications costs
- d. restructure IT support to maximize responsiveness and efficiency
- e. identify budgetary resources for appropriate replacement schedule
- f. explore partnerships with corporations and other institutions to share infrastructure and costs

- *Goal III:* Recruit and retain faculty and staff of the highest quality

Objective 1: Ensure fair and competitive compensation

Strategies:

- a. target salaries at top quintile of peer institutions⁷
- b. ensure faculty workload equity
- c. increase number of endowed professorships⁸
- d. develop and implement payroll classification system⁹
- e. develop and implement performance management system⁵
- f. explore incentive/merit-based pay system⁵

Objective 2: Provide environment conducive to excellence and professional development

Strategies:

- a. create all-University Tenure & Promotion Committee
- b. enhance faculty and staff orientation programs
- c. implement staff development program (fund; leadership; resource center)
- d. implement faculty development program (funds; leadership; resource center)
- e. implement improvements to working environment (classrooms; laboratories; offices; equipment; technology)
- f. create short- and long-term international opportunities for faculty and staff
- g. design and implement leadership/administrative development program for faculty
- h. provide support for faculty/staff attendance at professional meetings
- i. establish faculty/staff center
- j. engage faculty and staff in the mission and community of Drake University
- k. enhance faculty/staff recognition programs

Objective 3: Develop creative, new models for employment

⁷ The following institutions currently constitute Drake's peer group for benchmarking purposes: Bradley University, Butler University, Creighton University, Duquesne University, Hamline University, John Carroll University, Marquette University, University of Dayton, University of Evansville, University of Hartford, University of Richmond, University of Saint Thomas, Valparaiso University, Xavier University (OH)

⁸ see Goal II, Objective 2b

⁹ see Goal II, Objective 1

Strategy:

- a. facilitate realistic career path opportunities that maximize faculty abilities and interests for the good of the University and the individual (such as position-sharing partnerships with local businesses)
- *Goal IV:* Ensure that Drake students, faculty, and staff are able to function effectively as members of diverse local, national, and global communities

Objective 1: Increase diversity of students, faculty and staff

Strategies:

- a. [recommendations of Diversity Task Force]

Objective 2: Improve campus climate for diversity

Strategies:

- a. [recommendations of Diversity Task Force]

Objective 3: Increase global dimensions of Drake education

Strategies:

- a. establish Center for Global Inquiry
- b. implement Drake University Language Acquisition Program (DULAP)
- c. implement on-campus faculty development seminars on global education
- d. support faculty/staff participation in global education conferences, workshops
- e. encourage and support faculty/staff participation in overseas learning opportunities
- f. encourage and support faculty/staff participation in international associations, networks
- g. *[more. . .]*

Objective 4: Increase Drake's activities in international education

Strategies:

- a. expand international institutional partnerships as appropriate to institutional strengths and goals
 - b. increase study-abroad opportunities for Drake students
 - c. increase international student and faculty presence at Drake University
 - d. encourage faculty/staff participation in overseas study/research opportunities (Fulbright, etc.)
 - e. [more. . .]
- *Goal V:* Improve relationships and communications with University's constituencies (students; faculty; staff; boards; alumni; prospective students & their parents; friends; community; state; nation)

Objective 1: Develop and implement a strategy to enhance Drake University's visibility and impact in the Des Moines community, in the region, and on a national level

Strategies:

- a. support faculty and staff in taking leadership roles in the community, regional/national organizations
- b. enhance connections between University and media (local, regional, national) for expert commentary, placement of articles & op-ed pieces
- c. initiate and support partnerships with local organizations & institutions (e.g., PEP, I Have a Dream, DSM School System, WDSM Schools/IBM Global Village, etc.)
- d. pursue partnerships with the neighborhood for creative community development and revitalization (e.g., retirement communities; expanded student housing; commercial development, etc.)
- e. increase visibility and fan support for Drake athletics
- f. [more. . .]

Objective 2: Develop and implement a campus communications strategy

Strategies:

- a. develop schedule of regular town meetings
- b. develop campus intranet
- c. [more. . .]

Objective 3: Develop and implement an effective marketing program in support of University's admissions and fundraising efforts

Strategies:

- a. redefine mission of Marketing and Communications to place primary focus on proactive marketing and communications priorities rather than client-specific requests.
- b. conduct communications audit to assess current efforts and identify opportunities for streamlining and synergies to maximize effectiveness and impact.
- c. develop baseline perceptual measures of Drake through market research among key external and internal audiences that will also provide market-based foundation for maximizing the impact of communications efforts.
- d. define and disseminate "Drake brand," based on target market research, that culminates in a visual design standard, key messages and an ongoing integrated communications plan for raising awareness and creating strong point of differentiation from competitors.
- e. create and execute an ongoing, focused public relations plan for the University that enhances local, state and regional presence through a variety of non-advertising mediums (publicity, news media, faculty/staff involvement in key organizations, partnerships with local organizations and institutions, etc.)
- f. create and execute a media management and media relations strategy to assure accuracy and consistency of message, while providing ongoing opportunities for expert commentary, op-eds, etc.

Components of such a strategy will include:

- Media contact/university spokesperson plan
- Crisis communications plan
- Media contact and spokesperson training
- Experts" database of faculty "experts" available to the media
- Database of media targets for proactive story placement
- Goals and measurements for proactive media placements

Objective 4: Develop and implement a set of strategies to ensure productive and timely communication between the University and its core external constituencies (Board of Trustees; NAB's; President's Council; alumni)

V. Next Steps

We want to ensure that we have heard the Drake community correctly – that the goals and objectives as outlined are consistent with our discussions over the past two years regarding our aspirations for Drake in the 21st century. We will be scheduling a public forum – a Town Meeting – to facilitate feedback and input on this document during the week of October 15th. . We also encourage feedback by e-mail to president@drake.edu, or in hard copy to the President’s Office. We hope that feedback will also include, as appropriate, suggestions for additional strategies.

By the end of October, we hope to have received all comment on the goals and objectives, and will be in a position to finalize them as the organizing structure of our strategic plan. At that point (early November), RPAC and the Cabinet will meet with the Administrative Council to assign responsibility for “fleshing out” each of the strategies to the appropriate departments and units. This task will involve developing the details of the strategy, including (but not limited to) identifying the person responsible for ensuring that it is carried out, a time-line, indicators of progress/success, and resources needed (and their proposed source). Those detailed strategies will be due to RPAC in early December, at which point they will be integrated into the Strategic Plan.

A draft plan will be submitted for scrutiny by the campus in January, followed by submission to the Board of Trustees for their approval at the end of that month.