

## **Compilation of Task Force Recommendations**

### **University Strategic Planning Council**

#### **ACHIEVING ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE**

1. Establish an efficient system of program/center/institute/campus review, with the goals of maximizing academic potential, reducing redundancy and freeing resources to support academic excellence.
  - Establish a process of systematic review of all degree programs, extend the system of review of research centers and institutes, and carry out creative and realistic examinations of campus missions.
  - Implement a five-step process for systematic, university-wide program/center/institute/campus reviews.
  - Institute a process for conflict resolution.
  
2. Enhance excellence in teaching and learning.
  - Conduct a systematic outcomes assessment of general education to decide whether the general education program needs adjustment or overhaul.
  - Integrate theoretical and applied ethics into the curriculum across the University.
  - Infuse more scholarship/research opportunities and cross-disciplinary/interdisciplinary opportunities into the undergraduate curriculum and experience.
  - Expand opportunities for significant international academic experiences and attract more international undergraduate students to Penn State.
  - Encourage and support students' active engagement in their academic programs.
  - Engage more of the University's most distinguished faculty in teaching introductory courses.
  - Increase financial support for both undergraduate and graduate students.
  
3. Support excellence through hiring and development of outstanding faculty and staff.
  - Use cluster hiring to attract outstanding faculty and build excellent programs.
  - Provide more effective review of and support for fixed-term faculty.
  - Increase faculty mentoring, support, and development.
  - Enhance opportunities for staff development and enable flexible approaches to staff recruitment and retention.

## CAMPUS MISSIONS

### Academic Programs and Student Success

1. Strengthen the position of the campuses in relation to University Park. Academic units are not connected across the university in the matter that non-academic units are connected. The university group tasked with developing disciplinary communities must be fully supported by campuses, colleges, and the administration so that these connections become routine and institutionalized.
2. Invest resources in campus 2+2 students before, during, and after change of assignment (CHOA). The task force proposes a development initiative targeting funds for special summer jobs/tuition for CHOA students facing financial challenges during the transition to University Park.
3. All Chancellors and Deans should be expected to focus on long term academic programming.
4. Encourage selective specialization of some campuses.
5. Strategically reconfigure the faculty. All new faculty hires should be expected to teach at multiple campuses and develop online/hybrid courses. In addition, campuses should consider hiring faculty whose expertise straddles more than one discipline to facilitate their ability to teach in multiple areas.
6. Campuses should review the University Park Colleges that their freshmen indicate they are headed toward at the point of application and enrollment. If only a few students over a long period of time head toward a particular college, a campus may not need to invest in tenure line faculty to teach courses that only a few students require.
7. Campuses should review the associate degree program portfolios for opportunities to consolidate programs as faculty retire.

## Enrollment Management and Marketing

8. Maximize the Penn State name and strengthen its brand recognition. Create a culture that we are “one university geographically dispersed” in everything we do. Plan a multi-year statewide campaign emphasizing “one university geographically dispersed.”
9. Continue the tuition differential at campuses as part of Penn State’s strategy to meet the land-grant mission.
10. Assess each region of the Commonwealth and develop a strategy to increase competitiveness.

- New Approach to Housing

The University should consider partnering with private developers to create campus housing opportunities and exploring innovative ways of developing on-campus or housing adjacent to the campus.

- International Students

Campuses are looking at their recruitment plans for international students with increased interest as a means to offset demographic shifts and also to promote diversity. What would attract international students, and which countries of origin should be targeted? What criteria would have to be met to make a campus attractive to international students? Would there be a critical mass to finance the additional infrastructure required to support international students? What campuses might benefit enough to justify the investment? How would we market such campuses? These issues and others should be evaluated with the expertise of the Office of International Programs.

- Adult Learners

Adult learners are a growing population that Penn State has not been able to attract in the numbers that other colleges and universities do. However, the campuses are now better positioned geographically and organizationally to recruit and serve adults with the implementation of the recommendations contained in the 2006 report by the Committee to Attract and Retain Adult Learners at Penn State.

- Campus Appearance

Funding selective remodeling projects as well as new facilities will improve the physical appearance of the campuses.

- Admissions Criteria and Academic Rigor

Each campus must make certain that classroom activities are appropriately rigorous and prepare students to transition to upper division undergraduate work. Do students with lower

high school GPAs/SATs find it more difficult to succeed at University Park? If teaching rigor drops to accommodate weaker students at a campus, campuses should consider raising standards for admission.

#### Operational Efficiency and Resource Management

11. Invest appropriately to ensure that we are one university geographically dispersed connected by pioneering technology and instructional delivery methods. To support this vision, we should develop a Center for Geographically Dispersed Teaching and Learning composed of representatives from Information Technology Services, Schreyer Institute, and key leaders from the university. Promote the World Campus and e-Learning as powerful advantages for student recruitment.
12. Develop partnerships with private and public entities to continue strengthening campus infrastructure.
13. Follow up on the Commonwealth Campus Budget Task Force recommendations to determine which academic or administrative areas can use shared resources to address campus needs.
14. Continue tuition pricing differentials between University Park and the campuses.

#### Long-term Campus Sustainability and Re-missioning

15. Every college and every campus should have an effective and functioning enrollment management team.
16. Encourage better collaboration between the campuses, Cooperative Extension, and Continuing Education (CE).
17. Identify specific metrics that may trigger a review of campus sustainability.

## ENSURING STUDENT SUCCESS

1. Provide effective programs for key times of transition (including students enrolling as new, first-year students, changing campuses, transferring to Penn State, starting graduate level work, graduation, etc.).
  - Develop a “transitions” program for Change of Campus undergraduate students.
  - Enhance the First Year Experience for new students
  - Develop ways to partner with concerned and involved parents to support student success while helping the student transition into independent adulthood.
  - Provide programs for at-risk students
  - Develop programs to introduce new graduate students to the expectations of graduate level research, scholarship, and study.
  - Enhance and develop programs that assist students in their transition to professions and career.
  
2. Improve the availability and consistency of advising, mentoring, and academic support.
  - Create a culture of excellence in which students seek out advising and mentoring.
  - Build more connections between the various forms of advising.
  - Ensure that all students receive regular and appropriate advising.
  - Make academic support services partners in advising.
  - Examine the reward structure for faculty advising.
  - Explore ways in which graduate students can be more effective mentors of undergraduates.
  - Explore ways in which peer mentors can be an effective part of undergraduate advising.
  - Continue to ensure that technologies that assist students with advising and making academic progress are kept up to date and easy for students and advisors to use.
  - Assess the effectiveness of the systems of advising used across the University.
  
3. Develop new research opportunities for students.
  - Increase the awareness of how undergraduate students can become involved in research, particularly during their first two years.
  - Develop a seamless way in which all of the campuses can work together to ensure that undergraduate students have opportunities to perform research.
  - Increase fellowship opportunities for our undergraduate and graduate students to engage them more fully in the research process.
  
4. Integrate student services as an essential component of student success.
  - Continue to provide quality career services; provide stronger efforts to increase students’ use of these services.

- Support, review, and enhance programs and services designed to assist students in need such as those provided by Counseling and Psychological Services, Disability Services, the Center for Women Students, the LGBTQA Student Resource Center, the Multicultural Resource Center, and others.
5. Integrate the educational experience, including curricular and co-curricular aspects.
    - Emphasize interdisciplinary work and interdisciplinary connections across the curriculum.
    - Emphasize service learning and experiential learning in courses, minors, and major programs whenever possible.
    - Integrate diversity and internationalization in meaningful ways in the curriculum and co-curriculum and provide structures to showcase the diversity of individuals, cultures, and viewpoints among Penn State's students, faculty and staff.
    - Develop systematic co-curricular activities and programs that support the formal, faculty-led curriculum.
    - Conduct systematic program reviews and identify programs for potential consolidation or elimination.
    - Conduct a systematic review and develop a plan that will revise and integrate our general education offerings.
  6. Establish conditions for a culminating experience that reinforces the integration of learning (e.g., e-portfolio, capstone course, performance, internship, exhibition, thesis, etc.).
    - Develop a required capstone experience in all undergraduate programs and provide resources for piloting these.
  7. Increase internationalization, including global understanding.
    - Increase internationalization of curriculum in order to facilitate global citizenship among our students.
    - Make study abroad an integral opportunity of each student's curriculum.
    - Increase interaction between domestic students and international students and scholars in residence
    - International and global experiences for students should be seamless with the other parts of their educational experiences
  8. Increase student perspectives and participation in decision-making.
    - Include diverse groups of students in decision-making whenever possible.
    - Explicitly discuss how key decisions will affect students
    - Increase transparency of decisions and the process through which they are made.

9. Integrate civic engagement opportunities, including service learning, public scholarship, and volunteerism into the student experience.
  
10. Integrate curricular and co-curricular activities to foster student leadership skills, ethical understanding, global awareness and innovative capabilities.
  - Develop leadership programs such as an interdisciplinary minor in leadership that would be open to all students.
  - Provide a highly visible forum for our students to hear well-known speakers who are experts in the field and who bring unique perspectives to modern problems.
  - Provide a forum for our students to discuss currently relevant, ethical case studies.
  - Encourage students to become members of professional societies related to their field in which leadership opportunities exist.
  
11. Integrate student work experience (including teaching assistantships and graduate assistantships).
  - Develop meaningful on-campus employment opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students.

## **INFORMATION RESOURCES, TECHNOLOGIES AND SERVICES**

The following actions are recommended for funding priorities:

1. Basic infrastructure must be funded, as every aspect of the University is dependent upon it.
  
2. A robust online teaching and learning infrastructure is critical to meeting the goal of 40,000 resident UP students, 40,000 campus students, and 50,000 World Campus students and to supporting a hybrid teaching and learning model. However, the technology is not in itself sufficient. Competitive business models and appropriate faculty support and faculty models will also be required, as described under the Teaching and Learning section.
  
3. Cyberinfrastructure and new infrastructure specific to disciplinary research require collaborative development between ITS, the colleges, and other academic partners. Investment should be in those areas that offer the most promise to keep Penn State competitive. New computational Sciences would be such an area.

4. A voluntary Open Educational Resources initiative supported by an enterprise e-repository system.
5. Administrative systems are 20 to 30 years old and should be redesigned for the 21st century.
6. Electronic repositories, digital content, e-preservation, and archiving are important to research and teaching and to preserving the University's electronic records and our cultural and disciplinary heritage.
7. Security and identity management are increasingly important as networks are more vulnerable and as more applications require management of appropriate access and use.

### **INTERNATIONALIZING PENN STATE**

1. The immediate priority is to reorganize and expand the University Office of International Programs. This office has a significant role to play in promoting international engagement, facilitating international research and education programs, and working with the academic units and the University Faculty Senate to establish global competency as a primary objective of the undergraduate curriculum.
2. We propose that the most effective way to achieve the vision of a Global Penn State is through a global alliance of partnerships with leading academic institutions around the globe. Such an alliance, with a limited number of strategic partners, would integrate research, scholarship, education and service to advance knowledge, address complex challenges and educate responsible global citizens. We suggest that building such an alliance should be one of the more important – if not the central – component of Penn State's strategic development over the next decade.
3. Penn State faculty must be enthusiastically engaged for almost any substantial international effort to succeed, and there currently exists little incentive for them to expand their international involvement at the expense of other important activities. To make this happen extensively across the institution requires that we initiate processes that reduce that activation energy, reward faculty

for making the additional effort, and that we send a strong signal to the community (faculty, staff, and students) that this is important.

## **LAND GRANT MISSION**

### Recommendations for Access

1. We recommend increasing the tuition differential between the Commonwealth Campuses and University Park. The latter should be allowed to rise to the level of the market, while the former should have moderate increases. Prospective students and their families should know, the university should acknowledge, and policy should be made on the fact that the missions of the campuses are significantly different than that of University Park.
2. Aggressively emphasize the important role played by financial aid, particularly in the form of grants and scholarships, to help ensure that financial access to a Penn State education is maintained for all students. The availability of need-based grants for academically-able students at University Park is most pressing, because of the higher tuition charged at that campus. We recommend that restrictions on giving to these Trustee scholarships be eased so that there are only two requirements: the students receiving the scholarship must have financial need, as defined by eligibility for a federal Pell Grant, and the \$50,000 gift must be donated over no more than five years.
3. In an era when it is impossible for any university, or any campus within a university, to be “all things to all people,” the Task Force recommends a considered evaluation of the missions of its campuses so that they might fulfill the land grant mission of the University by becoming more responsive to the needs of the communities they serve. The Task Force also recommends that all of the campuses at Penn State continue their efforts to explore cross-campus administrative and academic collaboration, in order to maximize the services and programs offered to students while minimizing the growth in costs.
4. We need to do a better job of tracking the success of our COA students to determine whether the 2+2 model is truly supporting the access component of the Land Grant mission and whether it is a viable one for some of our campuses.

5. The Task Force believes that the World Campus should continue its growth. Programs should be well-matched to community needs/markets and they should be flexible and entrepreneurial in nature. The university should continue to recognize that the primary constituency of the World Campus lies beyond the borders of Pennsylvania.

#### Recommendations for Extension, Outreach, and Research

6. The Task Force reaffirms Penn State's commitment to the Cooperative Extension model.
7. Beginning from its roots in agriculture, Cooperative Extension as stewarded by the College of Agricultural Sciences has expanded to address a wide range of pressing societal needs, often in collaboration with other academic units of the university. It may be a good idea to expand this model to other parts of the university, but only after priorities have been set, organization and technology explored, and funding mechanisms found. Trying to infuse the county-based, legislative- and county-funded extension model to new areas without new funding and new modes of delivery threatens to tax our already overstretched faculty and infrastructure. Given the university's commitment to excellence in all activities, the Task Force recommends a review of existing Cooperative Extension programming and other translational research programs to assess relevance, redundancy, and quality.
8. The Task Force recommends a market evaluation of Cooperative Extension programs and a move toward fee-based services where possible and appropriate.
9. The Task Force recommends a review of the current geographical and programmatic distribution of Cooperative Extension resources with specific reference to funding sources, the adoption of issue-focused teams in extension program delivery, and the availability of technology to enhance our ability to deliver excellent programs in the most cost-effective manner.
10. Penn State has made an institutional commitment to using technology to provide increased and sustained access to its educational experiences. From the World Campus to Penn State Public Broadcasting to Cooperative Extension, these might be expanded. Strategic alliances between World Campus and some of the campuses around the delivery of short-term, community-needed programs, between Cooperative Extension offices and some campuses, and between multiple campuses and academic programs "housed" at University Park could position the University to serve its citizenry in ways that are surely consistent with the traditional intentions of the land grant. The Task Force supports the increased use of media as a tool to extend Penn State's academic resources into communities throughout the state and throughout the world. It also recommends that the University support the growth in the use of technology through professional

development of faculty and staff to help them embrace technology, incentives to academic programs to encourage adoption of online course and degree delivery, and the integration of market needs with academically rigorous scholarship.

11. The Task Force recommends that continuing education work with the campuses to develop stronger programs and services for adult learners. In addition, we recommend that Penn State build scholarship funds for adult students who may often be attending classes on a part-time basis, an action that will also help address the access component of the land grant mission.

## **RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND REVENUE ENHANCEMENT**

The Task Force recommends:

1. Establishment of a follow-on committee to consider changes to the current methodology for “assessing” units their annual share of recycling.
2. Modification of the current approach to central administration support for new initiatives to an investment model.
3. Implementation of a regular process of program evaluation, with the goal of determining continued viability and relevance.
4. Taking a total compensation view for faculty and staff positions that considers both salary and benefit expenses.
5. Formation of a follow-on committee composed of health care specialists from across the University to advise the Office of Human Resources regarding evolving best practice standards in the field.
6. Moving to implement a defined contribution health insurance plan for retirees within the next year.

7. Consideration of an increase in the University Park undergraduate target enrollment by 1,000 students.
8. Initiation of a study to determine if structural changes to the Commonwealth Campuses could yield efficiencies and cost reductions.
9. Exploring creative ways to look at pricing and tuition discounting to encourage greater volume and increased program offerings during the summer session.