Achieving Distinction

A Report on the Strategic Progress of Boise State University

Produced by the Office of the Provost
January, 2009
Charting the Course —
A Strategic Plan for Boise State University

Charting the Course guides Boise State University’s journey toward our vision of becoming a Metropolitan Research University of Distinction and supports our continuing evolution as an institution. It shapes our direction as opposed to changing it. It reaffirms our existing strengths in areas such as undergraduate education, continues work on current initiatives, and identifies new opportunities.

Boise State University’s vision is defined by **four destinations:**

- Academic Excellence
- Public Engagement
- Vibrant Culture
- Exceptional Research

The University has identified several milestones of progress.

Five areas emerged from the planning process as being central to achieving our vision: Culture, People, Resources, Infrastructure, and Connections.

Ten goals were developed to make progress in those five areas.

Charting the Course is not a prescriptive strategic plan. Instead it defines a framework of broad goals that will guide the strategic planning efforts of the units of the university. It is up to the divisions, colleges, departments, and other units to determine how they can best contribute to achieving our vision.
Measuring Our Progress in “Achieving Distinction”

This document is our first Scorecard, and is designed to track and report our progress toward reaching our vision of becoming a Metropolitan Research University of Distinction. Our scorecard will also ensure accountability and document resource allocations in support of our strategic plan.

Strategic Accomplishments:

The various units of the university (e.g., departments, colleges, and divisions) have accomplished hundreds of actions in support of Charting the Course. Rather than listing all of those accomplishments in this document, we have listed a single “exemplar” accomplishment for each Destination and for each Goal. Many more strategic accomplishments are listed on the websites of the various units.

Key Performance Indicators:

We have developed and will continue to develop performance measures that are designed to capture the essence of our Destinations and Goals and to measure the progress of the university. The divisions, colleges, departments, and other units will develop their own measures of strategic progress, and display those measures on unit websites.

Information Sources:

The data upon which the measures in this document are based have come from numerous internal and external sources. Most internal data is drawn from operational sources such as financial audit data, enrollment data, or other data secured by Institutional Assessment, Analysis, and Reporting (IAAR; http://www.boisestate.edu/iassess/).

Two specific sources of information that yielded several measures were:

1. The Campus Climate Survey, conducted by the Task Force on Campus Climate. Two reports, one on students and one on faculty and staff, were produced in late 2006. They assess the concerns and perceptions of individuals about the prevailing conditions of our learning and working environments. Those reports may be found at: http://www.boisestate.edu/provost/campusclimate/index.shtml

2. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Indiana University Bloomington. Boise State participated in the survey in 2002, 2004, 2006, and has just completed its participation in 2008. The NSSE provides a number of student perception measures of Boise State and provides benchmark data from a cohort of other urban universities. Additional information may be found at: http://nsse.iub.edu/index.cfm
Destination: Academic Excellence

Idaho Professor of the Year

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching selected Boise State University professor Heidi Reeder as the 2007 Idaho Professor of the Year. Dr. Reeder is an associate professor in the Department of Communication in the College of Social Sciences and Public Affairs. Dr. Reeder’s honor marks the 11th time that a Boise State professor has earned this award, and the seventh time in the past decade.

Destination: Public Engagement

Carnegie Foundation Recognition for Community Engagement

The Carnegie Foundation selected Boise State as a recipient of its newly created Community Engagement Classification. Boise State is one of 76 universities nationwide to be recognized for efforts to engage the community through partnerships, outreach activities, and curricula that have positive impact on the Treasure Valley and on the university. The recognition places the university among the ranks of the University of California-Los Angeles, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of North Carolina. Boise State was the only institution in Idaho to receive this honor.
Destination: Vibrant Culture

Numerous artistic and athletic events are hosted by Boise State University. Over 130 research, artistic and scholarly exhibits were presented at the 2008 Undergraduate Research Conference. Lighting the torch was an important part of the opening ceremony of the 2008 Special Olympics Invitational Winter Games in the Arena. The International Food, Song, and Dance Festival celebrated global diversity at Boise State. More than 400 men and women compete in 18 intercollegiate sports at Boise State, providing the community with many opportunities to attend sporting events.

Destination: Exceptional Research

Biomolecular Nanowire Research

David Araujo, a graduate student in the Department of Materials Science and Engineering, is working with engineering professor Dr. Bill Knowlton on an interdisciplinary research project to use strands of collagen, the most abundant protein in the human body, to build biomolecular nanowires. The project is part of a larger research project at Boise State involving biology, materials science, electrical and computer engineering, and other fields. The research is funded by the U.S. Department of Defense. Co-investigators on the project include materials science and engineering professor Dr. Amy Moll, biology professor Dr. Julie Oxford, and electrical and computer engineering professor Dr. Wan Kuang.
Key Performance Indicators for:

Destination: Academic Excellence

Academic Excellence denotes high quality student focused-programs that integrate theory and practice, engage students in community-based learning, and are informed by meaningful assessment.

Student perception of academic challenge (NSSE)

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) score of the perceived level of academic challenge at a university provides one measure of academic excellence. Our students perceive that the level of academic challenge is increasing at Boise State, and is nearly as high as at urban peers.

Student perceptions of active and enriching learning environments (NSSE)

Two additional measures of academic excellence are student perceptions of an enriching educational environment and of active & collaborative learning. Both are increasing at Boise State and are now essentially equal to those at our urban peers.

Students participating in courses with a Service Learning component

Service Learning at Boise State exists to foster active citizenship and enhance learning through academically-based community service. Courses with a service learning component require students to participate in a community service project that is relevant to the subject of the course. The number of students who have enrolled in a course with a service learning component has nearly tripled over six years.

Future Measure

Milestone

Recognized for integrating research with teaching and learning in high-quality programs
Key Performance Indicators for

**Destination: Public Engagement**

Public engagement links the University’s academic mission with its community partners to address issues of mutual benefit.

### Students participating in community-based projects for courses (NSSE)

One way that Boise State is linked to the community is through projects that students complete in their courses. Over half of students graduating from Boise State in 2008 participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course. Boise State consistently has had more students involved in such projects than other urban universities.

### Students engaged in voluntary activities through the Volunteer Services Board

The role of the Volunteer Services Board (VSB) is to connect student volunteers to the community. Volunteers facilitated by the VSB have contributed over 600 hours per year to the community.

### Funding for public service activities

Another link to the community is through public service activities, which include research projects, community education, and training grants. The funding devoted to public service by Boise State has increased by approximately 50% over the past seven years, with most of that increase occurring in the last year.

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**Milestone**

Recognized for partnerships that contribute to regional growth and development

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**Future Measure**
Key Performance Indicators for

Destination: Vibrant Culture

A Vibrant Culture embraces and fosters innovation, responsiveness, inclusiveness, accessibility, diversity, and effective stewardship.

Racial diversity of the student body

The racial diversity of the Boise State student body has steadily increased. The non-white student population increased 24% over the past seven years, from 10.5% to 13.1%. Our Hispanic population has grown the fastest, from 5.5% to 6.7%.

Supportive campus environment (NSSE)

A supportive campus environment will facilitate a vibrant culture by helping students of various backgrounds to feel welcomed and accepted at our campus. Student perception that Boise State offers a supportive campus environment has been increasing.

Interactions with students of different beliefs and ethnicity (NSSE)

In a vibrant culture, a diversity of people meet and engage with one another. Increasingly, students at Boise State indicate they have "often had serious conversations" with those with different beliefs or those of different ethnicities. We rank close to the average for other urban schools regarding different beliefs. As would be expected because of our modest level of ethnic diversity, we rank below other urban schools regarding interactions with students of different ethnicities.

Student participation in leadership activities

Over one third of the 2005-2006 graduates responding to our alumni survey reported that they had been involved in student clubs or organizations, and one in five had participated in volunteer services. At last count there were 208 student clubs and organizations at Boise State. Our new minor in Leadership Studies is increasing the number of students involved in student leadership activities.
**Key Performance Indicators for**

**Destination: Exceptional Research**

Exceptional Research is defined by progressive scholarship and creative activity, and graduate programs that have groundbreaking applications locally, regionally, and globally.

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### Externally funded research expenditures

The gold standard for measuring research activity is externally funded research expenditures. At Boise State, funding from externally funded research projects is up substantially over the past six years, from $6.1 million in FY 2002 to $9.7 million in FY 2007.

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### Sponsored project proposals and awards

The primary way that researchers secure funding is by submitting successful grant proposals. The dollar value of submitted proposals has risen dramatically since FY 1999 to more than $90 million in FY2008. The increase in awards is steady and has occurred in spite of a cooling of the national economy, reaching more than $28 million in FY2008. Project awards are expended over multiple years following the award.

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### Doctoral graduates

Doctoral graduate programs are key to Boise State’s research effort. Our EdD program was initiated in 1993, and has thus far had 53 graduates, with 42 graduating since 1999-2000, as shown in the graph. Our first PhD program, in Geophysics, was initiated in 2000 and by the end of 2007-08 had graduated 3 students. Two new PhD programs (Geology and Electrical & Computer Engineering) were launched in fall 2006.

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### Publications and Citations of Publications

Publications and the impact of those publications on the discipline are key to increasing our reputation in the area of research and creative activity. The number of items published by Boise State faculty members during a five year span has increased by 67% from 1999-03 to 2004-08. The impact of articles authored by Boise State faculty members, as measured by the number of times those articles are cited during a 5 year span, has nearly tripled in the same time period.
Boise State University is emerging as a Metropolitan Research University of Distinction. This transformation is being powered by the university’s first comprehensive campaign to support students, faculty, strategic initiatives, research and infrastructure. That’s why the campaign to raise $175 million in private support is called Destination Distinction. The specific goals include: Support of Students ($37 million), Support of Learning ($26 million), Direct Academic Support ($43 million), Support of Facilities ($69 million).

**Interactive Learning Center Unveiled**

Strategic Goal: **Obtain Fiscal Resources to Support the Vision**

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**Strategic Goal: Build and Maintain Facilities**

In September 2007, the Interactive Learning Center (ILC) was christened to facilitate state-of-the-art learning with cutting-edge technology. The $13.5 million building is being financed through bonds issued by Boise State and repaid through pledged revenues of the university. The ILC is one of the first manifestations of Boise State’s 2005 Campus Master Plan.

**Strategic Goal: Recruit & Retain Faculty and Staff**

Boise State University is one of six national recipients of the 2007-08 Alfred P. Sloan Award for Faculty Career Flexibility. The award will enable us to enhance the flexibility of career paths of faculty members. Our plan is to develop mentoring programs to address work-life balance issues, create policies and opportunities for part-time appointments for faculty members throughout their careers, and educate faculty members regarding policies and procedures that speak to career flexibility.

**Strategic Goal: Recruit & Retain a Prepared and Diverse Student Body**

The Honors College is undergoing a period of renewed growth. In 2007-08, 80 students joined the Honors College. For 2008-09, it is estimated that over 100 new students will join the 335 current Honors students. In addition, there will be a large expansion in the number of Honors students living in the Honors College housing on campus. New initiatives to improve recruitment and retention include active recruiting of gifted students, reformatting of the initial Honors seminar to address new student needs, and ensuring that Honors students have priority in registering for classes.
Strategic Goal: Provide Student-Centered Services

The Office of New Student and Family Programs was recently created to improve the academic success of new students. To increase acclimation and academic integration, a 2-day orientation was initiated which includes lectures by professors, meetings with advisors, community building, and activities for family members. Orientation is now organized together with the academic colleges to better link students with academic units on campus. In addition, new students are given equal access to key courses.

Strategic Goal: Promote Diverse Communities

Founded in 2004, the Residential College program provides students a unique opportunity to live and learn with students who share similar academic interests. Each of the five communities is facilitated by a faculty member who lives within the residence hall and who plans learning outcomes and activities that will benefit the overall academic experience of students. Two more Residential Colleges are being organized.

Strategic Goal: Provide Development Opportunities for Faculty

The Boise State Teaching Scholars Program is designed to stimulate dialogue, reflection, and innovation in teaching, to foster a sense of community, and to promote scholarly teaching practice. Sponsored by the Center for Teaching and Learning, the program involves interdisciplinary communities of faculty in a year-long process of inquiry to promote faculty development and enhance student learning.

Strategic Goal: Develop Network and Outreach Opportunities

Applied learning often benefits the community as it benefits students. For example, nursing students work on quality improvement community projects in the health-care sector. The Nursing Leadership faculty team calculated that in three semesters, three nursing faculty and 64 students made an estimated $193,135 in in-kind contributions. Projects included the evaluation of an immunizations education program for Central District Health and the creation of a suicide monitoring plan for the Suicide Prevention Action Network of Idaho.

Strategic Goal: Respond to the Educational Goals of the Region

“This program is a perfect example of ways the university and community can partner to build a better future and ensure the quality of life,” said Susan Mason, director of the new Master’s in Community and Regional Planning (MCRP). The MCRP program will prepare students in environmental planning, land use, transportation, and development to help tackle Southwest Idaho’s rapid growth. Graduates will assume professional planner roles in the numerous headquarters for local, state, and federal agencies, as well as with consulting companies and developers.

Strategic Goal: Organization Responsive to Change

In 2007, President Kustra joined more than 400 colleges and universities by signing the Presidents Climate Commitment, which commits Boise State to become climate neutral within 3 years. Some of the key initiatives already underway at Boise State include designing all new construction to meet at least the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED Silver standard, expanding access to public transportation to reduce commuting emissions, establishing a campus-wide recycling program, and waste-stream minimization practices.
Contributions to the Boise State Foundation

Private gifts to Boise State are increasing dramatically with the initiation of the university's first-ever comprehensive campaign, Destination Distinction, which has a goal of raising $175 million. Note that the FY 2008 bar only represents the first six months of the fiscal year.

Sponsored project income

Sponsored project revenues have increased by 17% over the past six years. Of this total, state and local grants/contracts have grown by 50%, which is substantially higher than the growth of federal grants/contracts (10% growth) and private grants/contracts (13% growth). Sponsored projects include research grants and contracts, federal financial aid grants (e.g., Pell grants), and training and educational grants and contracts.

Average educational expenditures per student

From FY 2002 to FY 2008, educational expenditures per student grew by 10.4%, while at the same time the Consumer Price Index rose 21%. Changes in distribution of funds represent our priorities: per student funding to academic support and instruction increased by 46% and 11%, respectively.
Boise State's Carbon Footprint

Cumulative new space added since 2000
Boise State added 724,000 square feet of space for academics, student activities, and athletics between 2000 and 2008. Another 300,000 square feet is scheduled to come online over the next three years, including a 40,000-sq-ft facility for nursing programs, a 56,000-sq-ft. research facility, and a 93,000-sq-ft. expansion of the student union.

Square feet of space per student
The amount of teaching space per student at Boise State is comparable to its peers, as would be expected given our strong tradition of excellence in teaching. However, as we transition to become stronger in research, we will build more research labs to give students opportunities to work on research projects. We will also increase student residential housing to give more students the opportunity to live on campus.
(Source: Society for College and University Planning)

Square feet of office and research-dedicated space per faculty member
We have nearly enough office space for faculty members and the staff members who support their efforts. A much greater challenge is providing space for research and creative activity to support our transition to a Metropolitan Research University of Distinction. The new Center for Environmental Science and Economic Development, scheduled to be completed in mid-2010, will provide 23,400 square feet of new research laboratory space.

Boise State's Carbon Footprint
Boise State produced a carbon footprint of 2.58 metric tons of carbon dioxide per student in 2007, the second lowest level of greenhouse gas emissions among the twelve institutions depicted. Three quarters of our emissions is attributable to transportation (28%), purchased goods and services (27%), and electricity (28%). Reducing our footprint is one goal of the new Associate Vice President for Energy Research, Policy, and Campus Sustainability.
To recruit and retain the highest quality faculty members, Boise State must pay competitive salaries. Average salaries of faculty members have remained nearly constant over the last two years as a percent of AAUP (American Association of University Professors) national average benchmarks. In FY08, averages for full professors, associate professors and assistant professors were 88%, 89% and 93%, respectively, of AAUP benchmarks for those ranks.

To recruit high-quality staff members also requires competitive salaries. Salaries of professional staff members at Boise State lag behind the CUPA benchmark but are improving. In 2006-07 Boise State salaries were 74% of CUPA, rising to 75% of CUPA in 2007-08.

As our enrollments increase and as we shift to a greater emphasis on research, we must add full-time faculty members or face increased student-to-faculty ratios, potential over-reliance on part-time instructors, and decreased ability to carry out research and creative activity. Since FY2004, we have increased the number of tenured/tenure-track positions by 9% to 497, and the number of full-time lecturers by 92% to 65.

As a result of an increased number of full-time faculty members and an increased focus on research, we have been able to reduce the student-to-faculty ratio, a key metric of instructional quality. Another result of the hiring of more full-time faculty members is that we have increased the percent of credit hours taught by full-time faculty members from 53% to 54%.
Six-year graduation rate

A second key metric of student success is the six-year graduation rate. This is the percentage of first-time, full-time freshmen who graduate with a baccalaureate degree within six years. Boise State’s six-year graduation rate has gradually improved to 26% for students who started in 2001 compared to 22% for students who started in 1995. The “Finish in Four” is one initiative that will cause a substantial increase in our graduation rate.

Retention rate for freshman students

Boise State’s freshmen retention rate is improving. Over two-thirds (68%) of first-time full-time academic freshmen who started in fall of 2007 returned to Boise State in fall of 2008. Retention rate is a key metric of student success because the first year is when two-thirds of all non-completers leave college. Various initiatives are underway to improve retention such as enhanced orientation and advising programs, increased financial aid, higher admission requirements, expanded residence hall space, and the Finish-in-4 program.

Characteristics of newly enrolled freshmen

The quality of high school students who enroll at Boise State has been steadily increasing. The proportion of freshmen entering with a 3.5—4.0 high school GPA rose 31% over six years and the proportion of freshmen admitted from the top quartile of their high school class rose 43% over the same period. The average high school GPA for the 2,214 entering freshman of the class of 2007 was 3.31. Ethnic diversity of incoming freshmen has been essentially constant, and the percentage non-white was 13.1% in 2008.

National Merit Scholar acceptances to Boise State

One indicator of the public perception of the quality of Boise State academic programs is our ability to recruit and enroll top students. There has been a substantial increase in the number of National Merit students accepting offers from Boise State, from none in 2005, to 5 in 2006, and up to 16 in 2008. In addition, the acceptance rate among those considering Boise State has increased from 38% in 2006 to 57% in 2008.
Students receiving academic services

There has been a rapidly expanding use of various student academic services such as advising, tutoring, academic success skill classes, and special programs to facilitate and monitor the transition to academic life. Use of central tutoring increased by 47% between 2003-04 and 2007-08, while use of centralized advising center services increased by 145%. Usage statistics are not available for other types of advising, such as that provided by faculty, or tutoring support from other sources.

Student rating of academic advising (NSSE)

Boise State students gave the quality of overall academic advising a lower rating than did students at other urban institutions. There has been a slight increase in the Boise State rating. The question does not discriminate between various sources of advising.

Student rating the quality of academic support (NSSE)

Our students gave a lower rating to the perceived emphasis that Boise State places on support for academic success than did students at other urban universities. Our rating, especially among first-year students, is increasing rapidly, and we are closing in on the rating of other urban schools. To increase our support of academic success, we have added seven new advising positions to the Office of Advising and Academic Enhancement during the last two years.

Student rating of administrative personnel and offices (NSSE)

Boise State students gave a lower rating to the quality of support received from administrative personnel support than did students at other urban institutions. Our ratings have not noticeably changed over time.
Encouraging interactions among those with different beliefs and ethnicities (NSSE)

NSSE asks students whether their university encourages interactions with individuals of different ethnicities and with different beliefs, and also asks whether those experiences contributed to a better understanding of differing groups. In both cases, Boise State students gave a rating that was lower than the average of other urban universities. To facilitate better understanding of differing groups, all undergraduates must now take an appropriate course to meet a diversity requirement.

Student perceptions of the quality of student and faculty interactions (NSSE)

An important aspect of community at a university is student-faculty interaction. Boise State students gave a rating to those interactions that was lower than the average from other urban universities. A number of organizations on campus are addressing the quality of student-faculty interactions, including the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Office of Advising and Academic Enhancement, and the Honors College.

Perceptions of receiving fair and equal treatment (Campus Climate Survey)

To feel part of the campus community, faculty and staff members must receive fair and equal treatment. A substantial majority of both groups indicated that they receive fair and equal treatment from Boise State. In 2007, all governing bodies at Boise State adopted a new Statement of Shared Values.

Student and faculty participation in study abroad programs

Another important aspect of the community experience of a university student and of a faculty member is participation in a study abroad program. The number of student participants has increased substantially. The number of faculty members taking advantage of study abroad experiences has remained relatively constant. Recommendations of a recent taskforce on internationalization include creation of an advisory board and grants to develop international curricula.
Undergraduate students participating in research projects with faculty (NSSE)

One of the most direct ways for faculty members to integrate research and teaching is to provide opportunities for students to work directly on research projects. About 15% of seniors reported having participated in research projects with faculty members. Research experience as an undergraduate is particularly important for students who intend to go on to graduate school or professional school, or to head directly into the workplace.

Student participants in the Undergraduate Research Conference

Boise State’s annual Undergraduate Research Conference showcases the work that students have done with faculty members. This includes many types of research and creative activity, as well as many modes of presentation, including poster and podium presentations; dance, theater, music, and oral interpretation; and visual arts and video/film. The number of student participants continues to grow each year.

Number of graduate assistantships

State appropriated funding for graduate assistantships (GA) provides an important foundation for successful graduate programs. The number of state-funded assistantships grew by 13% between 2005 and 2008. Grant funding for GAs indicates the success of investigators at securing funds to add members to their research teams. The number of grant-funded assistantships grew by 21% between 2005 and 2008.

Future Measure
**Key Performance Indicators for**

**Strategic Goal:**

**Develop Network and Outreach Opportunities with the Community**

**Sponsored project funding from state, local, and private sources**

Funding from state, local, and private sources has increased at Boise State, reflecting the increased emphasis the university has placed on scholarly activity and on connections with the community.

**Impacts of the Idaho Business Development Center (Idaho SBDC)**

The Idaho SBDC develops productive connections with the business community of Idaho. Housed in the College of Business and Economics, the Idaho SBDC has provided consulting and training to small businesses for 25 years. The average annual growth in sales of Idaho SBDC-assisted business has consistently exceeded the average annual growth in sales of Idaho small businesses statewide.

**Students participating in applied experiences (NSSE)**

Hands-on experience is a valuable learning experience for students; it also provides important benefits to the community. Over half of the Boise State undergraduate students graduating in 2006 participated in at least one applied experience, including internships, clinical experiences, field work, and student teaching.

**Future Measure**
Between 2000 and 2006, the population BSU’s 10-county service area increased by 22%. During that same period, Boise State increased enrollments, number of credits generated, and number of degrees awarded at essentially the same rate, enabling us to keep the per-citizen rates (see graph) nearly constant, indicating that our services are keeping pace with the increased population of our service area.

Dual enrollment gives high school students a relatively convenient and inexpensive way to receive college credit for courses taught at their high schools, at the Boise State campus, and via electronic delivery. Nearly 5,000 dual enrollment credits were awarded in FY 2008, a near quadrupling since FY 2004.

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Financial challenges often prevent students from starting or completing their college careers. Therefore, access to financial aid is an important factor in our ability to support regional educational needs. Financial aid availability has been improving for freshmen; however, it has not improved for the general undergraduate population. Because financial support for students is so important, a major goal of Destination Distinction is to raise $37 million for student scholarships.

It is by creating and implementing new academic programs and modifying existing ones that Boise State ensures that programs appropriate to the needs of the region are offered. Since the year 2000, 41 new programs have been implemented. The largest increase is in graduate programs: we have implemented 3 new PhD programs, 20 new Masters programs, and 7 graduate certificate programs.
Foundational to any efforts to change our university is the need to give our employees the knowledge and skills necessary to facilitate that change. There has been a rapid growth in the number of workshops offered by the Office of Training and Development for Boise State employees. In addition to these workshops, in 2008 a contract was established with SkillSoft to provide a wide range of online workshops and skill-oriented books.

The policies that guide our institution must be examined and revised periodically to ensure that they meet our ever-changing needs. In each of the last 3 years, 10% or fewer of policies were revised or newly created, with the result that more than 50% had not been revised or newly created during the previous 8 years. A new policy group has been formed to greatly enhance our ability to write new policies and revise existing ones.

Future Measure