

Background and Reflection

In 2005 Boise State University declared its vision to become a Metropolitan Research University of Distinction. In working toward this vision, a team of faculty and staff from across the university developed a strategic plan titled "*Charting the Course: A Strategic Vision for Boise State University.*" The bold new plan was published in April 2006 and outlined ten broadly defined goals focusing on four key areas: academic excellence, exceptional research, public engagement, and vibrant culture.

Since *Charting the Course* was published, Boise State University has made excellent progress toward reaching its vision. Highlights of the University's progress and surrounding events include:

- The 2008 opening of the Treasure Valley's first public community college, The College of Western Idaho, has increased access to post-secondary education in the region, released Boise State University from its charge to provide vocational training, and allowed the university to focus its academic mission
- An increase in the university's admission requirements, resulting in 40 percent of the entering freshmen for Fall 2011 earning a high school GPA exceeding 3.5 and SAT scores in critical reading and math that are substantially higher than the national averages
- A complete overhaul of the undergraduate core curriculum, structured around clearly articulated learning outcomes that provide a connected, multi-disciplinary framework of learning from freshman to senior years
- Increased retention and a flattening of the undergraduate enrollment profile from one that was historically over-represented by lower division students
- An expansion of graduate programming, with new Master degrees in anthropology, business administration, chemistry, community and regional planning, educational leadership, hydrologic sciences, mathematics, nursing, and STEM education; and new doctoral degrees in educational technology, electrical and computer engineering, geosciences, biomolecular sciences, and materials science and engineering
- A near-doubling of space for student activities (690,000 ft² total)
- An increase of 390,000 ft² for academic and research activity, including a new 84,000 ft² research facility that opened in fall 2011 and a 120,000 ft² business building scheduled to open in fall 2012
- A 55% increase in graduate degrees conferred (652 in FY 2011)
- A 68% increase in sponsored project expenditures (\$35M in FY 2011)
- A 63% increase in publications by Boise State University authors (1079 in calendar years 2006-2010)
- A 326% increase in citations of Boise State University publications (3874 in calendar years 2006-2010)

These achievements have occurred despite a 23% reduction in state funding over the past three years. In place of state support for new programs, funding has come from increases in enrollment, tuition and grant support, internal reallocations, university reserves, and bond issuance. The university also completed a comprehensive campaign in 2010 that generated over \$100M for academic programs and facilities.

Boise State University has made impressive strides toward becoming a Metropolitan Research University of Distinction, and we envision even greater advances in the years ahead. The process of developing a strategic plan for the next five years began in May 2011 with focused one-on-one conversations between campus leadership and 40 members of the faculty and staff. The rich information gleaned from those conversations was used to create a campus-wide survey that generated over 500 responses. The resulting data was used to create a set of core themes that describe the key aspects of the university's mission and inform the strategic planning process.

Process

In August 2011 groups from across the campus performed an analysis of the university's strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities. Informed by these analyses and our core values, the university's executive team produced a vision statement for the strategic planning process, as well as four pillars on which the strategic plan would be constructed. President Kustra, in his fall 2011 address to faculty and staff, announced that Boise State University would build a new strategic plan for the next five years with a draft of the goals and strategies to be completed by January 2012 and an implementation plan in place by May 2012.

During the fall semester four planning teams, led by executive team members and organized by pillar, developed a draft set of goals and strategies with input from key stakeholders. Planning team members included:

Pillar One: Local and Global Impact

Team Leader: Mark Rudin, Vice President for Research and Economic Development

Team Members: Bill Connors, Boise Chamber of Commerce
Debbie Kaylor, Director of Career Center
Jim Munger, Vice Provost for Academic Planning
Jack Pelton, Dean of Graduate College
Mark Wheeler, Dean of Extended Studies
Cindy Clark, Professor of Nursing

Pillar Two: Student Success and Engagement

Team Leader: Lisa Harris, Vice President for Student Affairs

Team Members: Mara Affre, Executive Director of Enrollment Management
Leslie Webb, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs
Al Dufty, Associate Dean of Graduate College
Andrew Finstuen, Director of Honors College
Anne Gregory, Professor of Literacy and Faculty Senate President
Doug Lincoln, Professor and Department Chair of Marketing and Finance
Sharon McGuire, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies
Francisco Salinas, Director of Student Diversity
Brandie VanOrder, President, Associated Students of Boise State University

Pillar Three: Visionary Relationships

Team Leader: Rosemary Reinhardt, Interim Vice President for University Advancement

Team Members: A. J. Balukoff, Foundation Board Member
Jim Browning, Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering
Tim Dunnagan, Dean of Health Sciences
Leslie Durham, Professor of Theatre Arts
Bruce Newcomb, Director of Government Relations
Melissa Lavitt, Dean of Social Sciences and Public Affairs
Mark Rudin, Vice President for Research and Economic Development
Kathleen Tuck, Assistant Director, Communications and Marketing

Pillar Four: Organizational Effectiveness

Team Leaders: Stacy Pearson, Vice President for Finance and Administration; Kevin Satterlee, Vice President and General Counsel

Team Members: Chris Rosenbaum, Assoc. Vice President for Finance and Administration
Pablo Coblenz, Assistant Vice President for Human Resource Services
Greg Hill, Professor & Chair of Public Policy and Administration
Marilyn Moody, Dean of Albertsons Library
Michelle Payne, Professor and Chair of English
Pat Shannon, Dean of Business and Economics

The work of the planning teams was vetted by the campus community in January and finalized by the executive team in preparation of a university-level implementation plan to be developed during the spring semester.

Foundation for a New Vision and Strategic Plan

Boise State University's Mission Statement (approved February 2012 by the Idaho State Board of Education)

Boise State University is a public, metropolitan research university offering an array of undergraduate and graduate degrees and experiences that foster student success, lifelong learning, community engagement, innovation and creativity. Research and creative activity advance new knowledge and benefit students, the community, the state and the nation. As an integral part of its metropolitan environment the university is engaged in professional and continuing education programming, policy issues, and promoting the region's economic vitality and cultural enrichment.

Core Themes

In September 2011, the university submitted four core themes to its accrediting body, The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. Each core theme, which is summarized below, describes a key aspect of our mission. A complete description of the core themes, including objectives pertaining to access, relevance, quality, and culture, can be accessed at <http://academics.boisestate.edu/planning/accreditation-standard-one/>.

***Undergraduate Education.** Our university provides access to high quality undergraduate education that cultivates the personal and professional growth of our students and meets the educational needs of our community, state, and nation. We engage our students and focus on their success.*

***Graduate Education.** Our university provides access to graduate education that addresses the needs of our region, is meaningful in a global context, is respected for its high quality, and is delivered within a supportive graduate culture.*

***Research and Creative Activity.** Through our endeavors in basic and applied research and in creative activity, our researchers, artists, and students create knowledge and understanding of our world and of ourselves, and transfer that knowledge to provide societal, economic, and cultural benefits. Students are integral to our faculty research and creative activity.*

***Community Commitment.** The university is a vital part of the community, and our commitment to the community extends beyond our educational programs, research, and creative activity. We collaborate in the development of partnerships that address community and university issues. The community and university share knowledge and expertise with each other. We look to the community to inform our goals, actions, and measures of success. We work with the community to create a rich mix of culture, learning experiences, and entertainment that educates and enriches the lives of our citizens. Our campus culture and climate promote civility, inclusivity and collegiality.*

Shared Values

Boise State University has established a set of shared values. These values guide our strategic planning, as they do all actions within the Boise State community.

- **Academic Excellence** - we engage in our own learning and participate fully in the academic community's pursuit of knowledge
- **Innovation** - we strive to create new and better ways of accomplishing our mission
- **Collaboration** - we reach across institutional, societal and cultural boundaries, working together for the success of the university and students
- **Responsibility and Fairness** - we are accountable for our choices and actions, which are based on an expectation of equality, impartiality, openness and due process
- **Citizenship and Respect** - we uphold civic virtues that prescribe how we behave in a self-governing community, obeying laws and policies while treating people with dignity, regardless of who they are or what they believe
- **Caring and Trustworthiness** - we manage ourselves with integrity by being honest in our communication and conduct, and by showing concern for the welfare of others

Vision for Strategic Plan 2012-2017

Boise State University aspires to be a research university known for the finest undergraduate education in the region, and outstanding research and graduate programs. With its exceptional faculty, staff and student body, and its location in the heart of a thriving metropolitan area, the university will be viewed as an engine that drives the Idaho economy, providing significant return on public investment.

In formulating its strategic plan for 2012-2017, Boise State University embraces the following aspirational characteristics of the university:

- Spirited Optimism
- Transformative Thinking
- Principled Action
- Responsible Risk Taking

Pillars of the Plan

Local and Global Impact

Boise State University fuels a robust regional economy and contributes to a vibrant and healthy community by focusing on societal and economic needs. Our students graduate with skills, knowledge, and experience that are relevant and valuable locally, regionally, nationally, and globally. The work of our teachers, researchers, artists, and students provides social, economic, and cultural benefits.

Student Success and Engagement

Boise State University fosters a rich and diverse culture that is student-centered, enabling students to focus on success and achievement of their educational goals. Students participate in their education through innovative learning environments in which they gain disciplinary expertise grounded in experiential practice. Our graduates are well-rounded in the arts, sciences and humanities; they are prepared to meet the challenges and pursue the opportunities of today and tomorrow; and their experiences at Boise State create an enduring bond with the university.

Visionary Relationships

At our core is a commitment to relationships that transcend all boundaries, inspire creativity and innovation across disciplines, and foster strategic growth and economic investment in the university. These relationships bring together strengths within and beyond the university to create synergistic opportunities that enable us to explore new possibilities, address complex problems, break down barriers, and create learning experiences that synthesize ideas and practices across a diversity of perspectives. Engagement with the community promotes our mission, provides experiential learning for students, and ensures alignment of programs with crucial needs.

Organizational Effectiveness

Pursuing our vision requires careful consideration of the ways in which we acquire and invest resources. We pursue innovative, broad-based funding models to ensure sustainable acquisition of those resources. We garner support from stakeholders by explicitly demonstrating return on investment. To ensure responsible stewardship of our resources, we are committed to creating business practices, processes, and organizational and physical infrastructures that are both effective and efficient, while providing a safe environment for working, teaching and learning. We hire well-qualified individuals from diverse backgrounds, facilitate their development as employees, and promote a culture of service, accountability and excellence. We celebrate and reward creativity, diversity, innovation, and openness to change.

Key Challenges and Opportunities

Reputational Currency

Higher education does not enjoy the same reputational currency that it once had. Even with increasing public recognition that higher education is critical to the nation's continued economic prosperity, questions abound regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of our nation's institutions of higher education. Employers lament that many college graduates lack fundamental skills such as communication, critical thinking, quantitative analysis, problem solving, and teamwork. Universities are struggling to address these quality concerns while maintaining access through affordable tuition and fees in the face of reductions in state appropriations.

With our efforts to address these concerns, Boise State University has an opportunity to increase its reputational currency. Specifically, the university is confronting the challenge from employers by implementing a new general education program based on nationally recognized LEAP (liberal education and America's promise) standards. Launched in 2005 by the American Association for Colleges and Universities, the LEAP initiative has gained national acceptance as an academic framework to ensure that essential learning outcomes are integrated and reinforced throughout the undergraduate curriculum.

As a public institution, we have also been mindful of the increasing financial burden placed on students and their families as rising tuition replaces state funding of higher education. Among Idaho's public universities, Boise State has the lowest tuition while receiving the least amount of state dollars per student.

Boise State has also made great strides in research and graduate programming, with new doctoral programs and a significant increase in graduate degrees conferred, in research space and expenditures, and in publications and citations of those publications in the literature. Much like our success on the field has advanced the Boise State brand as a football powerhouse, other successes provide an opportunity for Boise State to showcase its increasing research and academic prowess.

Student Success and Diversity

The State of Idaho is committed to increasing the education and earning potential of its citizens. In response to this commitment, the State Board of Education has established a goal for the year 2020 that 60% of all citizens between the ages of 25 and 34 will have a degree or certificate. Boise State University is well positioned to make an impact on the 60% goal but it must overcome historically low rates of student retention and graduation. The low rate of retention is rooted in the institution's past as a commuter school located in the largest metropolitan area of the nation without a community college. The region's first community college opened in 2009, and with the recent increase in admission standards, more student housing and improvements in advising and other student services, retention is on the rise at Boise State, having increased by 15% over the past four years. Increased retention has led to a more even distribution of undergraduate students between the lower and upper divisions. These factors provide an opportunity for Boise State to increase its graduation rate, provided the university keeps pace with the increased demand for upper-division coursework from students who are retained or transfer from the community college. In responding to the evolution of the student body, it will be critical for faculty and staff to understand the changes necessary and their individual roles in achieving that change.

Student success also means the ability to work in an increasingly integrated and global society. While Idaho is less diverse than most states, it has a growing population of minorities, many of whom do not have a history of access to higher education. The recruitment and retention of faculty and staff from under-represented groups, as well as first-generation and other underrepresented college students from Idaho, can have a greater impact on the State's 60% goal than recruiting and retaining students who would go to college, regardless. Simultaneously, all students at the university will gain greater appreciation and respect for diversity in perspectives and cultures, in order to become successful global citizens.

Organizational Effectiveness and a Culture of Service in a Changing Environment

Rules and regulations that govern operations at the university are often cumbersome, inefficient, unnecessarily time-consuming and costly, hampering our ability to be flexible and adaptable to the needs of an evolving workforce. Traditional ways of operating have gained the status of unwritten rules at the university, and employees are hesitant to challenge and change unspoken policies. In 2010 the state legislature exempted the university from oversight by the State Division of Purchasing under certain conditions. This provides an opportunity for the university to streamline its purchasing policies and procedures in order to gain substantial efficiencies that increase customer satisfaction. Additional relief from state oversight in other areas, if granted, should produce similar opportunities.

The current organizational structure of the university reinforces silos, and the value of creating partnerships across that structure is not always tangible. Various units of the university function independent of one another with competing priorities, needs, and goals, despite sharing the same overall institutional mission. Certain operating processes are centralized, while others are decentralized in an ad hoc rather than a strategic manner, leading to duplication of effort. As the university has grown, its communication strategies have become less effective due to the need for efficiency at the cost of individualized messages and services, while rapid policy development has created a culture of compliance at the expense of customer service and facilitation. Many university operating processes and procedures are not aligned with existing systems (technological, fiscal, etc.), which results in shadow systems and other inefficiencies. The university's current Enterprise Roadmap Project (<http://roadmap.boisestate.edu>) is an opportunity to assess and re-design systems and processes, in order to reduce inefficiencies while removing obstacles to integration, cooperation and change.

Academic approaches have changed significantly in the past ten years, from strategies for the instruction, support and engagement of students, to the requirements of technology and reporting to state and accrediting agencies. We hire and appoint employees with increasing frequency to positions for which they have insufficient training. While there is an expectation for faculty and staff to advise and serve students in a rapidly changing environment, such service is not always supported, promoted or evaluated in a consistent manner; nor is the university's infrastructure flexible enough to adapt to the new demands associated with a changing environment.

Developing a culture of service that focuses on student success is critical to providing the best education for students, and will result in students forming an enduring bond with the university. Strategies developed to promote such a culture must overcome bias towards the status quo and a lack of understanding and communication across all divisions of the university.

Financial Constraints and the Need for Prioritization

The university has multiple sources of revenue: state appropriations, tuition and fees, and other sources that include grant overhead, profits from self-support programs, and donor contributions. State appropriations have declined in recent years due to an unhealthy economy. Because enrollment has risen more rapidly at Boise State compared to other Idaho institutions, our share of the remaining state appropriations has become increasingly inequitable. Unfortunately, it is unlikely that these funding inequities will be fully resolved in the near future, and revenue from tuition and other sources is insufficient to make up the difference. With these funding restraints, the ability of the university to provide research and academic programs is exceeded by the needs and expectations of the community it serves. There is a need to evaluate and prioritize all university programs and activities based on criteria that are well-vetted and transparent.

Alignment of programs and activities has largely been left to individual units, based on the perceived needs and expectations of their self-identified constituencies. A more holistic approach is necessary to ensure integration across units and academic disciplines, in a manner that is consistent with the mission of the university.

In order to make informed decisions based on university priorities, it is essential to have widespread and timely access to reliable data that is easy to interpret. Such access is currently lacking. The reliance of individual programs on multiple funding sources has led to decisions driven more by funding availability than strategic need. As a result, allocation of resources across the university is uneven and has led to inconsistencies in the student experience. The lack of timely access to data that is both reliable and understandable also makes it more challenging to provide consistent data to our stakeholders in a timely manner, and to present our best case in support of our resource needs.

Finally, the university must look for new revenue streams and alternate funding models for new or expanding programs.

Emphasis on STEM Disciplines

It is widely recognized that the nation is in danger of under-producing the scientists and engineers necessary to maintaining our technological leadership in a global economy. In a 2005 report from a coalition of business organizations titled "Tapping America's Potential," an alarm was sounded that America's leadership in the natural sciences, technology, engineering and math (STEM) disciplines is at risk. President Obama subsequently identified three overarching priorities for STEM education in his "Educate to Innovate" campaign. Many states, including Idaho, have echoed this call to action with their own programs. The Idaho STEM Pipeline and I-STEM are two such programs in Idaho that have recently combined efforts to "increase access to STEM learning opportunities within Idaho for all students." The Treasure Valley also has a growing need for highly trained scientists, engineers, and healthcare professionals, in order to fuel the continued expansion of its high-tech and healthcare industries.

Historically, the STEM disciplines at Boise State University have been underrepresented, both in terms of the number of majors and the production of graduates, yet that imbalance has recently diminished. From 2006 to 2011 the number of students majoring in STEM disciplines increased 66% while overall growth in the student body was 5%. Even with this surge, Boise State continues to lag the nation in the proportion of its graduates earning STEM degrees. If

Boise State is to continue its current trajectory toward a research university of distinction, it will need to maintain the trend of increasing STEM participation, and translate that trend into a more balanced output between STEM and non-STEM degrees at both the graduate and undergraduate levels.

Graduate Programs

A significant factor in the surging interest in STEM disciplines at Boise State University is the increase in external funding for research. More than 90% of our increase in sponsored project expenditures over the past five years is directly tied to research in the STEM disciplines. Conversations with external funding agencies and their review panels make it clear that Boise State must increase the number of PhD students who participate in research in the STEM disciplines if the University is going to reach the next level of research prominence and better compete for funding with other research universities. During the last academic year (2010-2011) Boise State University graduated over 650 students with a Master's degree, while conferring fewer than the minimum of twenty doctoral degrees required for Carnegie classification as a doctoral research university.

As a metropolitan university, providing strong professional graduate programs that meet the needs of the community will continue to be an important part of our mission. And with the recent approval of several new PhD programs by the State Board of Education, we now have an opportunity to develop strong doctoral programs in the STEM disciplines, as well.

Focus on Effectiveness: A Strategic Plan for Boise State University **2012-2017**

Goal 1: Create a signature, high-quality educational experience for all students.

Strategies:

- Develop the Foundational Studies Program into a memorable centerpiece of the undergraduate experience.
- Provide bountiful opportunities within and across disciplines for experiential learning.
- Facilitate respect for the diversity of human cultures, institutions, and experiences in curricular and co-curricular education.
- Cultivate intellectual community among students and faculty.
- Invest in faculty development, innovative pedagogies, and an engaging environment for learning.

Goal 2: Facilitate the timely attainment of educational goals of our diverse student population.

Strategies:

- Identify and remove barriers to graduation.
- Bring classes to students using advanced technologies and multiple delivery formats.
- Design and implement innovative policies and processes that facilitate student success.
- Connect students with university services that address their individual needs.
- Ensure that faculty and staff understand their roles and responsibilities in facilitating student success.

Goal 3: Gain distinction as a doctoral research university.

Strategies:

- Recruit, retain, and support highly qualified faculty, staff, and students from diverse backgrounds.
- Identify and invest in areas of excellence with the greatest potential for economic, societal, and cultural benefit.
- Build infrastructure to keep pace with growing research and creative activity.
- Design systems to support and reward interdisciplinary collaboration.

Goal 4: Align university programs and activities with community needs.

Strategies:

- Include community impact in the creation and assessment of university programs and activities.
- Leverage knowledge and expertise within the community to develop mutually beneficial partnerships.
- Collaborate with external partners to increase Idaho students' readiness for and enrollment in higher education.
- Increase student recruitment, retention, and graduation in STEM disciplines.
- Evaluate our institutional impact and effectiveness on a regular basis and publicize results.

Goal 5: Transform our operations to serve the contemporary mission of the university.

Strategies:

- Reinvent our academic and business practices to improve service and efficiency.
- Simplify or eliminate policies and regulations that waste effort and resources.
- Invest in faculty and staff to develop key competencies and motivate top performance.
- Break down silos that inhibit communication, collaboration and creativity.
- Provide widespread and timely access to reliable and understandable data, and use it to drive decision-making across the university.
- Build an infrastructure to encourage and accommodate external funding, philanthropic support, private-sector relationships, and a diversity of funding models.
- Develop and implement a model for resource allocation that supports strategic goals and promotes innovation, effectiveness, and responsible risk-taking.