Focus on Effectiveness

A Strategic Plan for Boise State University 2012-2017

Project Overviews for
Proposed Portfolio of University-Wide Projects for FY2012-13
August 30, 2012

Projects that Build on Specific Initiatives Already Underway

> **Although every project will build on what we have done in the past, the following projects build on specific initiatives that are already underway.**

Develop Our Strategic Enrollment Plan as the Basis for Integrated University Planning

This project will create an integrated planning structure that will enable us to achieve strong alignment of our actions and resources with our mission and strategic plan. The centerpiece of this project is a Strategic Enrollment Plan.

Project Components

- An *Informational Foundation* that includes assessment of:
  - community/state workforce and access needs;
  - student demand;
  - program capacity, cost, productivity, and quality.
- A *Strategic Enrollment Plan* that translates our mission and strategic plan into goals for enrollment at both university and program levels, and that outlines a set of actions that will be taken to achieve those goals. Actions to be considered include: (i) using scholarships, tuition waivers, and recruiting to shape enrollments; (ii) defining course capacities necessary to accommodate enrolled students; and (iii) creating budget models that enable those course capacities to be developed.
- *An Analysis of Program Alignment* to determine if new or realigned programs would better meet the needs of the community and state, and to ensure that our academic programming and our research & creative activity are coordinated and mutually supportive.
- An *Infrastructure Plan* that describes the facilities and information technology necessary to implement the Strategic Enrollment Plan.
- A *Financial Plan* that describes the financial resources needed and fundraising efforts necessary to achieve the goals of the Strategic Enrollment Plan.

Achieve Institutional Effectiveness through Comprehensive and Systematic Assessment

This project will create a structure to ensure systematic and sustained assessment, at both the unit and university levels, of our effectiveness as an institution. Assessment will be used to improve our performance, understand the impact of those improvements, and to hold ourselves accountable. Assessment will be coordinated with review processes that are specific to particular units (e.g., periodic review of academic departments, teaching evaluations, and specialized accreditation), and will incorporate "industry standards" for assessment practices (e.g., Council for the Advancement of Standards).

Project Components

- Regularly scheduled university-wide assessment of institutional effectiveness.

    - One potential framework that could be used is defined in Ruben's "Excellence in Higher Education," and includes information on 8 dimensions: leadership, plans & purposes, beneficiaries & constituencies, programs & services, faculty/staff & workplace focus, assessment & information use, and outcomes & achievements.

- Methodology to ensure regular assessment of all units, with a focus on effectiveness and alignment with university mission.

- An audit of existing partnerships with the community, in order to:

    - strategically plan our future role in the community;

    - renew our Carnegie classification of "Community Engagement".

- A structure to oversee surveys conducted on campus, such as the Campus Climate Survey, Employee Engagement Survey [to be developed], and the National Survey of Student Engagement, in order to ensure that key surveys are conducted and that the resulting information is utilized.

Adopt Leading-Edge Pedagogy and Learning Environments at the Program Level

This project will focus on the _how_ and _where_ of learning. The "how" of learning depends very much on the pedagogy used by the instructor, while the "where" of learning pertains to the environment in which learning takes place – both the physical classroom environments and the anytime, anywhere environments leveraged by mobile learning strategies.

The primary goal of this is project is to enable academic departments to transform pedagogy and learning environments throughout an entire academic program.   Significant synergies will result from mutual support among faculty members and a consistency of student experience across the curriculum.

Project Components

- Initial discussions will help interested academic departments to understand and explore potential pedagogies that might be adopted.

- Proposals will be solicited from departments who are interested in further exploring and adopting innovative pedagogies at the program level.

- The work will be supported by the Center for Teaching and Learning.

- Because innovative pedagogy is often directly linked to the environment in which it is delivered, it is important to ensure that appropriately configured learning environments are available. For example, many of our classrooms have neither the physical setup, such as moveable tables, nor the technology required for modern pedagogies.

  - A set of guidelines well be developed for classroom construction, furnishings, and technology that facilitate learning through modern pedagogies.

  - A team will be developed and charged with ensuring that necessary facility and technological changes are made to support the implementation of new program-wide pedagogies.

Implement Complete College Idaho

As part of the Complete College Idaho program, the Idaho State Board of Education has set the ambitious goal that 60% of all Idahoans between the ages of 25 and 34 will have a college degree or certificate by the year 2020. The SBOE is developing a performance-based funding model that will link university funding to college completion rates.

The greatest impact on college completion rate in Idaho will result from (i) increasing the number of Idahoans who attend college, especially Idahoans from underrepresented groups; and (ii) increasing the completion rate for those who attend.

Project Components

- Help students, especially those with high financial need, to meet the financial challenges of college.
    - o Revise our financial aid award criteria, in order to facilitate college entry and completion, especially by underrepresented Idahoans.
    - o Focus our fundraising efforts on scholarships, including those that target underrepresented Idahoans.
    - o Increase opportunities for employment of students on campus.
- Scale up our advising and student support so that we "meet students where they are" in terms of their ability, financial capacity, college preparation, need for remediation, culture, etc., and thereby help them succeed.
- Create a greater focus on college entry and completion by increasing recruitment to degree completion programs, contributing to college preparation in high school, and targeting underrepresented Idahoans.
- Develop additional capacity in programs and course offerings, in order to reduce bottlenecks to graduation and better serve students in need of non-traditional formats.

Foster a Culture Focused on Student Success

This project is designed to build a culture in which staff and faculty have an unshakable focus on their role in the success of our students. This culture is necessary to increase retention and graduation rates at Boise State, which are much lower than those at our peer institutions.

Studies have shown that universities in which students perform and are retained at higher levels have several cultural elements in common: an unshakable focus on student learning; a "lived" educational philosophy; clear pathways to student success; and a shared responsibility for educational quality and student success. While many of our students report positive experiences, others describe Boise State's culture as bureaucratic and uncaring. A frequent complaint among students is "getting the runaround."

Project Components

- **Align performance with institutional mission and goals.** Leaders at every level of the university will be expected to:
    o model the university's focus on student success in their actions and priorities;
    o coach and mentor staff on standards and expectations for their actions;
    o incorporate expectations into performance evaluations, development plans, and reward structures for faculty and staff.

- **Disseminate models of effectiveness.** To reinforce desired behavior and culture in support of student success, we will publicize specific examples of exemplary behavior by faculty and staff in a variety of venues.

- **Adopt a "One Referral" Standard**. When a person (student, staff, faculty, or community member) makes an inquiry that needs to be referred from one office to another, that referral made should be the last.

- **Respond to assessment information**. A wide variety of information will be gathered to measure the contribution of faculty and staff to a culture of student success, including student comments from surveys, interviews "on the street", and focus groups. The resulting information will be reviewed by all university units, who will identify action items for their unit to address significant concerns.

Build Sustainable Structure to Increase Funding for Research and Creative Activity

This project will create a structure for helping faculty with the often challenging and time-consuming activity of developing grant proposals. One example of where such support is expected to generate significant returns is in the development of grant proposals that integrate education, social sciences, and humanities into research in the STEM disciplines. Such proposals can be especially strong in addressing the societal impact of proposed research, which is a primary consideration in proposal review.

Project Components

- Help with the analysis and organization of tasks involved in completing and submitting a grant proposal, as well as the actual grant writing. Activities would include grant writing workshops, mentoring of cross-disciplinary partnerships, and group writing sessions.

- Support for interdisciplinary proposals, including (i) seed funding to support proposals that integrate social sciences, education, and the humanities with research in the STEM disciplines; and (ii) the coordination of brainstorm sessions and other logistical support to enhance the development of complex interdisciplinary proposals.

- Seed funding to hire grant writers.

- Creation of a taskforce to identify and remove barriers to interdisciplinary research and creative activity.

Expand the Mobile Learning Initiative

The Mobile Learning Initiative (MLI) has made substantial progress in creating technology-enabled learning spaces, deploying unique-content delivery methods, supporting faculty and student digital fluency, and making e-content more available. We are "ahead of the pack" in many ways and this project is designed to continue that trajectory.

Project Components

- Continue to support access to e-content and devices through bookstore, library and other means:
    - expand the availability of library e-books and the usage of e-textbooks;
    - ensure access to devices for viewing e-content through loaner programs.
- Create and implement a marketing strategy:
    - increase awareness of mobile learning opportunities and resources and thereby broaden and deepen their usage among faculty and among students;
    - promote top-notch mobile learning initiatives as part of the university "brand".
- Continue support for innovation and exploration through faculty development programs:
    - plan and implement a set of expanded workshops to further increase digital fluency in faculty, staff, and students.

Maximize Success of the Foundational Studies Program in Achieving University Learning Outcomes

This project will create a university-wide structure to aid departments in the assessment of their Foundational Studies Program (FSP)[1] courses, especially Disciplinary Lens (DL) courses. An assessment structure that is integrated into our teaching and learning processes will ensure the highest possible level of attainment of the University Learning Outcomes (ULOs)[1]. This project also will facilitate integration of ULOs with the Program Learning Goals (PLGs) of our degree programs and connection of ULOs with co-curricular activities.

Project Components

- The FSP will coordinate a broad effort to create and implement an e-portfolio methodology for assessing DL courses.
    - Recent innovations in technology and associated practices demonstrate that e-portfolios will work well with our ULOs.
    - An e-portfolio system could be embedded into either myboisestate.edu or our learning management system (Blackboard Learn) so that the experience is seamless for students and faculty.

- Fall semester, 2012 marks the first opportunity to evaluate FSP courses and the effectiveness of the FSP program. The "Great Ideas for Teaching" Symposium scheduled for January will facilitate an institution-wide conversation of the FSP, including a discussion of student learning in DL courses, while promoting an ongoing inter- and intra- department conversations about student learning and pedagogical approaches, in general.

- Integration and coordination of ULOs with program-specific learning goals (PLGs) will be piloted in a representative set of academic departments. The goal of this activity is to increase student success at achieving ULOs and PLGs, and substantial economy in the assessment of that success.

- The association of ULOs with co-curricular activities will complement required program curricula. A pilot set of co-curricular activities will be aligned with ULOs, and a structure will be created to evaluate the effectiveness of those activities in helping students achieve ULOs.

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[1]For further information on the Foundational Studies Program and the University Learning Outcomes, go to http://academics.boisestate.edu/fsp/.

Strengthen the Structure and Operations of Academic Departments

This project will assess and improve key work processes in our academic departments, define and assign roles and responsibilities at the department and college level, and provide easy and timely access to the accurate data required to inform decision-making and operations within academic departments. The goal of this project is to provide department chairs with the ability to focus on strategic thinking and program assessment, while department operations are skillfully, effectively, and efficiently managed.

Project Components

- Incoming department chairs will participate in the Academic Leadership Program (ALP), which is designed to impart key knowledge and develop leadership and management skills.

- Department chairs will be invited to develop proposals to fund and implement changes in work processes, position descriptions, and staffing configurations within their departments. The proposals will be based on the identification and mapping of key work processes, review and revision of staff roles and position descriptions to carry out those processes, and the creation of staffing models to effectively accomplish department work.

- The University's Roadmap initiative and the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) will create a focus on facilitating the success of departmental operations.

   o Roadmap personnel will map key work processes and apply technology and systems changes to the needs of departments.

   o Data warehouse reporting formats will be created with a focus on department operations.

   o A "departmental operations" page will accompany the already-planned student, faculty, and staff pages as part of the Unified Web Experience.

   o OIR will expand its capacity to provide department chairs and administrative personnel with analyses that can be used to inform their decision making.