



**BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY**



**DECEMBER 2014**

## **GETTING A HANDLE ON UNIVERSITY INITIATIVES**

*“Initiative fatigue.”* It’s a phrase that I hear from faculty and staff who think there is not a compelling reason for them to engage in yet another new initiative, that there are too many of them, and that they are launched too often. Folks feel they have enough on their plates without another initiative that brings them work. In this issue of *Priorities*, we answer some of the frequently asked questions that I hear about initiatives.

### **So how do you know a university initiative when you see one?**

At the university or division level, there are several hallmarks:

- It’s an assignment or call to action, generally from an executive office
- It requires significant change in how we do things
- All or almost all departments/units participate and/or feel the impact
- It comes with accountability measures
- It might look and feel like a project with start and end times, but it will likely live on as an institutionalized (regular) activity.

### **What kinds of things do university initiatives address?**

The best initiatives have a clearly stated purpose to address one or more critical responsibilities of the university. Think of recent initiatives and you should be able to align them with one or more of the following purposes:

#### **Mission and goals:**

- What should we be doing in the next few years to accomplish our mission and goals?
- How can we increase the relevance and quality of our programs?

#### **External influences:**

- What must we do to demonstrate compliance, accountability, and responsiveness to our governing bodies and constituents?

#### **Institutional effectiveness:**

- How can we function better as an organization?
- How can we better align our work with strategic goals?
- How can we sustain our fiscal health?

### **Can't we have an "initiative free" period of time, in order to catch up?**

There will seldom be an "initiative free" period of time, although there will be variations in the level of required response to external influences in addition to our own priorities. The last few years have been particularly active, driven by external challenges and our institutional tradition of innovation and problem-solving. The fall of 2012 is memorable for the implementation of the Foundational Studies Program, a new class schedule, and a new set of strategic goals, all occurring in the aftermath of the great recession. The fall of 2013 brought us program prioritization that required huge amounts of time and energy from everyone. This fall we have been busy implementing many of the changes associated with program prioritization.

### **What initiatives are currently underway that impact and/or require participation from Academic Affairs?**

The following section provides information on our current initiatives, what we are trying to address with each, and where you can find out more information.

## **Mission and Goals**

### **Student Success Dashboard**

This fall, we launched First Year and Continuing Student tools (i.e. Student Success Dashboard) that identify students with four or more at-risk indicators. Faculty and staff can access these students' profiles and photos and develop appropriate communication and interventions.

**Learn more:** Click on Reporting Services via MyBoiseState or contact [Tim Squires](#) in Advising and Academic Enhancement

### **eAdvising**

eAdvising is a suite of tools for students and advisors. Degree Tracker is a course planning tool that allows students and advisors to know when students are off-track, and projects course demand for academic departments. Degree Tracker has been fully implemented. Coming soon are Advisor Notes and Degree Search.

**Learn more:** Housed in MyBoiseState. Contact [Ashlee Anderson](#) in OIT.

### **ePortfolios**

Digication, the ePortfolio platform, has been launched in Foundational Studies courses and a first round of degree programs. Barbara Schroeder has been hired as the Interim Manager; a permanent search is underway. Working groups considering how best to document competency-based

**Learn more:** Digication: [Barbara Schroeder](#). Badges and Credit for Prior Learning: [Sharon McGuire](#), Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies, or [Pete Risse](#), Associate

learning (e.g. badges and Credit for Prior Learning) will also use Digication.

### Articulation of transfer credits

We are focusing on ensuring that transfer students are able to quickly and accurately know which of their transfer credits will articulate with specific courses. We are creating course equivalencies for the top 20 transfer schools. We have also developed the Bronco Connect admission and advising services at CWI, and are working with individual departments to develop academic program articulations.

### College of Innovation and Design

The creation of the CoID was approved by the State Board at its October meeting. Several new transdisciplinary academic programs are being developed including a BS in Games, Interactive Media, and Mobile Media and an undergraduate Certificate in Leadership. Dr. Andrew Finstuen, Dean of Honors College, is serving as interim dean.

### Bridge to Career

Bridge to Career is a program using badges and certificates in skills and knowledge correlated to employability, encouraging students to reach across disciplinary lines to gain credentials relevant to the job market. The program will be housed in the newly formed College of Innovation and Design. Offerings will be available by Fall 2015.

## External Influences

### Complete College Idaho

This is an Idaho State Board of Education initiative in which all universities are participating. The goal is for 60% of Idahoans to attain at least a one-year post-secondary certificate or more. This is an external initiative very much in alignment with our own strategic goals. See the student success initiatives addressing our Mission and Goals.

## Institutional Effectiveness

### Assessment of Program and University Learning Outcomes

The recent mid-cycle review by the our regional accreditors, the NWCCU, strongly emphasized the importance of ensuring that we assess our University Learning Outcomes (ULOs) and the intended learning outcomes for all of our academic programs (PLOs), and that we make

Dean, Extended Studies.

**Learn more:** [Jeff Peters](#) in Advising and Academic Enhancement.

**Learn more:** [College of Innovation and Design Moving Forward](#)

**Learn more:** Project Lead [Andrew Finstuen](#), Interim Dean, College of Innovation and Design.

**Learn more:** See the student success initiatives addressing our Mission and Goals.

**Learn more:** [Mid-Cycle Evaluation Report \(pdf\)](#)

[E-Portfolios: Show What You Know](#)

improvements based on assessment results. During Program Prioritization, we evaluated how well each department is assessing program learning outcomes. We will follow up with departments during this year to strengthen that assessment where necessary. As we implement e-Portfolios and other assessment methods in our University Foundations (UF), Communication in the Disciplines (CID), and Finishing Foundations (FF) courses, departments will have the opportunity to integrate the assessment structures used for ULOs with those used for PLOs, thereby simplifying the work of departments.

### Program prioritization follow-up

Each university division is creating a “report card” that will depict all of the actions that have been proposed as a result of Program Prioritization (PP). The report card enables members of the campus community to see what actions resulted campus-wide from PP campus-wide and to track the progress of those actions. Over this next year, we will revisit the metrics developed during PP to ensure that they do a good job of measuring unit effectiveness.

**Learn more:** [Jim Munger](#), Vice Provost for Academic Planning.

### Strategic Enrollment

Under development is a new Strategic Enrollment Plan, which will use our strategic plan, mission, and core themes as a foundation for goals and strategies focused on enrollment. It will contain six strategic priorities (i) increase overall number of graduates, (ii) increase baccalaureate graduates with high impact on Idaho’s college completion rate, (iii) increase graduates from key areas, (iv) increase recruitment and access, (v) maintain appropriate enrollment, and (vi) increase retention and progression rates. A draft of the plan is due to be submitted to the President by the end of December, 2014.

**Learn more:** [Jim Anderson](#), AVP for Enrollment Services.

Marty Schimpf, Sharon McGuire, and Jim Munger are members of the Strategic Enrollment Committee.

### PRP Implementation

PeopleSoft Renovation Project (PRP) is focused on improving the PeopleSoft Human Resources and Finance modules along with many administrative processes.

**Learn more:** [PeopleSoft Renovation Project](#)

As you can see, we are not resting on past successes. Instead, we are actively engaged in work that addresses our mission and goals, external influences, and institutional effectiveness.

I will look forward to any feedback, questions, and ideas that you might have regarding current and future initiatives.

Marty

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## Have questions, comments, or suggestions for newsletter topics?

Contact Marcy Harmer at [marcyharmer@boisestate.edu](mailto:marcyharmer@boisestate.edu).

## Wonder who to contact in the Provost's Office for general questions?

Visit the Office of the Provost website to see the [staff listing](#).

### PROVOST AND VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

#### Dr. Martin Schimpf

Dr. Martin Schimpf joined the faculty at Boise State University in 1990. He has held several administrative appointments at the University, including Chair of Chemistry, Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and Dean of Arts and Sciences. He currently serves as Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, a position he has held since 2010. Dr. Schimpf holds degrees in chemistry from the University of Washington and the University of Utah. His interdisciplinary research on thermophoresis and the characterization of nanomaterials has led to more than 80 internationally distributed publications in the scientific literature.



#### OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

The Provost's office is committed to building a culture, along with the necessary support structures, in which faculty, staff, and students can thrive in our efforts to accomplish Boise State University's mission. Thank you for doing your part, and let us know how we can support you.

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