

THE ISSUES AND CONCERNS

The previously listed subcommittees were formed to address key components of University operations and to assure comprehensive coverage and identification of issues that would impact planning. Those committees are *Academic and Research Excellence, Strategic Enrollment Management, Fiscal Integrity, Information Technology, and Facilities and Master Planning*. Each committee was charged with identifying and deliberating on the substantive issues and concerns that related significantly to the University's ability to advance performance in their respective areas. Those issues and concerns are as follows.

Academic and Research Excellence was operationally defined by the committee as "a coordinated effort of faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni to produce the knowledge, behavior and skills for students to become productive citizens employable in their fields of study. Excellence requires faculty to provide quality instruction, advising, and mentoring and to pursue scholarship and research that will positively impact the community, their fields of study, and our students. Excellence is evident in the quality of our graduates and their impact on the larger society and in the intellectual leadership of the faculty." The committee deliberated and identified the primary issues and concerns affecting the accomplishment of goals and objectives in this area. In order for the University to achieve academic and research excellence, it must pursue these courses of action:

- Proactively manage undergraduate, graduate, and professional enrollment growth;
- Increase student retention and graduation rates while meeting other state performance measures and accreditation standards;
- Provide remedial education designed for student success;
- Increase student outcomes;
- Recruit and retain high-performing and competitive faculty;



- Provide funding for faculty salary increases, professional development, research facilities, and physical expansion;
- Address the challenges of technology in the instructional process;
- Develop future academic leaders;
- Continuously assess academic programs, including reviews to ensure that programs are current with industry trends and disciplinary developments; and
- Enhance the University's image to attract additional resources.

Strategic Enrollment Management was operationally defined by the committee as “the planning, analysis, implementation, and controlling of programs and activities designed to recruit and retain through graduation a student population consistent with the mission of the University. Enrollment is managed in a strategically deliberate, data-driven manner to assure a high-quality education and excellent customer service for the University's student population.” The committee deliberated and identified the primary issues and concerns underlying the accomplishment of goals and objectives in this area. In order for the university to achieve performance excellence in enrollment, it must take the following steps:

- Recruit more academically talented students;
- Increase student retention and graduation rates;
- Provide quality developmental instruction and academic support;
- Offer high-demand degree programs;
- Respond to student interests in the offering and scheduling of courses;
- Provide more scholarships and institutional financial aid; and
- Provide quality customer service to students.



Fiscal Integrity was operationally defined by the committee as “the ability for an entity to operate its fiscal affairs so as to fulfill its vision and mission in an ethical manner without compromising sound business practices. This term primarily includes correctly reporting financial operating results, but also encompasses the following: (1) judiciously allocating scarce resources at the macro and micro levels and expending these for purposes they were intended; and (2) conducting fiscal activities in accordance with applicable laws, guidelines, and regulations; and (3) ensuring that each organizational layer (staff, administrators, and faculty) understands the significance of adhering to principles of sound financial practices.” The committee deliberated and identified the primary issues and concerns affecting the accomplishment of goals and objectives in this area. In order for the University to achieve and demonstrate fiscal integrity, it must do the following:

- Receive sufficient funding for the appropriate allocation of funds to programs, classrooms, and compensation and training of faculty and staff;
- Eliminate any disparity in faculty, staff and administration performance evaluations;
- Evaluate the variety of factors (e.g. demographic changes, limited growth space, diversity of the student body, technological challenges) that will influence the University’s ability to attract and retain excellent students;
- Promote increased commitment to public accountability (e.g. Sarbanes – Oxley); and
- Ensure continuous communication to faculty and staff concerning correct policies and procedures, regulations, appropriate disciplinary system for ethical abuses, etc.

Facilities includes “all buildings and their infrastructure, security, technology, furnishings to meet design specifications, and the surrounding campus grounds. The Facilities support staff must then maintain the buildings, their contents, the campus grounds, parking lots, vegetation and lighting.”



The *Master Plan* component is operationally defined as “a five-year, state-mandated blueprint for the maintenance, improvement and expansion of University facilities and grounds. Projected construction of new buildings is based on planned growth of the student population and related program space needs.” In order for the University to achieve the implementation of the facilities and master plan, it must utilize the following measures:

- Acquire land away from Third Ward;
- Acquire funding
- Facilitate communication (public/university);
- Add satellite facilities (distance education);
- Anticipate and provide for changes in technology;
- Provide adequate parking/housing (student services);
- Consider building height – community impact;
- Ensure financial resources for University and students (identifying qualifying criteria);
- Expand computer services and infrastructure;
- Design a better structure for distance learning;
- Include counseling and health services;
- Provide a child care center; and
- Enhance library services (space and resources).

Information Technology was operationally defined as “the tools necessary to manage information and enhance teaching, learning, research, and the provision of efficient services. These tools include voice, video, data and instructional technologies.” In order for the University to achieve and demonstrate effectiveness in the use and applications of information technology, it must address the following:



- The lack of communication, coordination and planning regarding information technology resources, needs and concerns across the campus;
- The lack of standards for classroom technology and the inconsistency of its availability across the campus;
- The need to identify the appropriate level of technology (e.g. state of the art, industry standard, commonly accepted) that supports the institution's vision and mission;
- The ever-increasing importance of using technology in teaching as a tool to enhance effective and efficient learning;
- The need for institutional goals for integrating technology into instructional delivery;
- Inconsistent support for faculty and staff computing;
- The disparity between those who effectively obtain and use technology and those who are less successful;
- The resistance University-wide to embracing rapidly changing technologies;
- The ever-present issue of the funding of technology;
- The variation in existing faculty and staff technology skill sets throughout the campus;
- The lack of professional development programs including technology training;
- The speed of execution in implementing technological changes; and
- The need to define and adhere to standards, e.g.
 - a. physical infrastructure
 - b. external policies
 - c. rapid changes in technology
 - d. training

