



STRATEGIC PLAN 2008-2012

AUGUST, 2008

Mission Statement

Drake's mission is to provide an *exceptional learning environment* that prepares students for *meaningful personal lives, professional accomplishments, and responsible global citizenship*. The Drake experience is distinguished by *collaborative learning* among students, faculty, and staff, and by the *integration of the liberal arts and sciences with professional preparation*.

I. PREAMBLE

Drake University Strategic Plan 2008-2012 has at its core a very simple purpose: to identify the processes, infrastructure and resources that will enable Drake University to fulfill the mandate of *Drake University 2012* – a vision of the University that clearly states the defining characteristics of a truly exceptional institution of higher learning. The *Plan's* focus on process, as well as outcomes, is essential if we are to achieve the flexibility, responsiveness and adaptability that are essential to institutional success in a rapidly changing world. It is, in essence, a plan that is “pushed” by institutional mission, and “pulled” by our aspirations for and vision of our future.

Strategic Plan 2008-2012 does not, of course, exist in isolation – either conceptually or functionally. It is deeply grounded in the planning efforts underway at Drake University since 2000, and in the ongoing assessment of the challenges and opportunities that face us, both internally and externally. It is the centerpiece of a complex web of other discussions and other documents, many of which will be referenced throughout the *Plan*.¹

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¹ See Appendix B for list and for the *Drake University Strategic Initiatives Map*

The University's first obligation is to fulfill the promise of the *Mission Statement* to students, staff, faculty, parents, alumni and the larger community. But in fulfilling that promise, we aspire to do more. We are determined to develop and implement the best practices in student learning and in faculty and staff development in a manner that will enable us to create a *truly exceptional learning community*--one that will be recognized as a model for the best in higher education.


There are many indications that the higher education system in the United States is facing an unprecedented array of challenges, including the erosion of public confidence, decreased funding and increased costs, changing workforce needs, concerns about affordability and access for our students, demands for accountability and transparency, dramatic changes in student social contexts and learning styles, and competition for students, faculty/staff and resources from an increasing diverse range of education providers.² *Drake University Strategic Plan 2008-2012* is thus intended as well to ensure that the University is not only prepared to confront and manage these (and other) challenges, but to do so in a manner that serves as a model for responsiveness to and effective management of a dynamic and often unpredictable external environment.

The aspiration that has "pulled" us forward in the planning process is stated in *Drake University Vision 2012*:

Drake University's distinctive focus on the integration of the best of liberal arts & sciences education with professional preparation – grounded in an intensely interactive and collaborative environment – is a powerful model for the nation's higher education community in addressing the learning and developmental needs of students, meeting society's needs for expertise and an engaged citizenry, and in resolving the many challenges currently confronting higher education. *Already acknowledged as one of the top institutions of our kind in the Midwest,³ our goal, simply put, is to become – within five to six years – a model for excellence, effectiveness, innovation, accessibility and accountability in higher education.*

² See, for instance: *Drake University 2025 ("Assumptions")*; *Toward Collective Foresight: The Leadership Challenges for Higher Education's Future* (American Council on Education, 2008); *Exploring the Future of Higher Education: Futures Forum 2007* (NACUBO, 2007)

³ Master's Institutions; Fall 2007 *U.S. News & World Report* rankings



From an historical perspective, Drake University is now uniquely positioned to fulfill this vision. Having established a strong and vibrant core over the last decade that includes a highly qualified student body, outstanding faculty and staff committed to the University's core values and mission, the integration of graduate programs with the needs of the community, a stable financial base and many updated facilities, and the increasing national recognition of our quality, Drake is now ready to launch the processes and initiatives necessary to achieve our collective aspirations.

Focus: Strategic Plan 2008-2012 does not, of course, represent all that we will do in the next five years as an institution; we will continue to build and strengthen the initiatives that have brought us to our current level of success. The Plan identifies those areas in which, as a community, we will make exceptional and focused efforts to direct our intellectual energies, physical efforts and financial resources to fulfill our mission at the highest level.

There are three major characteristics identified in *Drake University Vision 2012* that provide this focus--that inform the prioritization of goals, objectives and tasks in *Strategic Plan 2008-2012*:

- Greater integration of liberal learning and professional development in an interdisciplinary environment on both the graduate and undergraduate levels;
- Development of integrated learning and living environments that bring students, faculty, and staff together in a dynamic learning community; and
- Engagement of Drake students, staff, and faculty with the challenges, opportunities, demands and needs of a rapidly changing social, economic, cultural, political and physical environment on local, national and global levels.

Together with a pervasive commitment to innovation, these themes of integration and engagement will guide our choices as we shape and implement the next phase of Drake University's future.

II. OPERATING PRECEPTS

Precepts are general principles that are both commands for action and guidelines for the manner in which the action is implemented. Derived from the core values and aspirations of the University, they collectively constitute the rules by which the operational decisions of the University are carried out, and form the essential bedrock upon which our aspirations – and our plans – for Drake’s future are built. *Our strategic vision, and our promise to our students and to the common good, can be fulfilled only if we adhere assiduously to the mandate of these precepts. We must hold ourselves accountable for fulfilling the intent of these precepts, and for demonstrating objectively that we have done so.*

Drake University’s operating precepts include the following:

- A commitment to the understanding that we must wholeheartedly embrace the prospect of change if we are to manage successfully the demands and challenges of a complex, dynamic and rapidly-changing environment while fulfilling the promise of our mission⁴
- A commitment to ongoing mission-driven strategic planning and decision-making that serve the University’s core constituencies, and that are informed by the challenges and opportunities of the environment in which we operate
- A commitment to a balanced annual operating budget and an endowment payout rate that appropriately balances support for the needs of the present with the University’s long-term fiscal health
- A commitment to the effective and efficient use of resources, and to ensuring that resource allocation is consistent with strategic goals (including the consideration of reallocation of existing resources before additional funds are sought for new initiatives)
- A commitment to financial access for qualified students by controlling the cost of a Drake education (including minimizing annual increases in tuition and fees to the greatest extent possible), and making effective use of financial aid resources

⁴ See Appendix A for “Some thoughts on change”

- A commitment to transparency, making financial information, the *Drake University Data Book*, program assessment results, student success indicators, and all other data accessible to the internal community and, as appropriate, to external constituencies
- A commitment to maintaining the undergraduate population at a size that maximizes the effectiveness of Drake’s interactive, collaborative learning environment
- A commitment to a campus environment that is safe, attractive and supportive of the Drake community
- A commitment to a strong-shared governance system consistent with the “Joint Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities”⁵
- A commitment to recruit students, faculty, and staff of exceptional abilities who are committed to the mission, goals, and core values of the institution, and who represent the diversity of American society and the global community
- A commitment to equitable and competitive compensation

III. GOALS

GOAL I: CREATE A DISTINCTIVE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

OBJECTIVES:

- A. *Strengthen the focus of learning at Drake University on achieving mission outcomes, with particular emphasis on interdisciplinary connections, global perspectives, engaged citizenship competencies and communications skills.*

Strategy 1: Establish a Task Force to recommend appropriate revisions to the Drake Curriculum.

Responsibility: Vice Provost for Academic Affairs & University Curriculum Committee.

FY09

⁵ See “Joint Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities,” Appendix F of the *Drake University Academic Charter*

Strategy 2: Develop strategies and resources to ensure that graduates are able to speak and write effectively
Responsibility: Provost
FY11

Strategy 3: Develop a comprehensive assessment and feedback system that provides evidence for achievement of the Drake mission learning outcomes.
Responsibility: Vice Provost for Academic Affairs & Faculty Senate
FY10

Strategy 4: Explore the feasibility of transdisciplinary learning opportunities across graduate programs
Responsibility: Provost
FY11

Strategy 5: Develop a structure and resources to support the development of and facilitate teaching in interdisciplinary programs.
Responsibility: Provost.
FY11

Strategy 6: Design and implement an administrative infrastructure to support and enhance the University's constellation of interdisciplinary centers
Responsibility: Provost; Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
FY10-11

B. *Enhance the integration of liberal and professional education for both undergraduate and graduate students, with a strong focus on collaborative learning, global perspectives, reflective practice, ethics, and leadership.*

Strategy 1: Develop academic course sequences (minors or certificates) to enhance the integration of liberal education and professional studies on both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

- a) Focus on Leadership Development to complement the co-curricular work of the Adams Institute
Responsibility: Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
FY10

- b) Focus on global studies and ethics as an enhancement available to any graduate program.
Responsibility: Graduate Council
FY10-12

Strategy 2: Strive to infuse the discussion of ethical issues throughout the curriculum.
Responsibility: Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Deans
FY09-12

C. *Expand learning opportunities for students, faculty, and staff in and with cultural contexts different from those with which they are already familiar.*

Strategy 1: Redesign the administrative structure to coordinate and further the achievement of university goals on internationalization.
Responsibility: Provost.
FY10

Strategy 2: Expand and diversify the recruitment of international students and exchanges with international faculty.
Responsibility: V.P. Admissions & Student Financial Planning, and Provost.
FY09-13

Strategy 3: Increase the number of students, faculty, and staff who have significant off-campus learning experiences abroad or domestically.
Responsibility: Provost and Deans
FY09-13

D. *Strengthen the integration of academic and co-curricular activities.*

Strategy 1: Expand living-learning communities beyond the first year experience (e.g., "theme houses;" role of sororities and fraternities).
Responsibility: Vice-Provost for Student Affairs & Academic Excellence, Dean of Students
FY09-13

Strategy 2: Enhance the collaboration among Student Life and academic programs.
Responsibility: Vice-Provost for Student Affairs & Academic Excellence, Dean of Students
FY09-13

Strategy 3: Transform athletics from an extra-curricular to a co-curricular experience

Responsibility: Director of Athletics

FY09-13

Strategy 4: Engage upper division students in creating research, service or academic support programs for lower division students on the model of Peer-Led Team Training.

Responsibility: Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

FY11-13

Strategy 5: Ascertain student advising needs and develop an appropriate response to address issues identified

Responsibility: Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

FY10

E. Expand research and grant activities consistent with the Mission

Strategy 1: Redesign academic administrative structure to enhance support for research.

Responsibility: Provost

FY09

Strategy 2: Develop and implement an incentive program for faculty and staff research grants.

Responsibility: Provost

FY09

Strategy 3: Enhance support for faculty-student research.

President, Provost, and Deans

FY09-13

F. Enhance the culture and infrastructure that support exceptional professional graduate programs

Strategy 1: Ensure that University services, policies, and procedures are responsive to the needs of graduate and professional students

Responsibility: President's Cabinet

FY09-10

Strategy 2: Develop structures and processes that encourage academic innovation and excellence in graduate programs.

Responsibility: Provost

FY10-12

GOAL II: CREATE AN EXCEPTIONAL LEARNING AND WORK ENVIRONMENT

OBJECTIVES:

A. *Create a work environment that attracts, retains, and supports faculty and staff of exceptional quality.*

Strategy 1: Complete a work environment assessment and implement a plan of action based on the findings of that assessment.

Responsibility: Director of Human Resources

FY09

Strategy 2: Enhance recruitment practices to create points of distinction.

Responsibility: Director of Human Resources and Provost

FY09-13

B. *Create a culture of learning and development for faculty, staff and student employees.*

Strategy 1: Enhance opportunities for both formal and informal professional development.

Responsibility: Provost; Director, Human Resources; Director, Career Services

FY09-13

Strategy 2: Create leadership development programs.

Responsibility: Provost; Director, Human Resources

FY10-13

Strategy 3: Develop collaborative programs on student learning styles and best practices in pedagogy for both faculty and staff

Responsibility: Director of the Institute for Creative Learning and Teaching

FY12-13

C. *Create flexible facilities that support learning at the highest level, and that enhance the integration of living and learning.*

Strategy 1: Develop a rolling 3 to 5 year capital budget that links funding with institutional priorities and the University's Campus Master Plan.

Responsibility: Vice-President for Business & Finance

FY09

Strategy 2: Ensure that creation of new learning spaces on campus support best practices in student learning and build community. The projects named below should receive high priority for fund-raising and construction in the next five years.

Responsibility: President

FY10-13

- a. Expand science facilities and renovate Olin Hall.
- b. Construct new School of Education building (with classrooms available for all academic programs).
- c. Expand and renovate Cowles Library
- d. Assess facilities needs in the fine arts and renovate Harmon Fine Arts Center.
- e. Include academic/learning facilities within a renovated Field House.

D. *Support the educational mission and administrative effectiveness of the University by enhancing its technological environment.*

Strategy 1: Form a standing Campus Technology Committee with campus-wide membership to evaluate needs, articulate and prioritize developmental goals, make budgetary recommendations, and coordinate the effective use of technology across campus.

Responsibility: President

FY'09

Strategy 2: Develop programs to help faculty integrate appropriate and readily-available technology into their teaching.

Responsibility: Associate Provost for Curriculum

FY10-13

E. *Establish a culture of wellness for students, faculty, and staff.*

Strategy 1: Engage campus resources to develop and promote a comprehensive, coordinated wellness culture.

Responsibility: Director of Human Resources; Director of Athletics
FY09-13

GOAL III: CARRY OUT THE UNIVERSITY'S PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY TO SERVE THE COMMON GOOD

OBJECTIVES:

A. *Enhance the University's position as the premier provider of graduate degree, professional development and non-degree programs for the Greater Des Moines community (see also: Strategic Enrollment & Revenue Plan, 2005)*

Strategy 1: Expand and enhance connections among Drake students and faculty and community professionals, as well as enhance Drake's stature as a location for professional education.

Responsibility: Deans
FY09-13

Strategy 2: Assess the education needs of individuals, public and non-profit entities and business organizations in the Des Moines metro area.

Responsibility: Provost
FY 11

Strategy 3: Expand graduate and professional programs consistent with the assessment findings, the Drake mission, and available resources.

Responsibility: Provost
FY12-13

B. *Develop and support a robust constellation of community engagement and service learning opportunities for students.*

Strategy 1: Redesign the administrative structure to support service learning and significant experiential learning opportunities for Drake students.

Responsibility: Provost
FY12

Strategy 2: Expand resources to support students, faculty and staff in traveling to service learning or community research sites.
Responsibility: President
FY13

Strategy 3: Consolidate community service and service-learning programs in Drake University Center for Community Service
Responsibility: President
FY13

- C. *Develop and implement partnerships with regional school districts and organizations to improve the academic success and college readiness of economically disadvantaged populations.*

Strategy 1: Expand Drake's connections to school systems and existing relevant community organizations that work with disadvantaged populations.
Responsibility: Vice-Provost for Student Affairs and Academic Excellence; Vice President for Admission & Student Financial Services; Dean, School of Education
FY09-13

Strategy 2: Enhance Drake student outreach, service learning and leadership training programs for students from area schools
Responsibility: Provost and Deans.
FY09-13

- D. *Explore the establishment of the Drake University Center for Public Policy as a think-tank both for student/faculty learning and as a resource for Iowa governments*

Strategy 1: Create study group to explore need, structure, and funding feasibility
Responsibility: Provost
FY10

- E. *Implement strategies to minimize the University's environmental impact, and serve as a model of environmental responsibility.*

Strategy 1: Provide the human and financial resources to support the work of the President's Climate Commitment Task Force.
Responsibility: President
FY09

Strategy 2: Design and implement long-term recycling, energy efficiency, and sustainability programs at Drake.

Responsibility: Vice-President for Business and Finance
FY09

- F. *Serve as a community resource for intellectual, cultural and sports programming for Des Moines and Central Iowa.*

Strategy 1: Enhance official on-line information about University programming, and ensure that it is easily accessible and user-friendly.

Responsibility: Director of Marketing & Communications
FY09-13

Strategy 2: Encourage greater community participation in and support for Drake's cultural, sports and intellectual programming.

Responsibility: President
FY09-13

Strategy 3: Enhance the continuum of lifelong learning opportunities appropriate to the University's mission.

Responsibility: Provost
FY11-13

GOAL IV: PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE — BUILDING THE FOUNDATION FOR TRANSFORMATION

OBJECTIVES:

- A. *Create the Institute for Creative Learning and Teaching*

Strategy 1: Design the Institute for Creative Learning and Teaching.

Responsibility: Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
FY09

Strategy 2: Develop and implement a plan to secure endowment funding.

Responsibility: Vice-President for Alumni & Development
FY09

Strategy 3: Appoint a director to implement the design and manage the Institute.

Responsibility: Provost
FY10

B. Explore the re-conceptualization and restructuring of faculty/staff roles

Strategy 1: Establish faculty and staff study groups to explore national trends and to discuss faculty and staff roles in light of the revised curriculum and strategies developed by the Institute for Creative Learning and Teaching

Responsibility: Provost
FY11

Strategy 2: Develop formal proposals for submission to Academic and Administrative Operational Efficiency teams (cf. C.1 below).

Responsibility: Provost
FY 10-13

C. Ensure that the University's organizational (academic & administrative) structure facilitates the effective and efficient fulfillment of the University's mission

Strategy 1: Require systematic benchmarking of critical key indicators by each administrative unit with annual reporting to the campus community.


Responsibility: President
FY09-13

Strategy 2: Establish a cross-functional Administrative Operational Efficiency Team charged with making recommendations on realigning administrative functions and structures to better support the University's future direction and strategic initiatives.

Responsibility: President
FY10

Strategy 3: Establish an Academic Operational Efficiency Team charged with making recommendations on aligning academic administrative functions and structures to better support the University's Mission and strategic initiatives.

Responsibility: Provost
FY10



D. Secure the resources sufficient to fulfill the promise of Vision 2012 and the aspirations of Vision 2025, and to guarantee the University's long-term ability to thrive in the future.

Strategy 1: Establish a culture of philanthropy to ensure the long-term health of the University

Overall Responsibility: President

FY09-13

Strategy 2: Increase the resources of the University through:

- Comprehensive Campaign
- Increase in the Drake Fund (Annual Giving)
- Market growth of endowment

Responsibility: President; Vice President for Alumni & Development; Vice President for Business & Finance

FY09-13

APPENDIX A

SOME THOUGHTS ON CHANGE

Drake University Vision 2025 (toward which this *Strategic Plan* is a first, but large, step) is grounded in an extremely important assumption that bears repeating and emphasis here:

. . . Drake University in twenty years will be different from what it is now in some profound ways – while remaining faithful to our mission, and without losing the core sense of who and what we are as a academic community. *There is no reason to believe that anything that we now do will be the same* [emphasis added] – some things may turn out to be identical, or similar, to their current form, but it would be risky to assume that probability at this stage.

Our ability to achieve our collective vision for Drake University in the next five years, to fulfill the mandate of *Strategic Plan 2008-2012*, is entirely dependent on our willingness to step back from some of our most fundamental assumptions about the way that we do some very important things and decide that in some cases there may be a much better way to do them. Indeed, it requires the enthusiastic and healthy dissatisfaction with the status quo that informs the academic culture: our students come to us because they want to know more; we do research because we feel that there are better answers to the questions that we have (or that we haven't asked the right questions); we engage in intellectual discourse and debate in the expectation that we can collectively arrive at higher and more elegant truths. We cannot move Drake University forward in a manner that meets our goals without applying those same values to the very ways in which we do things as a University. Needless to say, it is unlikely that we can achieve our aspirations as outlined in *Vision 2012* by doing *everything* the same way that we always have. If some of the questions that we ask ourselves do not make us uncomfortable, we are probably not asking the right questions.

We do not embrace change for the sake of change itself – for the sake of novelty or “market differentiation.” Drake University does many things extremely well, and we have objective indicators that we are doing a number of them superbly, thanks to the efforts, energy and dedication of the Drake University family. We cannot lose our current excellence for the sake of change. Our essence as an institution is grounded in our tradition, in the experiences of the generations that preceded us, in our core values, and in our mission, and we must guard against losing that essence as we consider change.



APPENDIX B
STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS

- *Drake University Statement of Principles (1992)*
- *The Mission Explication (2004)*
- *Strategic Enrollment and Revenue Plan (SERP; 2005)*
- *Drake University Vision 2025 (2005)*
- *Drake University Vision 2012 (2006)*
- *Drake University Master Plan (2006)*
- *Departmental/Unit White Papers (2007)*
- *2007 Summer Futures Conference*
- *Drake University Accreditation Self-Study (2007)*

2008 Drake University Strategic Initiatives Map

