

Drake University Strategic Plan

2003-2008

Mission

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.

Vision

Drake University will enhance its position as a premier comprehensive university in the Midwest and as a national leader in higher education for learning, faculty roles, and public service.

I. Introduction

Drake University's *Strategic Plan 2003-2008* is the second iteration—an update—of the University's ongoing planning initiative begun with *Strategic Plan 2001-2006*. By design, this next stage both overlaps with and extends the plan already in place, reflecting three of the fundamental principles of the initiative:

- The *Strategic Plan* is a *dynamic process*, not a static document. We continually measure and report our progress and periodically assess the continuing validity of the assumptions on which the plan is based. When indicated by changing circumstances, appropriate alterations are made to objectives and tasks in the *Plan*.
- As a *process*, the *Strategic Plan* has no finite end. It is, in essence, an operating behavior on all levels of the institution, informed by clearly-stated goals, objectives, and tasks. In this context, it is vital that our decision-making is informed by long-term, strategic goals. Thus it is essential that we always have 4-5 years of plan out in front of us.
- We recognize that Drake must identify and anticipate the challenges—both internal and external—that face us, and we must be able to manage those challenges in a manner that maximizes opportunities for the University to move forward toward its goals, and minimizes the potential for negative impact on the University.
- Thus, the overarching purpose of the *Strategic Plan* is to

simultaneously move Drake toward the realization of our vision for the University's future, and to position the University, structurally, culturally, and behaviorally to have the flexibility, resilience, and responsiveness to manage change in a dynamic environment.

One further distinctive feature should be noted: since the completion of *Strategic Plan 2001-2006*, the six schools and colleges, Cowles Library, the Office of Information Technology, the Department of Athletics, and other administrative units have completed strategic plans that "plug into" the University's strategic plan. Rather than risk the excessive length and complexity that incorporation of those plans into this document would entail, references to those plans are provided where relevant and useful. All of the existing plan documents are available on the Drake University website at: [reference]

II. Progress to Date

The Drake University community should take great pride in all that has been accomplished in the first two years of the planning process. Our considerable progress is a direct consequence of the commitment, energy, and hard work by literally hundreds of members of all of the University's on- and off-campus constituencies, from faculty, staff, and students to the Board of Trustees, advisory boards and alumni. The following is an inventory of the tasks from *Strategic Plan 2001-2006* that have been accomplished:

Goal 1: Ensure the excellence, currency, and appropriateness of academic programs

Completed Tasks (those with an asterisk have been initiated but are still under development):

- Implement system of annual data reporting on key indicators (based on evaluation approach designed for Program Review)*
- Implement systematic external peer review of programs
- Establish University-wide Curriculum Committee
- Assess Drake Curriculum to ensure that it is meeting stated goals; design and implement ongoing assessment mechanism for Drake Curriculum*
- Establish interdisciplinary centers specified in Program Review (Center for Global Citizenship and the Center for Digital Technology and Learning have been established)*
- Establish selected new interdisciplinary programs* [identify which new programs are on line]

- Establish faculty development fund*
- Expand/enhance Learning Communities*
- Enhance student/faculty research fund*
- Restructure academic support programs*
- Implement Drake University Language Acquisition Program (DULAP)
- Implement student leadership development program*
- Expand service learning initiatives (Campus Compact, etc.) and internship opportunities that enhance on-campus learning*
- Evaluate the role of athletics (intercollegiate Division I; intramural; wellness programs, etc.) in contributing to the learning experience; make recommendations for strengthening integration of athletics into overall campus community*
- Appoint chief information officer
- Develop strategic plan for educational technology and distance learning
- Develop and implement strategic plan to address needs for information access in teaching/learning/research (including the role of the University Library)
- Establish Center for E-Learning (note: now called Center for Digital Technology and Learning) to provide leadership and direction for technology-based teaching/learning

Goal 2: Improve and sustain the financial strength of the University

Completed Tasks (those with an asterisk have been initiated but are still under development):

- Achieve financially viable student/faculty ratio (target: 15:1)* (improved to 13.8% in 2003-2004)
- Implement zero-based budget system
- Reduce operating costs at school/college level by \$400,000*
- Reduce overload pay*
- Develop and implement payroll classification system
- Develop and implement performance management system
- Explore incentive/merit-based pay system
- Implement new Campus Information System (DUIT)* (now called DUSIS-Drake University Student Information System; 2/3 of implementation completed by summer 2003)
- Conduct ongoing financial ratio analysis and key indicator comparisons with appropriate peer groups
- Develop and implement employee incentive plan for cost savings

- Exploit opportunities for Des Moines Area Higher Education Buying Cooperative
- Increase net tuition revenues consistent with the CPI for education costs

- Increase tuition annually (at a rate not to exceed the CPI for education costs)
- Stabilize EFR (entering freshmen) at current level +31 (total of approx. 800) – Note: fall 2003 EFR at 814

Activities:

- Continue Noel/Levitz partnership
- Identify, strengthen, and publicize truly distinctive aspects of Drake education*
- Establish enrollment task force
- Reduce undergraduate discount rate (EFR rate at: in Fall 2003, down by %)
- Improve freshman to sophomore persistence to 85% and 6-year graduation rate to 70%* (2003 rates are:)

Activities:

- Convert/renovate first floor of Olmsted as student center
- Develop comprehensive plan for residence life, including residence hall improvements/renovations*
- Conduct assessment of first-year experience
- Conduct Board-directed study of Greek system (Student Life Committee)
- Connect students to service opportunities in the community*
- Increase non-undergraduate net tuition revenues

Activities:

- Develop net revenue-sharing incentive plan for faculty/staff, departments, and colleges for program development
- Identify, develop, and expand distance learning opportunities (task force established Summer 2003)*
- Successfully conclude Campaign Drake
- Review investment strategies
- Develop post-campaign strategies (major gifts, annual fund, etc.)*
- Increase Annual Fund contribution to operating budget (plan in place to increase Annual Fund to \$4 million by 2005-2006)*
- Create contingency response plan for budgetary shortfall
- Flatten administrative decision-making structures

- Simplify and streamline faculty (academic) decision-making structures in key areas*
- Implement “customer-service” training for Drake employees* (constituent service program begun Fall 2003)
- Develop a strategic plan for administrative technology* (under review)
- Restructure IT support to maximize responsiveness and efficiency*
- Establish IT Advisory Council

Goal 3: Recruit and retain faculty and staff of the highest quality

Completed Tasks (those with an asterisk have been initiated but are still under development):

- Target salaries to top quintile of peer institutions* (revised targets: appropriate market penetration for staff; 60-80th percentile for faculty, with merit taken into account; \$1.6 million added to compensation budget for FY04 as first step)
- Develop and implement payroll classification system
- Develop and implement performance management system
- Investigate and design incentive/merit-based pay system
- Enhance faculty and staff orientation programs*
- Implement staff development program (fund; leadership; resource center)*
- Implement faculty development program (funds; leadership; resource center)*
- Create short- and long-term international opportunities for faculty and staff*
- Enhance faculty/staff recognition programs*

Goal 4: Ensure that Drake students, faculty, and staff are able to function effectively as members of diverse local, national, and global communities

Completed Tasks (those with an asterisk have been initiated but are still under development):

- Consciously rework recruitment procedures for faculty and staff to ensure consistent awareness of and attention to the goal of increasing representational diversity among Drake employees.*
- Institute periodic audit of diversity efforts by outside panel*
- Ask that the Board of Trustees consider development of a plan to increase diversity on the Board*

- Establish Center for Global Inquiry (now called Center for Global Citizenship)
- Implement Drake University Language Acquisition Program (DULAP)
- Support faculty/staff participation in global education conferences, workshops*
- Encourage and support faculty/staff participation in overseas learning opportunities*
- Expand international institutional partnerships as appropriate to institutional strengths and goals* (agreements signed with institutions in China, France, and Germany)
- Increase study-abroad opportunities for Drake students*
- Encourage faculty/staff participation in overseas study/research opportunities (Fulbright, etc.)*

GOAL 5: Improve relationships and communications with University's constituencies (students; faculty; staff; boards; alumni; prospective students & their parents; friends; community; state; nation)

Completed Tasks (those with an asterisk have been initiated but are still in progress):

- Initiate and support partnerships with local organizations & institutions (e.g., PEP, I Have a Dream, DSM School System, WDM Schools/IBM Global Village, etc.)*
- Create and implement plan for partnerships with the neighborhood for creative community development and revitalization (e.g., retirement communities; expanded student housing; commercial development, etc.)*
- Increase visibility and fan support for Drake athletics*
- Develop schedule of regular town meetings*
- Redefine mission of Marketing and Communications to place primary focus on proactive marketing and communications priorities*
- Develop baseline perceptual measures of Drake through market research among key internal and external audiences to provide market-based foundation for maximizing the impact of marketing and communications efforts.*

III. Drake University's Future

The entire planning process, from its inception, has been informed by the University's *Strategic Vision Document* (January 2000). The fundamental purpose of that document was to provide a view of our aspirations for Drake University in the year 2010. It has served, in a sense, as the "constitution" for the change and planning initiatives at Drake, enabling us to measure our plans against a coherent sense of direction and goals. As indicated later in this document (under Goal V), after almost four years it is time to step back and assess the legitimacy and appropriateness of that vision, given the rapidly changing internal and external environments in which the University operates. It is, of course, likely that we will reaffirm most – if not all – of that document, but the process of review and rethinking is itself essential to the ongoing vitality of our efforts.

At the same time, in the many discussions revolving around strategic planning that have taken place in the past year, it is evident that we have a shared inventory of concrete expectations for the University's future – a picture of what Drake can and should be as we fulfill the promises that we have made to our students and their parents, to our alumni, and ultimately to ourselves. That picture, while perhaps not sufficiently focused in many of these discussions, ultimately has had a profound influence on the nature of our priorities, decision-making, and operational behavior.

The complete inventory of our collective picture for Drake's future – the details of "Drake's portrait" in the year 2010, is probably quite long, but the following comprise the core characteristics of the University seven years from now that inform the ongoing planning process:

- Excellence is the defining characteristic of the Drake experience for learners at all levels; the University is nationally recognized for overall educational quality, and for specific centers of excellence
- Drake University plays a leadership role on the national level in the systematic and meaningful integration of liberal arts and sciences education with professional preparation, and in the meaningful integration of the academic program with student life and experiential learning
- Education at Drake University is characterized by a strong emphasis on interdisciplinary and international learning that prepares students to function effectively in an increasingly complex global environment
- Drake University has a constellation of international university partnerships that creates a broad range of learning and research opportunities for students, faculty, and staff
- The University complements its historical emphasis on undergraduate education with nationally-recognized graduate programs focused on key

distinctive strengths of the University and that respond to the needs of the region and the nation

- The University addresses the learning and professional development needs of the region's adult population through a variety of innovative models, including the Drake University Business Alliance, and a robust web-based distance learning program
- The demographics of Drake's students, faculty, and staff reflect the rich diversity of the American population, and the Drake educational process prepares students to function effectively in an environment characterized by difference
- Drake's institutional culture, campus community, compensation structure, working conditions, and physical plant enable the University to recruit and retain the very best faculty and staff
- The University's budget is characterized by integrity, based on conservative assumptions about projected revenue and expense and on long-term planning; the University's resource allocation is consistent with strategic priorities
- The University strives to minimize dependence on tuition for operating revenue (thus keeping costs to students and their parents at the lowest possible level) and to maximize revenues from other appropriate sources (endowment income, gifts, income from non-degree programs, grants & contracts)
- Decision-making at all levels is driven by institutional goals (as identified in the *Strategic Plan*) and by our shared values as a community
- The operating behavior of the University is characterized by transparency and effective communications, and grounded in a culture of assessment
- Drake University plays a vital role in Central Iowa as a resource for educational, cultural, and recreational programming, as a partner in economic and neighborhood development, and as the place where Central Iowa comes together to talk about the important issues of the day
- Drake University serves as a national model in NCAA Division I for the academic achievement of its athletes and the integrity and excellence of its athletic programs
- A renovated and reconfigured Drake Stadium positions Des Moines as a national track and field center—home, annually, to the Drake Relays and to regional, national, and international track and field events
- Drake's physical plant supports education and the quality of student life at the highest level; a variety of residential options reinforce the learning community model; the overall appearance of the campus reflects the institution's emphasis on excellence
- The University and the community collaborate in the ongoing commercial and residential revitalization of the Drake neighborhood

IV. The Challenges Ahead

As noted earlier, it is essential that the *Strategic Plan* position the University to manage—and to exploit—the challenges ahead. *Strategic Plan 2001-2006* identified the following as the core set of challenges facing Drake University:

- Budget
- Student demographics
- Increasing competition
- Diversity
- Campus environment/quality of student life
- Technology
- Local environment
- The philanthropic environment

While we have made great headway in many of these areas, as noted in Section II above, in a broad sense this set of challenges still defines the environment in which Drake University operates, and which we must continue to confront in as creative a manner as possible. Thus, much of *Strategic Plan 2003-2006* continues to focus on these issues.

At the same time, our successes in completing many of the tasks identified in *Strategic Plan 2001-2006*, as well as changes in circumstances (both internal and external), have led us, in many ways, to more nuanced definitions of the many issues that must play a role in our deliberations, and that ultimately have to be managed as we go forward. These challenges, defined in our planning retreat in May, 2003, and in subsequent discussions by the Senior Advisory Council, include:

- Continue to increase the intellectual vitality of the campus and the integration of student life with learning (addressed in Goal I)
- Develop and implement a robust assessment infrastructure (addressed in Goal I)
- Address the challenges imposed by accreditation standards: North Central Association and the many professional accrediting bodies; the NCA accreditation process in 2008 (addressed in Goal I)
- Develop a concrete plan regarding enrollment capacity, ideal size, growth in selected areas, and recruitment strategies (addressed in Goals I and II)
- Manage resources and expenses effectively (addressed in Goal II)
- Increase philanthropic support—annual fund, endowment, capital projects (addressed in Goal II)
- Manage financial aid resources and policies (addressed in Goal II)

- Continue to improve physical plant/ address deferred maintenance (addressed in Goal II)
- Continue to make progress on the University's compensation goals (addressed in Goal III)
- Make continuous progress toward our diversity goals (addressed in Goal IV)
- Manage expectations and develop effective campus communications (addressed in Goal V)

In addition, there are two challenges – meta-issues – that relate to the plan itself, and that we must manage successfully if the overall process is to yield the results that we desire:

- Ensure that our plan and our vision become a reality
- Develop a culture of strategic behavior

It bears repeating here that our success in meeting the goals of *Strategic Plan 2003-2008*, and – ultimately – our success as an institution is intimately tied to a *culture of assessment*. It is vital that we assess, on an ongoing basis, the validity of the assumptions on which the Plan is based, and make adjustments when appropriate and necessary. Equally vital is that we periodically assess and report our progress toward our Plan goals. Finally, it is critically important that we regularly assess the quality and appropriateness of everything that we do at Drake, and use the information derived from that assessment as a basis for continual improvement.

In the following pages, *Drake University Strategic Plan 2003-2008* describes a comprehensive set of objectives and tasks designed to realize the University's vision for the future, meet the goals that we have set for ourselves, and manage in a productive manner the challenges that we face.