

## **Environmental Scanning**

### **Background and Context**

At the September 19, 2007 Fall Convocation, President Maxwell announced the Strategic Positioning Initiative, the first phase of a planning process that will culminate in a new Strategic Plan. During 2006-07, each planning unit will be asked to complete an environmental scan and develop a white paper to be presented at the 2007 summer Futures Conference.

This communication only covers environmental scanning. Later this fall a document that addresses the white paper will be circulated.

### **Definitions:**

Environmental Scanning: the identification and review of the trends and factors in the environment outside of the institution that are likely to affect the unit in the future.

Academic Unit: With Drake University's complex structure, it is not possible for one definition to apply to all situations. The following are the key considerations:

1. The major units are administrative entities that are listed on the University's Organizational chart. In the academic division, that includes colleges and schools and other entities with a dean or director reporting to the provost.
2. Within the major administrative entities, there may be units that are responsible for academic programs or other closely related activities. Sometimes these are called divisions, departments, centers, or by some other title.

Planning Unit: The specification of entities that are to conduct environmental scans and prepare white papers will be made by the person in charge of the major units listed on the organizational chart.

### **Purpose of environmental scanning:**

Environmental scans will identify external trends and factors that are likely to affect the University and your specific discipline, interdisciplinary program, or center in the future. These trends and factors will form the foundation for white papers that will propose new initiatives, suggest enhancements of transformations that are underway and identify existing activities that might be phased out to create resources for innovation.

**Process:**

The responsibility for identifying the external and internal challenges facing all higher education institutions is assigned to the Senior Advisory Council. This document will be made available as soon as possible.

The responsibility for developing a document that notes the challenges and opportunities to the discipline, interdisciplinary program, or center is assigned to individual planning units. The dean or director of major units will specify entities that are to conduct environmental scans and prepare white papers.

The general organizational framework for the environmental scan is identified below.

1. Establish a planning group.
2. Review the literature that discusses the challenges and opportunities to the discipline, interdisciplinary program, or center.
3. Discuss and review the challenges and trends that will affect the planning unit.
4. Prepare a two-page written report in bullet point format with no more than two or three explanatory sentences that identifies the major external trends and factors that may affect your discipline, interdisciplinary program, or center. (Identification of sources for external trends and factors is expected.)

Planning units across campus are at various stages of work toward a new strategic plan. If a planning unit has already completed its environmental scan during the past six months, it may submit the results of that work in the format requested.

Deadline for environmental scanning reports: January 12, 2007

**Results:**

The environmental scanning reports will be compiled and made available, on the web, to all members of the Drake University community.

**White Papers:**

Guidelines for white papers will be available by the end of the semester.