September 14, 2012

Charge to the Community Engagement Task Force

The university has developed significantly over the last 25 years, enhancing its educational, research, and community service programs. The recent and dramatic reduction in financial support from the state creates a new set of challenges and opportunities for the university. The purpose of the strategic planning process is to consider how we can build upon our current strengths, seize emerging opportunities, and meet our challenges. In doing this, we will continue our development as a leading public research university and accomplish our educational, research, and community service missions.

The planning process will rely heavily on the work of a steering committee and five task forces with their associated working groups. Each of the five task forces and their associated working groups will be responsible for a specific area. The five areas are: Student Success and Academic Excellence, Research and Creative Endeavors, Community Engagement, Diversity, and Internationalization.

The Steering Committee will be responsible for the overall planning process, including the preparation of the final version of the plan. The Steering Committee will be responsible for integrating the recommendations of the task forces, creating an integrated financial plan to address the university’s financial challenges, prioritizing recommended initiatives, and considering ways to fund prioritized initiatives.

Each task force will be responsible for identifying goals and initiatives we should undertake in the referenced area, determining the resource requirements of the goals and initiatives, and setting priorities among the recommended goals and initiatives.

For the Community Engagement task force and its associated working groups, we would like you to consider the following questions as well as others that may arise during your deliberations:
1. The university prides itself on its connection with, and overall impact on, our local community. Our faculty, staff, and students work with the community in a broad range of areas, including educational support, health services, and economic development assistance. Given our existing initiatives and community partners, are there different and/or additional initiatives to consider? Should we consider focusing our efforts in specific neighborhoods and/or in specific areas that are aligned with our educational and research programs? (Community Engagement)

2. Since its founding in 1897, the university has been committed to educating teachers and supporting K-12 education. This commitment has produced the development of national best practices and has provided support for the students and school districts in our local service area. Noteworthy examples of the latter approach include the Compact for Success with the Sweetwater Union School District and the College Avenue Compact in the City Heights neighborhood. Given the current status of these partnerships, how should the university develop these partnerships and how should it support other students and school districts in our local service area? Similarly, what should be the balance between our efforts to support local school districts and develop more general educational practices? (K-12 Partnership)

3. The community looks to us for educational leadership to “fix” problems in public schools. What specific expertise can we bring to bear on addressing certain problems? (K-12 Partnership)

4. Recent reports from the National Academy of Sciences demonstrate strong workforce demands for graduates in STEM majors. The university has a number a number of initiatives to support STEM programs in K-12 and the enrollment of students from these programs at the university. Should we expand or add to these initiatives? (K-12 Partnership)

5. As the oldest and largest university in San Diego, the university has over 240,000 alumni. Many of these alumni are prominent community leaders in the region and across the nation. Moreover, our alumni participate extensively in university events, especially athletics. At the same time, our alumni annual giving rates are relatively low. What initiatives can we pursue to strengthen our alumni network and increase alumni annual giving? (Alumni Engagement)

6. Great universities create powerful networks in which university alumni support each other professionally. This approach helps students obtain employment and alumni prosper in their professional pursuits. What initiatives can we pursue to support the development of networks that will support the “Aztec Family”? (Alumni Engagement)
7. The economic challenges of the current period have significantly impacted the morale of our faculty and staff members. What initiatives can we undertake to enhance faculty and staff morale despite our financial challenges? Can we find ways to offer additional professional development opportunities, enhance the health of our community, and enhance the appearance of our campus for the purpose of improving morale? (Campus Climate)

8. The university’s location within the College Area community provides opportunities for our faculty and staff members to live near the university. At the same time, we have an opportunity to develop the College area by helping our students who reside in the area develop into good neighbors and responsible citizens. What can we do to support faculty and staff members who wish to reside near the university? Similarly, what can we do to build on our current initiatives to help our students be responsible members of our community? (Campus Climate)

9. The transfer of technology from universities to private businesses through licensing agreements fosters economic development. How can we improve our processes and the support we provide for technology development and technology transfer? (Economic Development)

10. In addition to transferring technology, the university is supporting business development through multiple centers (i.e., the Zahn Center, the Entrepreneurial Management Center). How can we support the development of these centers and ensure that the missions and operational methods of these entities are complementary and mutually supportive to the development of small businesses? (Economic Development)

Task force reports are due to the Steering Committee no later than February 1st. Reports should be between 1 and 5 pages and should include general information about the area of the task force, identified goals (if relevant), and recommended initiatives. The resource requirements of all recommended initiatives should also be included. Relevant background information and the detailed rationale for recommended initiatives should be included in appendices. The final task force report will integrate the task force recommendations and integrated financial plans as described above.

To facilitate the engagement of the campus community, the Steering Committee and each task force should hold an open forum to solicit comments and opinions from the university community. Members of the community should also be invited to communicate suggestions, in writing, to the committee and task force chairs. All written reports and recommendations should be presented in draft form on the strategic planning process website, and members of the community should be invited to comment prior to the completion of any report.
Thank you for your contributions to the planning process. The planning process represents an important opportunity to reflect on the present state of the university and to consider how we can make choices--identifying goals and planning initiatives--that will help us meet our challenges, seize opportunities, and fulfill our mission.

With best regards,

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