September 14, 2012

Charge to the Internationalization 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 Internationalization task force, we would like you to consider the following questions as well as others that may arise during your deliberations:

The university has increased its international programs dramatically over the last decade. How should we conceptualize the role of international programs in our educational and research programs as we move forward?
1. The university has been recognized as one of the leading institutions for the number of students studying abroad. Should we consider additional initiatives to increase the number of students who are studying abroad? Are there specific groups of students who are studying abroad at low rates? Should we undertake specific initiatives to increase rates of studying abroad for any of these groups of students? Should we expand our study abroad programs and exchange partnerships to accomplish these objectives? As a long-term goal, should all undergraduate students be required to have an international experience?

2. Many faculty, staff, and students pursue education and research programs that have international foci. Should we expand or enhance the programs we offer? Should we focus our efforts on specific geographic regions? What type of resources would be necessary to expand or enhance our international education and research programs? Should we develop a physical presence abroad?

3. International students add to the diversity of our student body, as well as the fiscal stability of the university. Should we consider expanding recruitment of international students? If so, what support and co-curricular programs are necessary to ensure that international students are successful? Are there particular countries or programs on which we should focus?

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,

Elliot Hirshman  
President

William F. Eadie, Ph.D.  
Professor

Rob O’Keefe  
President, Associated Students