"Defining the Future"

The Next Decade for the University of Tennessee System

Final Draft, May 30, 2012

Introduction

The University of Tennessee System, comprised of four campuses and two institutes, has been educating the state's citizenry since its founding in 1794 and is a critical part of Tennessee's leadership, workforce, economic development, health and well-being. The UT System has a presence in each of Tennessee's 95 counties and has sent more than 320,000 alumni to live, work in and contribute to our state, nation and world.

 Dr. Joe DiPietro became the 25th UT President in January 2011. Under his leadership, the System Administration launched a Strategic Planning process to strengthen and advance the UT System's stature as a "best-in-class" system dedicated to its purpose to "Educate, Discover and Connect." This collaborative project engaged UT's campuses, institutes, System Administration, Board of Trustees and multiple constituencies in a new planning process following the System's last Strategic Plan of 2006.

The UT System Administration's Strategic Plan comes at a pivotal time for higher education in the United States and in Tennessee. Ambitious national and state agendas are driving bold efforts to raise enrollment and graduation rates, ensure student achievement and success, expand economic and workforce development and respond to the urgent challenges and opportunities of globalization. Across the nation, higher education's strategic challenges are widespread as the U.S attempts to maintain its preeminent status in global postsecondary education. Tennessee has taken the national spotlight in educational reform through its successful "Race to the Top" initiatives and its master plan, "The Public Agenda for Tennessee Higher Education, 2010 – 2015." This new "public agenda" for higher education establishes a direct link between the state's economic development and its educational system, with the overarching goal for Tennessee to meet the projected national average in educational attainment by 2025.

The UT System Administration Strategic Plan is outcomes-driven. It provides a vision for the next decade to support and increase UT's impact on education, workforce development, economic impact and other areas critical to its influence, relationships and community-building. The plan's objective is to transform the state's educational pipeline for the good of the state's residents and economy—and to supply graduates to meet emerging occupational and intellectual needs within the state and beyond.

Directed by the President, led by a Steering Committee and with close involvement of the Board of Trustees and UT campuses and institutes, the Strategic Plan also responds to objectives of the Complete College Tennessee Act (CCTA), a comprehensive reform program enacted by the state legislature in 2010. CCTA seeks to transform public higher education through changes in academic, fiscal and administrative policies at state and institutional levels. These reforms center on the need for more Tennesseans to be better educated and trained, while acknowledging the state's diminished fiscal capacity to support higher education.

Historically, the state's public higher education institutions have been funded largely on enrollment. CCTA initiated a new outcomes-based funding formula that places greater emphasis on retention and graduation and recognizes research activity with regional and national relevance. The public agenda establishes a goal of 26,000 additional undergraduates by 2015 and, in response to national goals, a sustained rate of growth to produce 210,000 additional degrees by 2025. It also calls on higher education to collaborate with industry, government and communities to build Tennessee's future.

Importantly, the Strategic Plan also distinguishes and leverages the UT System's comprehensive portfolio and its educational, research and outreach assets geared to the diversity of the state through campuses and institutes. All focused on a "best-in-class" university system, these multiple components produce considerable benefits for the citizens of Tennessee.

To sustain and expand these contributions for maximum impact, the UT System, Strategic Plan purposefully facilitates the aspirations, strategic goals and action plans of each campus and institute:

- The flagship University of Tennessee-Knoxville (UTK)

- The metropolitan University of Tennessee-Chattanooga (UTC)

- The regional University of Tennessee-Martin (UTM)

- The Memphis-based, statewide University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC)

- The statewide Institute of Agriculture and Institute for Public Service

 The CCTA agenda promotes efficiencies by capitalizing on each institution's distinctive capacity to serve the state and through greater collaboration among institutions for cost efficiencies and minimizing program duplication. The strategic planning process facilitated clearer definition of the missions of the (statewide) UT System and UT System Administration, and of the roles and responsibilities of the System Administration and the campuses and the institutes to implement the strategic goals.

For more than a century, America's great public universities have served as the major institutions promoting education of their state's citizens, investment in state and regional economies, workforce planning and development, scientific research, inventions and innovation. In the second decade of the 21st century and more than ever, the economic impact of the UT System is central to Tennessee's achievements at every level, from the state capital in Nashville to extension offices in all 95 counties. Directed at implementing UT System President DiPietro's mission for the role of the System Administration, this five-year Strategic Plan defines a future with great momentum. It removes obstacles to education, promotes diversity, provides advocacy, secures and distributes resources, ensures accountability, produces work-ready graduates, generates premier research and engages innovation in ways more vitally needed than ever.

The Strategic Planning Process

President DiPietro formally launched the planning process in September 2011 with engagement activities designed to expand and strengthen relationships among faculty, staff, administrators, the Board of Trustees, students, friends, alumni, legislators and the people of Tennessee. Activities of the transparent process were reported in a timely fashion through a comprehensive communications plan and on a dedicated website allowing the UT community and affiliated groups to track the project from start to finish.

The five-phase process incorporated multiple participants and resources:

- A 17-member Steering Committee comprised of members of the President's Leadership Team, campus Chancellors or their representatives, and representatives from UT alumni, students and the Board of Trustees

- Listening Sessions with more than 200 administrators, faculty, staff and students on each campus, within each institute and including alumni and state and local leadership

- Best practice, data and trend analysis for public higher education and land-grant institutions

- Affirmation of the new System Administration Mission Statement and an updated Mission Statement for the UT System

- 12 cross-System Task Forces bringing together 190 subject experts to develop action items, impacts, five-year timelines, resources and accountability for the strategic goals and initiatives

- Draft plans followed by a broader "constituent engagement" review for additional input

- Project dashboard, budget, communication and implementation plans

- Final approval by the UT Board of Trustees in June 2012

The Steering Committee and Task Forces

The 17-member Steering Committee was appointed by the President and represented leadership for System Administration, the campuses and institutes, the Board of Trustees, alumni and students. Their commitment to the President's vision for the process and their oversight through six formal meetings from September 2011 to April 2012 ensured that the emerging Strategic Plan reflected and embraced the UT System's strengths and culture, identified and found solutions to its challenges and charges from the state, and engaged multiple constituencies in a transparent process. The Steering Committee developed the Plan's goals and initiatives, reviewed data and feedback, advised on Task Force membership and additional stakeholder involvement, prioritized action items and initial timelines developed by the Task Forces, and approved supporting frameworks for communications, constituent engagement, dashboard, budget and implementation.

A total of 12 Task Forces with representatives from across the System met in December 2011-January 2012 to propose five-year action items with a focus on the first two years of the plan's implementation. Drawing together subject experts across the enterprise, these collaborations identified activities for achieving Plan goals and initiatives. The Task Forces met frequently on a tight timeframe and produced detailed action steps at the same time their collaboration built momentum and wider internal participation in the plan's formulation. After reviewing the Task Force work, the Steering Committee prioritized recommendations for the first two years of implementation and preserved remaining ideas for use by operational teams responsible for translating the Plan into action. These teams, appointed by the President and Chancellors, and the scope of their work will be defined further in Year 1 implementation activities, which start after July 1, 2012.

The 12 Task Forces were:
Academic Affairs
- Driving Investment and New Revenues
- Employer of Choice
- External Affairs
- Facilities and Infrastructure
- Faculty Affairs
- Leadership and Management
- Outcome, Impact, Measurement and Reporting

- Research
- Staff Affairs
- Student Affairs/Student Experience
- System-Wide Support Systems

Revised Mission Statements

A theme identified early in the project was the need to define more clearly the primary roles of the System Administration, the campuses and institutes, and their relationships with each other. This also raised the issue of clarifying language to describe the major parts of the UT enterprise. Going forward, the "University of Tennessee System" will refer to the entire University of Tennessee, the common portfolio and collective assets of all parts of the statewide institution. "System Administration" will refer to the President's Office and the administrative offices reporting directly to the President, and thus the leadership team responsible and accountable for this Strategic Plan.

To further distinguish these functions, the Steering Committee recommended two mission statements—a new mission statement for the U T System and a mission statement for the System Administration, which President DiPietro developed soon after taking office in 2011. Chancellors, with input from the Steering Committee, developed a new UT System Mission Statement.

University of Tennessee System Mission Statement

The University of Tennessee System, through its multiple campuses and institutes, serves the people of Tennessee and beyond through the discovery, communication and application of knowledge. The System is committed to providing undergraduate, graduate and professional education programs in a diverse learning environment that prepares students to be leaders in a global society. The UT System's delivery of education, discovery, outreach and public service contributes to the economic, social and environmental well-being of all Tennesseans.

University of Tennessee System Administration Mission Statement

The mission of the University of Tennessee System Administration is to advance the educational, discovery, creative and outreach programs of the campuses and institutes through leadership that removes obstacles, understands needs, provides advocacy, secures resources, promotes accountability, fosters diversity, promotes innovation, coordinates campus efforts and delivers efficient and effective central services.

University of Tennessee System's Planning Framework and Campus Alignment
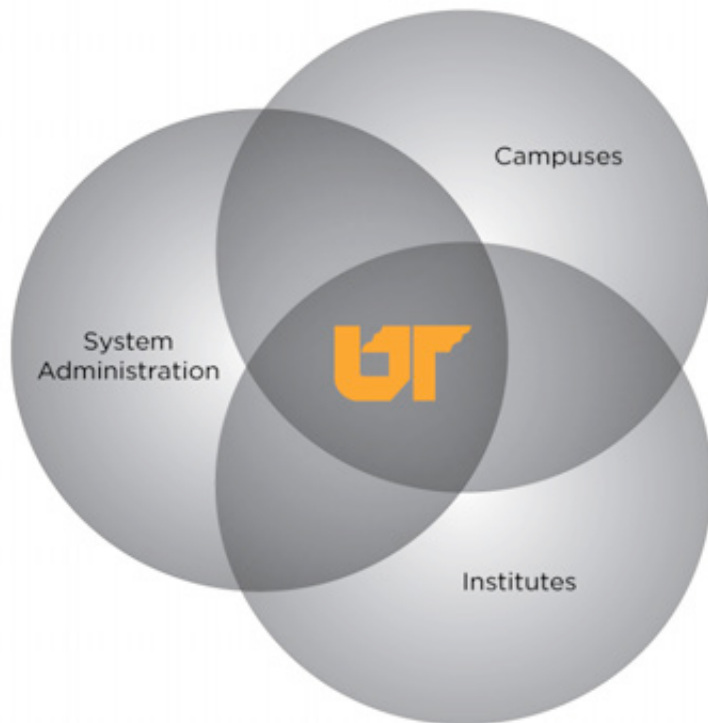
Strategic Plan Accountability

Determining and communicating roles, responsibilities and accountability for the Plan's progress and implementation are also necessary to make it successful. As discussions about mission and the Plan's initiatives revealed, the project enabled clearer definition of and alignment around the respective roles of System Administration and campuses and institutes. Over the years at UT, lack of clarity has caused confusion and signaled misalignment related to certain System, campus and unique and shared roles.

While the UT President is ultimately accountable to the Trustees for the Plan's outcomes, specific implementation responsibilities will involve the System Administration and the campuses and institutes. Using a custom roles-and-responsibilities model, President DiPietro and campus and institute Chancellors considered each action item and assigned System, campus/institute or shared accountability. Affirming both critical distinctions among the entities and shared responsibilities, this process was one of the major outcomes of the planning process and laid the foundation for increased collaboration across the UT System.

The Steering Committee further considered and finalized these roles in completing the Plan. First-year implementation committees will develop operational plans with responsibilities for specific offices or individuals at the System or campus/institute levels.

Communications and Constituent Engagement

A comprehensive communications plan that reports and tracks progress and solicits comments from multiple constituencies is also a vital ingredient that informs, gains additional ideas and builds buy-in for the planning process across the UT community. The System Administration's Office of Public and Government Relations developed a public Strategic Plan website and regularly collected and shared planning documents, reports and timely information about the project (http://president.tennessee.edu/strategicplan/index.html). This website allowed all constituencies to see materials produced and to review progress reports. A "comments" box generated individual perspectives over the months-long project. By distributing timely and responsive communications about the project and working with campus and institute communications offices, information was relayed to faculty, staff, students, alumni and Trustees across the enterprise. This work highlighted the benefits of planning "in the sunshine" so that various steps and results are transparent to the entire UT community. Continuing to keep the community informed about progress and outcomes will be important as the Plan takes shape and moves forward over the next several years.

In addition to communications from the President and campus/institute Chancellors at critical milestones, the formal Constituent Engagement Plan specified outreach activities to more than 20 groups across the university and in the state—such as UT Trustees and state governmental leaders, System administrative leadership and committees/councils, campus and institute constituencies, planning project leadership (such as Task Forces) and faculty, staff, students, alumni and retirees.

While the entire UT System community was invited to comment on plan drafts via the website, several groups representing more than 250 additional individuals were invited to participate in brief online surveys on specific proposals. Questions posed to the UT System Faculty Council, the Alumni Legislative Council and UT Alumni Association (UTAA) presidents, the Compensation Advisory Board, Employee Relations Advisory Board and UT retirees targeted their particular vantage points and expertise. Their responses, along with input from Task Force members and other individuals, were considered as planning progressed.

The University of Tennessee System Administration Strategic Plan, 2012-2017

Summary of Goals and Initiatives:

Goal I [Enhancing Educational Excellence]: Increase the number, quality and diversity of students graduating from the UT System and benefiting from its distinct educational portfolio to produce at each campus and institute the most capable and best-prepared workforce for society.

1. Raise the UT System's academic quality, stature and impact through educational excellence and student achievement across diverse populations.

2. Drive educational excellence and student performance, and ensure a "best in class" student population.

3. Establish a System mechanism to ensure campus/institute accountability for faculty quality and productivity.

4. Develop and coordinate collaborative and innovative academic programs that build on the unique capabilities of the System's campuses and institutes and drive key outcomes and standards

Goal II [Expanding Research Capacities]: Develop support systems for System research efforts that solve critical problems and issues, expand economic development and enhance the quality of life in Tennessee, the nation and the world.

1. Design and implement a strategic business plan for expanding research to harness the power of the UT System's substantial research enterprise and increase its visibility and impact

2. Promote the application and commercialization of research and development to improve the economy and develop and expand business and industry in the state

3. Define standards, measure progress and communicate research outcomes and impacts in the economy

Goal III [Fostering Outreach and Engagement]: Engage members of the UT System community in outreach, engagement and service to improve communities and the quality of life of residents in Tennessee, with emphasis on economic development.

1. Articulate clearly the role of the UT System in community outreach and engagement and engage all campuses/institutes in this mission

2. Promote and measure alumni and student engagement and outreach that benefit the people and communities of Tennessee

3. Track, measure and communicate the outcomes for economic development and improved quality of life for Tennesseans through a Strategic Plan dashboard

Goal IV [Ensuring Effectiveness & Efficiency]: Systematically invest in the UT System's infrastructure and rigorously implement support mechanisms and practices that ensure the success of Strategic Plan aspirations and goals and effective and efficient delivery of services.

1. Catalyze and support collaboration across the UT System and with external partners, including removing policy and procedural roadblocks, to strengthen the impact of the University of Tennessee System as greater than the sum of its parts

2. Define a System Administration approach to a service culture that is modeled by the System Administration and support campus and institute strategic goals with services, information and data

3. Implement Employer of Choice standards across the UT System

4. Create a "culture of communication" throughout the UT System through an improved internal communications program—both between the System and the campuses and institutes and the campuses and institutes with each other—that regularly informs the UT community about System goals, processes and services through multiple channels

5. Collaborate with campuses and institutes to define the facilities and space necessary for an environment of excellence in research, education and outreach

6. Identify and promote compelling opportunities for continued and expanded investment in the various entities of the UT System by the federal, state, county, industry and philanthropic communities

7. Extend diversity initiatives throughout the System for faculty, staff, students and cultural/community life

Goal V: [Advocating for the University of Tennessee System]: Promote awareness and advocacy for the University of Tennessee System and its distinctive contributions to improving the education, economic development and quality of life of the citizens of Tennessee.

1. Enhance the UT System President's role as the "voice" for the value of public higher education and access to a public education in Tennessee

2. Implement a collaborative System marketing/communications plan that supports all the goals of this Strategic Plan and advances the brand position of the UT System and each of its campuses and institutes

3. Provide a UT System platform that will enable and support campus and institute efforts to promote and advance the visibility of faculty and faculty expertise within the UT System
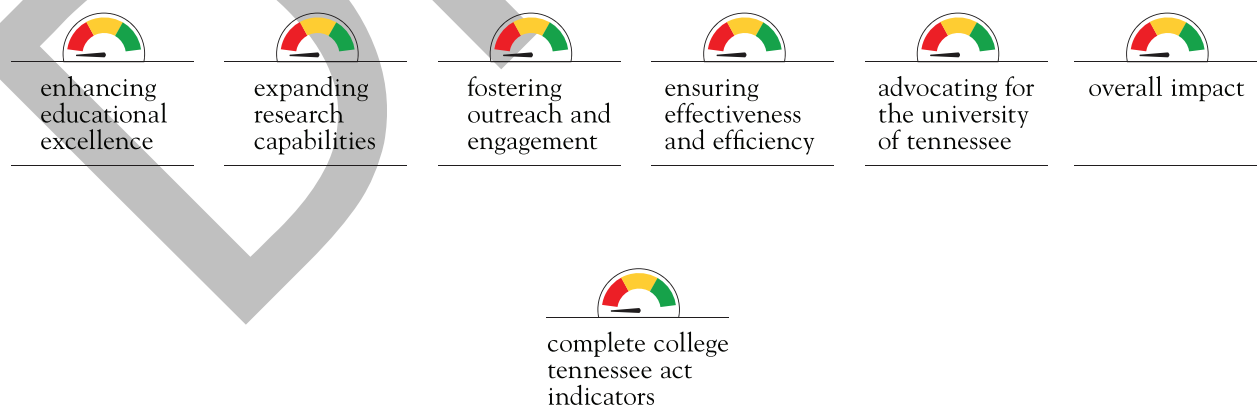
4. Develop and implement a communication plan in conjunction with campus leadership to enhance the promotion of outreach and engagement activities at campuses and institutes, with specific opportunities to communicate with all constituent groups, including alumni and communities across the state

Strategic Plan Implementation

Strategic Plan implementation builds on three critical areas – a budget to fund initiatives over the next five years, an implementation plan to support unit and individual operating plans, and a dashboard of performance metrics. The latter enables state officials and Trustees to track and evaluate the Strategic Plan's progress and outcomes against CCTA objectives, research and outreach goals and other performance indicators appropriate to the specialized and unique missions of the campuses and institutes. Individual and office work plans over the first 24 months, with responsibilities and outcomes noted, will be finalized within the implementation rollout early in FY 2012-2013.

A Strategic plan budget accompanies this plan with resources tagged specifically for implementation for the first 24 months. Most of the first two years of activity will be funded by existing budgets, including repurposing currently approved dollars. Much of the budget activity during the first two years will involve baseline setting, analysis and identification of new funding needs for subsequent years and integrated budget planning through councils and teams across the UT System. This will allow longer-term planning for investments to fund actual initiatives and programs in Years 3-5.

The dashboard will provide a visual snapshot of the Strategic Plan's progress and impact with separate indicators for each of the five goals and a sixth for overall impact. For each dashboard indicator, several tiers will provide more detailed data. To ensure consistency in reporting, the dashboard's design will be aligned with the new IT Governance Model, which is developing definitions and standards for data gathering and reporting across the UT System.

| enhancing educational excellence | expanding research capabilities | fostering outreach and engagement | ensuring effectiveness and efficiency | advocating for the university of tennessee | overall impact |

complete college tennessee act indicators

Conclusion – Defining the Future of UT System

In the University of Tennessee System, each campus and institute is responsible for developing its own Strategic Plan, for which it is also held accountable by the Board of Trustees. "Defining the Future," this UT System Administration Strategic Plan, is aimed at facilitating the long-term success of those plans through the President's staff and leadership team, fostering alignment among goals, and assisting with resources and resource decisions. Placing a spotlight on the "System portfolio" as greater than the sum of its parts, the Strategic Plan also provides a framework for further decisions about the distinctive and shared roles of campuses, institutes and System Administration over the next decade.

A substantial benefit of the new Strategic Plan is its flexibility. It has been deliberately designed as a dynamic document to accommodate change at the same time higher education and public universities are transforming their institutions to advance the greater public good.