

November 2011 Monthly Report

Overview

During this time of unprecedented change in public higher education and after years of leadership changes at the University of Tennessee, UT President Joe DiPietro in his first year in office is leading a strategic planning process for the UT System. As the United States seeks to regain its once acknowledged lead in quality higher education and the state's leadership sets higher competitive standards for its public institutions, the University is well-positioned to engage in this planning project. Its focus is clear – a project that embodies best practices of a leadership-driven, collaborative planning model and one that infuses bold questions and strategic thinking to drive courageous decisions to leverage UT's vast assets. The result – 5-year strategic goals, 10-year strategic focus and a 20-year aspiration – will define the University in 2032.

Summary data from the UT-wide “listening sessions” conducted by The Napa Group consultants informed the second meeting of the UT Strategic Planning Project's Steering Committee on November 11, 2011. Within this context, the Steering Committee was presented a call to excellence for “best in class” status as the overall theme and outcome for the planning process. This charge, supported by a refined set of strategic goals, which were informed by the recent listening sessions with all campuses and institutes, provided the platform for committee discussions and work group activities. The results: (1) content revisions to the proposed University mission statement and the existing University-wide Administration mission statement; (2) refinement of the proposed strategic goals and objectives; and (3) further definition of the next phase task force composition and work assignments to develop actual initiatives for these strategic goals.

Mission Statements

The Steering Committee proposed revisions to the current University-wide Administration mission statement, which will be reviewed by President DiPietro and revised further during the planning process:

The Mission of the University of Tennessee 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.

The Steering Committee also provided recommendations to the UT Chancellors, who are drafting a proposed UT mission statement:

The University of Tennessee System serves the people of Tennessee and beyond through the discovery, communication and application of knowledge. Undergraduate, graduate and professional education programs prepare students for leadership roles in a global society. Knowledge acquisition and research contribute to the economic, social and environmental health of all Tennesseans. The University of Tennessee System strives to provide access to enhance the application of knowledge through academic programming, educational outreach, diverse experiences and clinical services that impact stakeholders around the world.

The Chancellors will present their revised version at a future Steering Committee meeting.

Proposed Strategic Plan Goals and Initiatives

The Steering Committee developed proposed strategic goals and initiatives based on the listening sessions' feedback and previous discussions. These will now be considered by Task Forces, which will develop tactics to implement these goals over the next 5 years, and will be further revised as the project proceeds into 2012 and before the final plan's completion by June 2012.

Goal I: Emphasize educational excellence and student achievement, thereby raising the U of T's academic quality, stature and impact

1. Provide guidance for students and the support services to drive educational excellence and student performance and raise graduation and transfer rates; support educational programs that are integral part of creating a best in class student population and increased visibility of UT students in the community
2. Strengthen the quality, productivity and visibility of UT faculty and UT faculty expertise (recruitment, evaluation, compensation, promotion and retention)
3. Promote and support innovative and collaborative programs, building on the unique capabilities of the System's campuses and institutes
4. Ensure diversity in the faculty, staff, students and cultural/community life
5. Renovate and build physical environment and infrastructure through additional resources that foster excellence in research and education

Goal II: Strengthen University research capacities to provide solutions for critical problems, to grow opportunities for economic development, and to enhance the quality of life in TN, nation and the world.

1. Intensify faculty research competitiveness to increase extramural funding levels, especially in the federal arena
2. Promote and facilitate strategic research partnerships across the UT System and with other institutions and industries to enhance UT's research and education
3. Optimize the research education experience for undergraduate and graduate students to increase the number of students pursuing STEM careers
4. Promote the application of research to help strengthen existing businesses, grow new businesses and produce more high-level jobs
5. Improve policies and procedures for recruitment, promotion and retention of faculty to ensure high-quality research performance
6. Better define and measure research outcomes and impacts in the economy

Goal III: Engage every member of the UT community in understanding the land-grant mission, participating in outreach and engagement and communicating the value of outreach to economic development and improved quality of life for Tennesseans

1. Define the land-grant mission for the 21st century, engaging all campuses/institutes in contributing to community and economic development
2. Ensure that each campus defines its outreach and engagement (service) model and key activities and outcomes
3. Develop tools for collecting, measuring and reporting outreach data and impact across the state
4. Develop communications about "outreach and engagement" that are easily understood by constituents, with appropriate messaging for various groups including alumni and communities

Goal IV: Ensure the success of these goals through an infrastructure and practices that ensure a "best in class" University:

1. Support campus and institute strategic goals with financial resources and a service culture embracing "employer of choice" standards
2. Hire high performers, motivate and reward performance by faculty and staff, require accountability and create alignment around shared responsibility for success
3. Implement a collaborative System-wide marketing/communications plan that positions UT campuses and institutes for investment and competitiveness and consistently communicates UT's contributions to jobs, economic impact and education

4. Create a “culture of communication” throughout the University through a new internal communications program – both between the System and the campuses and the campuses with each other – that regularly informs the University community about System goals, processes and services through multiple channels
5. Foster and measure alumni and student engagement both in the University and their communities
6. Identify and promote compelling opportunities for continued investment in the University by the state, industry and philanthropies

Task Forces

The Steering Committee created 12 task forces, which will focus on their assigned area, consider the 5-year timeframe of the strategic plan, and populate a planning template with recommendations for specific actions and/or activities (tactics) in each goal that need to occur during the next 5 years for the University to successfully execute the goal and to effectively move forward its aspirations of “Best in Class” status for all campuses and institutes. Task Forces are to specify whether these tactics are 1st year, 2nd year, etc., and coordination with key groups already underway, such as the Diversity Advisory Council and the Compensation Advisory Board, is considered to be essential.

Task Force chairs and members, with broad representation across the UT System, were nominated by the Steering Committee and the President’s Office; members of the Steering Committee will serve as liaisons to each Task Force. Their recommendations are due for presentation at the February 2, 2012 Steering Committee meeting.

1. Student Affairs/Student Experience
2. Academic Affairs
3. Faculty Affairs
4. Staff Affairs
5. Research
6. External Affairs/Communications and Marketing
7. System-wide support systems
8. Leadership and Management
9. Outcome, impact, measurement and reporting
10. Facilities and infrastructure
11. Employer of Choice [includes Compensation Advisory Board members]
12. Driving investment and new revenues

Next Steps:

- Task Forces launch in early December and work through January, 2012.
- The project's Steering Committee meets next on February 2, 2012 to consider the Task Force recommendations and revise the strategic goals and initiatives in preparation for a first draft of the new strategic plan.
- The first draft of the President's and University-wide Administration's Strategic Plan will be developed for review and comment by UT constituencies in February 2012.