

11-2016

Academic Affairs Update, November 2016

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Recommended Citation

University of Northern Iowa. Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs., "Academic Affairs Update, November 2016" (2016). *Academic Affairs Update*. 21.
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November Academic Affairs Update



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Into the Future: UNI's Strategic Plan

Randy Pilkington, *Business & Community Services and Federal Relations*

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Transitioning from last year's Academic Master Plan (AMP), in May a 30-member committee began the process for creating the 2017-22 University Strategic Plan. The Committee gathered significant input from faculty, staff, students, alumni, donors, and community leaders, and over the summer developed an initial draft of the Plan.

A leadership retreat in May enabled 160 participants to consult via small groups, then comment on how the AMP's vision and mission statements suggested priority initiatives for the Committee. These initiatives were further grouped into goal categories.

In June, the Committee reviewed input from the May leadership retreat and discussed how UNI's purpose and uniqueness could provide a foundation for revising the AMP's vision and mission statements. Task groups were appointed to revise the AMP's core principles and initiatives.

In July and August, the Committee launched eight extensive and inclusive public input sessions in Cedar Falls, Waterloo, Cedar Rapids, Des Moines and Marshalltown. Nearly 150 participants attended, representing economic development organizations, non-profit organizations, K-12 teachers and administrators, community leaders, alumni, elected local and state officials, Board of Regents members, and Foundation trustees.

The sessions posed four questions:

- What should UNI do to help students be more successful, both while on campus and after they have graduated?
- What can UNI do to become a more diverse and inclusive campus community?
- What can UNI do to increase opportunities for interaction and engagement among Iowa communities, businesses and non-profits, and UNI's students, faculty and staff?
- What can UNI do to help Iowa and its communities grow and prosper?

In addition, an online survey was sent to the groups represented by session participants as well as to students and to parents of not only current students but also alumni. The Committee reviewed over 300 responses.

July and August further involved revising the AMP's statements and core principles via two planning sessions. The Committee also drafted a unifying goal for UNI and three supporting goals (each with its own strategic initiatives), and an overall set of metrics.

As Committee Co-Chair Christopher Cox explained, the Committee composed with the understanding of a vision as "what a university aspires to be in the future" and a mission as "what the university is currently, why it exists, [and] its unique features." The unifying goal ("Student Success") guided the generation of satellite supporting goals, initiatives meant to span the overall university rather than articulating to, e.g. a specific academic program, and metrics as covering an entire supporting goal rather than being tied to a particular initiative.

On September 15 and 16, three town hall meetings were held in the Commons Slife Ballroom to gather crowd-sourced feedback on the Plan draft. Participants circulated among posters displaying the draft's vision and mission, unifying goal and its supporting goals, initiatives, and metrics.

A web presence for submitting feedback also was made available shortly before the town hall meetings. Trends in the feedback data enabled subsequent refinements to the Plan, which then was submitted to the Board of Regents in September. The Board approved the Plan on October 20.

Input meetings are intended for each May, to review the Plan and adjust initiatives for the forthcoming year.

[Click here](#) for the Strategic Planning website.

Transitioning from the Academic Master Plan

The 2015-16 year's final issue of *Academic Affairs Updated* described the Academic Master Plan's (AMP) February and March 2016 Brown Bag events, specifically how the AMP vision and mission statement drafts had been divided into four sections: "The University of Northern Iowa (Who We Are)," "Vision (Who We Aspire to Become)," "Mission (How We Will Get There)," and "Core Principles."

An April Brown Bag focused on the AMP's Core Principle 3, the "Value for Faculty and Staff Excellence." Core Principle 4, "Diversity," also was discussed.

The AMP project, a two-year process, continued into late spring and summer.

Consideration of the needs of the University Strategic Plan, due to the Board of Regents in September, increased the specificity of revisions made.

Efforts included a June meeting that developed the AMP's previous goal areas into tactical initiatives.

For example, the Principle "Advance Student Engagement and Success" by "mak[ing] engaged learning an explicit part of the UNI student experience" evolved into an initiative to "strengthen student leadership and professional development opportunities through intentional collaborations between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs."

As the Strategic Plan underwent its own development in the summer and beyond (see "Into the Future: UNI's Strategic Plan"), the AMP's specific initiatives helped to guide the drafting of the Strategic Plan's metrics.

Academic Master Plan Steering Committee

- Kavita Dhanwada
- Dan Power
- Laura Terlip
- Carolyn Hildebrandt
- Chris Neuhaus
- Patrick Pease
- Tim Kidd
- Kristin Woods
- Deedee Heistad
- John Fritch
- Maureen Clayton
- Stephanie Logan
- Renae Beard
- Amy Petersen

November 2016

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