

## MEMORANDUM

April 1, 2013

**TO:** Campus Community  
**FROM:** Neil Kerwin, President  
**SUBJECT:** Final Strategic Plan Objectives, Years 5 & 6

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With this memorandum I am conveying a new set of strategic plan objectives for years 5 and 6 of the strategic plan. These objectives have been developed with the benefit of extensive discussions within the schools and colleges, led by Provost Bass, and in the other divisions of the university led by the respective vice presidents and our director of athletics and recreation. In addition to these discussions the university community was given the opportunity to participate in the development of these objectives through a variety of means.

An initial call was issued early in the fall semester for ideas related to fundamental changes or additions to the goals of the plan. On January 28, I forwarded a comprehensive set of draft objectives to the university community for review, comment and recommendations. In February, I reviewed these same draft objectives with the representatives of our student body, faculty, staff, and alumni who sit on University Council. Several changes were made in the draft recommendations as a result of these consultations, including changes in targets related to term faculty, information available to graduate students related to costs and debt management, extending family-friendly policy and practices initiatives to staff and others. Some recommendations were not adopted and I will communicate directly with those who submitted them to explain why they are not included on this round.

The objectives were sufficiently developed to provide guidance for the final decisions that formed the university budget for fiscal years 2014 and 2015. The budget and supporting information will be available on the [Office of Finance and Treasurer](#) and [University Budget Resource Center](#) websites later this week. You will note in these documents materials that explicitly link expenditures in the budget to the major goals and objectives of the strategic plan. In addition to guiding the allocation of resources, our performance relative to the strategic plan and more specifically these objectives will be carefully measured and monitored over the coming two years. I will report on those results to the Board of Trustees and the university community periodically during this period, including links to the underlying measurement methods and data.

## **TRANSFORMATIONAL GOALS**

### **1. Epitomize the Scholar-Teacher Ideal**

- Maintain high level of instructional effectiveness as evidenced by strong SET results, student learning assessments, faculty teaching awards, and other examples of teaching quality.
- Increase the number of term faculty on multi-year contracts by 15 percent over two years.
- Secure current or deferred commitments to endow at least three new faculty positions by the end of FY2015.
- Increase scholarly and professional impact of faculty on their fields, as measured by books, journal articles, citations, grants and awards, election of faculty to honorary academies/associations, and comparable evaluations for fields not covered by Academic Analytics.

### **2. Provide an Unsurpassed Undergraduate Education and Experience**

- Enhance financial aid from institutional and fundraising sources, and continue programs that educate students about ways to reduce loan debt; demonstrate desired results by FY 2015.
- Meet or exceed the freshman-to-sophomore retention rate of 90 percent over the next two years. Improve the sophomore to junior retention rate to reach or exceed 84.4 percent by fall 2015.
- Increase the retention rate of transfer students after one year to at least 80 percent.
- Increase the number of courses designed for freshman with enrollments of 20 or fewer that are offered by full-time faculty.
- Offer new three-year degree programs in SPA and SOC.
- Prepare proposal and seek approval from the Faculty Senate to revise the University Honors Program. Begin implementation of the revised program.
- Propose and approve new undergraduate programs and expand the opportunities in the sciences.
- Conduct a review of undergraduate quantitative offerings campus-wide, sharpen current curricular offerings and develop new learning opportunities.
- Achieve a five percent increase in reported gains of freshmen and sophomores on understanding of statistical and quantitative analysis, as measured in the 2015 Campus Climate Survey.
- Effectively communicate expected learning outcomes to undergraduate students and use assessments to demonstrate competencies and address areas of concern.
- Increase first year student interest in AU as demonstrated by:
  - Generating an early decision applicant pool that will yield 30 percent of the enrolled first-year class.
  - Increasing the yield rate for admitted freshmen applicants to 24 percent (while maintaining current levels of quality and rate of admission) and

- Increasing the percentage of freshmen who say AU was their first choice from the 2012 freshman survey results (53.9 percent).
- Maintain a competitive Patriot League profile with a departmental GPA above 3.25 and a graduation rate above 90 percent.

### **3. Demonstrate Distinction in Graduate, Professional, and Legal Studies**

- By fall 2015, increase overall graduate, degree-seeking enrollment by 2 percent above AY2012.
- Effectively communicate expected learning outcomes to graduate students and use assessments to demonstrate competences and address areas of concern.
- Increase awareness of cross unit learning opportunities for graduate students.
- Increase WCL revenue through continuing professional legal education.
- Negotiate and sign a contract with providers to expand AU's presence in on-line instruction, adding at least two new programs.
- Develop strategies for serving online graduate degree students to support their academic success and sense of connection to the AU community.
- Study prospective master's student views of AU and identify reasons students choose or do not choose AU for graduate or certificate programs and use in program development.
- Examine ways to provide information to graduate students on debt and debt management.

### **4. Engage the Great Ideas and Issues of Our Time Through Research, Centers, and Institutes**

- Build alliances across AU schools/colleges to foster new areas of research and instruction through framework of AU 2030.
- Increase the aggregate funding level of faculty grant awards in FY2014 by 5 percent over the current three-year average (FY2009-FY2011).
- Ensure centers and institutes focus on great issues in their areas of expertise through research, symposia and other forms of outreach.

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### **5. Reflect and Value Diversity**

- Maintain current high retention levels (89.4 percent) of underrepresented minority and Pell-eligible first-year students and maintain retention within two percent of retention levels for all first-year students.
- Offer new pedagogical workshops for faculty related to improving diversity and inclusion.
- Focus strategic enrollment management strategies at the graduate level on underrepresented minorities.
- Provide a dedicated full-time professional housed at AU Central providing customized university information to enrolled veterans.

- Provide financial support for study abroad and internship experiences to high achieving low-income students.
- Establish priorities for universal design projects to enhance the inclusion of students, faculty, and staff with disabilities in campus activities and events.
- Continue to improve climate for diversity and inclusion for staff.

## **6. Bring the World to AU and AU to the World**

- By 2015, increase international student enrollment by five percent over fall 2012 level.
- Maintain or increase levels of student participation in study abroad. Continue to receive recognition for the level of student involvement in study abroad, as evidenced by results of the Open Doors Survey and the National Survey of Student Engagement.

## **7. Act on Our Values Through Social Responsibility and Service**

- Develop better ways to track courses that include service components to the D.C. community. Ensure that students have opportunities to have taken such a course by the time they graduate.
- Design a protocol and institutionalize the annual collection and reporting of comprehensive, campus-wide data on the university's civic engagement and service in the District of Columbia and greater metropolitan area.
- Improve public health and sustainability by transitioning to a tobacco-free campus environment.
- Complete a sustainability plan to guide continued implementation of sustainability and climate commitment goals.
- Renew our commitment to ensuring competitive and responsible wage and benefit policies for the lowest paid workers including updating the university wage policy and medical plan subsidies.
- Continue effective stewardship of the university arboretum and gardens.

## **8. Engage Alumni in the Life of the University, On and Off Campus**

- Increase affinity programs for under-represented alumni populations by 33 percent and total affinity program participation by 30 percent by end of FY2015.
- By end of FY2015, average 12,000 alumni donors to the university annually, with specific emphasis on attracting and retaining donors who are:
  - From affinity groups with increased programs;
  - Engaged with any program sponsored by Alumni Relations or Regional Advancement; and
  - Previous donors.
- Increase overall donor loyalty rate by three percent by end of FY2015.

## **9. Encourage Innovation and High Performance**

- Successfully complete the Middle States reaccreditation.
- Develop faculty and staff policies and benefits that promote work-life balance.
- Implement a campus-wide graduate enrollment management system.
- Demonstrate that graduating seniors, master's and PhD students achieve success six months after graduation, either through employment in chosen fields or by continuing study in graduate school.
- Increase the number of cross-divisional collaboration initiatives, including faculty and staff working collaboratively as part of the Baldrige Initiative in Higher Education.
- Expand financial management training to all university managers six sessions per year.
- Apply the new standards of performance in the revamped PMP program including the new overall rating system and the link between pay and performance.
- Support leaders and managers in the rapidly changing workplace through new manager training and development initiatives.
- Build on WAMU 88.5's fall 2012 Arbitron ratings of 8.4 share of weekly listening; AQH (average quarter hour) of 31,900; weekly cumulative audience of 647,800; and TSL (time spent listening) of six hours per week.
- Make improvements in process, structure, technology, and personnel performance, guided by best practices, to ensure institutional resources are managed to achieve AU's strategic priorities.
- Reassess the web strategy (distributed publishing model) to ensure quality and accuracy.

## **10. Win Recognition and Distinction**

- Produce success in national/international scholarships and competitions, including the Fulbright, where AU will have at least nine Fulbright scholars, with the aim to be one of the top institutions in the country that produces Fulbright student scholars (as reported in the Chronicle of Higher Education).
- Maintain athletics competitive profile by winning team and individual Patriot League team championships (at least seven annually); at least four teams with a winning percentage of .600 or greater; and the number of NCAA appearances of six or higher.
- Pilot marketing initiative employing inbound and Search Engine Marketing strategies with two high priority online graduate programs. Acquire top five search position for two master's programs promoted through pilot program.
- Renew AU's web design to reclaim position as a pacesetter in higher education. Achieve a web "first" among nonprofit universities for trends in web presence in FY2015.
- Evolve brand campaign and extend to new audiences. AU will be one of the top two most frequently mentioned institutions, when audiences are asked to name excellent universities in Washington.
- Remain competitive in seeking #1 standing of WAMU 88.5 in the local radio market by mitigating the threat of new competition through ongoing investment in new programming, signal expansion, and augmenting the station's digital presence.
- Effectively communicate major faculty awards and professional recognition.

## **ENABLING GOALS**

### **1. Diversify Our Revenue Sources**

- Generate \$1 million in new revenue through SPExS over FY2012 levels, by FY2015.
- Enhance endowment management, identifying new strategies, opportunities, and structure consistent with emerging university priorities.
- Generate additional investment return on working capital assets without sacrificing safety or liquidity.
- Create a comprehensive marketing plan and conferencing operation to capitalize on suite and apartment style housing units on East Campus.
- Secure at least six principal gift commitments of \$1 million or more, and generate at least \$10 million in new deferred or realized estate commitments by the end of FY2015.
- Generate a minimum of \$3 to \$4 million in total cash and minimum of \$5 million in gifts and pledges for student support. Strategically increase philanthropic dollars for student scholarship support: \$200,000 total from FY2014-2015 for emergency financial aid; eight new scholarship endowments (merit or need) by FY2015; and close one major gift for need-based financial aid.

### **2. Employ Technology to Empower Excellence**

- Meet the median level of peer schools as measured by EDUCAUSE benchmarks in the important areas of online learning, business intelligence and analytics, and cyber security across the entire university.
- Improve operational efficiency through adoption of contemporary solutions like imaging and admissions systems.
- Enable use of analytics through continued roll out of business intelligence to support critical institutional outcomes.
- Manage the university's diverse technology infrastructure building in the right level of reliability, availability, and security.

### **3. Enhance the University Library and Research Infrastructure**

- Develop a long-range facility and space-use plan for the Bender Library.
- Conduct Council on Governmental Relations best practices review of sponsored research activities.

### **4. Forge Partnerships by Leveraging Our Capital Location**

- Develop strategic partnerships with government and local industry to offer new professional education programs targeted to the regional workforce.

- Explore partnerships with other national universities to offer academic programs in collaboration with AU in the D.C. region.
- Maintain strategic partnerships with local organizations including the, Smithsonian, National Archives, the Washington Post, and with emphasis in a manner similar to the Initiative for Russian Culture, the Russian Embassy, and the Washington Nationals.

## **5. Continue as a Model for Civil Discourse**

- Develop effective relationships with AU collective bargaining units.
- Develop effective dialogue with community, characterized by timely sharing of information about university activities that may affect the neighborhood environment and timely solution of problems associated with Campus Plan implementation.
- Continue to collaborate with AU shared governance structures including the Faculty Senate on matters pertinent to the future of the academy.
- Create programs and opportunities that engage students with faculty and staff in discussions that focus on civility and inclusion.

## **6. Align Facilities Planning with Strategic Goals**

- Complete the planning, design and construction activities required to execute the capital expansion plan as detailed in the approved capital budget, with the focus on the major projects, including:
  - Cassell Hall
  - Nebraska Hall addition
  - 4401 Connecticut Avenue renovation
  - McKinley-School of Communication renovation
  - Washington College of Law–Tenley Campus
  - East Campus projects
- Complete planning and implement foodservice facility and operational improvements to support new and expanded facilities.
- Continue to perfect the university’s debt portfolio, both strategically for the long-term, and tactically in the near-term, including the capital financing for the new East Campus and WCL–Tenley projects.