

CHAPTER THREE

*Moving
Forward*





Chapter Three:

Moving Forward

Academic Strategic Planning at UNL

UNL has never been short of planning activities. Chapter 5 on Criterion 2 of this self-study describes a vast array of unit plans, plans in response to specific situations and requirements, regional plans and others that demonstrate a strong planning capability. Furthermore, the campus deliberations of the past several years described in Chapter 2 have resulted in a strong sense of direction and aspiration throughout the institution. What UNL has needed is a way to build on these strengths so that we can remain successful in a future that promises to be more complex, changing and competitive. We need an academic planning process that will help us respond proactively to the challenges we face, state our academic vision and build steadily towards it, and focus on priorities while being at the same time open to new ideas and new opportunities.

Chancellor Perlman in his 2004 State of the University address described the process we would seek to develop to ensure the needed planning for our future:

The experience of the 2020 Report convinces me that the best and more sustainable ideas emerge from those most engaged in the processes of the university. Thus I need your best thinking and your engagement in fashioning the direction for our future. ...

I believe that we must pursue a meaningful strategic planning effort. ... [A] meaningful planning process is in our own best interest. I do not mean to suggest that strategic planning has been nonexistent. Both at the University level and within many programs, we have clear direction. However, to date, no unifying document ties together the strategic elements of those various plans with an agreement on core values, on common objectives, and on measures of accountability. More importantly we do not have a process or a culture that ensures that a planning effort will have consequences — that it will form the basis for conversations about the establishment of priorities and the allocation of resources. [www.unl.edu/resources/3-1]

In some books I have done more careful planning than in others, but always the end was seen from the beginning, and in each case it was the end that I set out to reach—I mean, literally, the end of the story: not necessarily the scene, but the feeling of the end, the mood in which I should leave my characters and in which I myself should say good-bye to them. But practically everything beside the central purpose or the central feeling comes spontaneously and unexpectedly, though they all grow out of the main theme and out of the feeling and experience that made me choose that theme.

Willa Cather—from “The Genius of Willa Cather,” Robert H. Footman, page 138

www.unl.edu/resources/3-1

This vision is a tall order. UNL is a very large institution with scores, even hundreds, of programs and activities. We have always operated in a de-centralized way, encouraging units to develop relatively autonomously in the directions they deem best. We do not have a history of coordinated central planning; in fact, we have very little successful experience with it, in part, because planning efforts in the past generally were not tied to resource decisions in meaningful ways, were too top down, or simply produced “wish lists” with no real priorities being established. We know that there is no ready-made strategic planning model that we can adopt that will serve us well. Instead we will need to design our model while doing it — sort of the proverbial building the airplane while flying it. We are certain, however, that being good stewards of the legacy of our university, going back to its first days, and building on the impressive advances of the last decade will require us to become even more focused in how and for what purposes we use our resources. We need a planning process that will bring our activities together without restricting their development. We need a planning process that each year will become more effective as we learn how best to do it. All this is what makes this a tall order.

The chancellor felt the campus was positioned to respond quickly and immediately to the needs he described in his 2004 address, and he outlined an ambitious goal for the months ahead. He asked that each academic program develop a strategic plan by March 15, 2005 — just six months ahead. Each plan was to include:

- A candid assessment of where the academic program stood as of March 15, 2005, and a clear set of priorities for achieving higher levels of excellence; confirmation, or suggested revision of the core values of the university and the linkage between the program’s priorities and those core values;
- Actions the program proposes to take within its own resources to achieve its priorities;
- Actions required of others that would support the program’s ambitions; and
- A projected timeline and the metrics proposed to measure whether the program is successfully achieving its objectives.

Programs also were asked that their plans incorporate and relate to academic program reviews, as well as any professional accreditation processes. While the chancellor made the expectations for priority setting clear, at the same time, he emphasized our need to remain flexible, nimble and able to respond to new demands and challenges quickly. A plan that could not be changed or make room for new opportunities was not wanted. The chancellor also was quite clear about getting down to “brass tacks,” that is, having a working plan, grounded in reality and focused on action. And he said so bluntly:

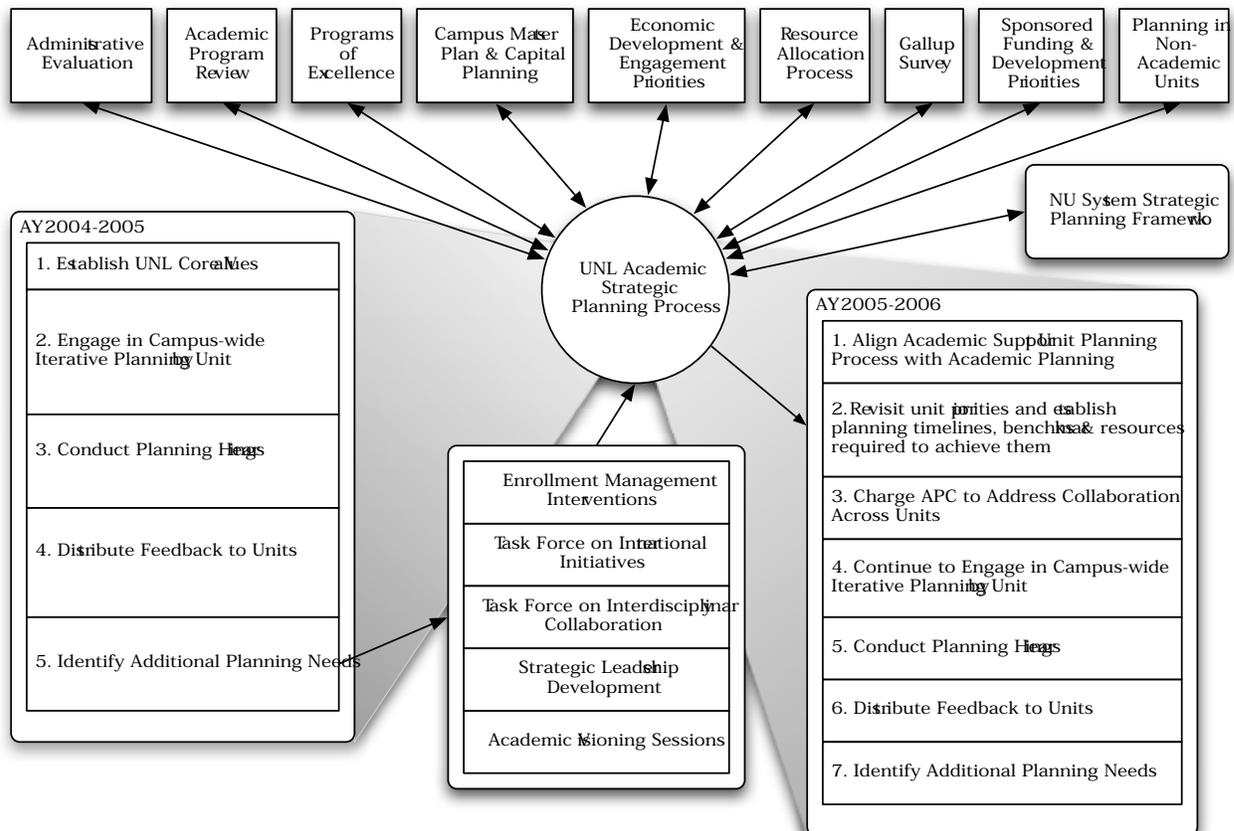
We should not waste time refining all-embracing vision statements, environmental scans, or elegantly phrased platitudes. I am skeptical that any of us have the ability to imagine the conditions or opportunities we will face beyond a one or two-year horizon. Nonetheless, I am mindful of the fact that it is difficult to get somewhere

unless you know where you are going. More importantly, it is difficult for those of us in administration to help you achieve your goals unless we know what they are and how together we can achieve them.

The chancellor gave the administrative leadership and faculty a considerable challenge that is ambitious in its scope and timing: we will develop a systemic, iterative planning process with the goals of engaging with the university mission and achieving continuous quality improvement.

The sections below describe the saga of our academic strategic planning process as it has progressed for two years now. The following sections are organized in three parts: Year 1: The Challenge of Planning Strategically, Year 2: The Rubber Hits the Road, and Years Next: What Must We Do Now? In the first two of these sections, our academic strategic planning activities are described along with reflection on them. The third section summarizes our conclusions and suggests questions for our visiting review team as they work with us to help make academic strategic planning at UNL an effective approach to pursuing our distinctive path toward excellence. Figure 3.1 provides an overall road map to the UNL strategic planning process as it has been followed for the past two years.

Figure 3.1 UNL Academic Strategic Planning Process



Year 1: The Challenge of Planning Strategically

The chancellor's challenge to get on with planning without spending a great deal of time doing environmental scans and crafting vision statements could on the one hand be interpreted as a cynical rejection of pro forma guidelines for traditional strategic planning, or on the other an optimistic expression of faith in UNL's campus leadership. Although the former is in part true, Perlman clearly placed his bets on the latter. The chancellor encouraged campus leadership over the last two years to think constructively about the power of individual effort to shape what we do. Deans and vice chancellors have read and discussed with him Jim Collins' *Good to Great*, widely known as one of the most influential management guides of the past decade, and they have taken to heart Collins' conclusion that great organizations are headed by CEOs and other leaders who take the time to get the "right people on the bus." Within the last few years, deans and chairs have worked with senior administrators to hire and retain the best faculty, who have helped the university strengthen its best programs (see Chapters 2 and 6). UNL has the right leadership in a talented group of deans and senior administrators, and the chancellor expects them to lead.

The first planning task was to define core values that articulate the UNL mission. Clearly, our academic priorities must flow from these. The second was to define a set of templates that would guide our academic units to produce viable responses — quickly — to the chancellor's specific requests. Inherent in both of these activities was the challenge to engage the entire university academic community in the planning effort; in short, to take it seriously. Here's what was done.

Defining UNL's Core Values

At a retreat with senior administrators in fall 2004, UNL deans drew from the work of the *2020 Vision* and other task force reports described earlier as well as from published statements of our mission to articulate plainly and concisely the core values that define all work done at UNL. The draft core values statements embody the commitments of these campus leaders to education and scholarship at a major research university and their reflection on the mission and stated priorities of UNL. The core values document was distributed to the university community for review and discussed in two open forums; videoconferencing enabled faculty and staff at Extension sites to participate "live" in these discussions. (See announcement of these forums in Exhibit A at the end of this chapter.) Comments were frank and wide ranging (see notes of open forums at [www.unl.edu/resources/3-2]).

www.unl.edu/resources/3-2

In addition, all academic units that were asked to submit strategic plans were invited to comment individually on the core values, to suggest additions or changes to them, and to indicate how they are reflected in the strategic priorities they had identified. From these sources of input came several good suggestions for re-crafting the core values draft, but this review also made clear that our academic leadership was indeed in touch with the faculty — the core values draft, by and large, rang true.

Following this exposure, the core values draft was brought back to deans and the senior leadership at the end of the 2004-05 academic year and revised to reflect new input. Chancellor Perlman, in his 2005 State of the University address, introduced a new draft:

- We value the uncompromising pursuit of excellence.
- We value a diversity of ideas and people.
- We value a learning environment that prepares students for success and leadership in their lives and careers.
- We value research and creative activity that informs teaching, fosters discovery, and contributes to economic prosperity and the quality of life in Nebraska.
- We value engagement with academic, business, and civic communities throughout Nebraska and the world.
- We value an institutional climate that challenges every member of the university to advance these core values and celebrate their success.

Discussion about the core values continued during the 2005-06 year. With help from the University Communications staff, a final version was crafted and announced in May, 2006:

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln values:

- Learning that prepares students for lifetime success and leadership;
- Excellence pursued without compromise;
- Achievement supported by a climate that celebrates each person's success;
- Diversity of ideas and people;
- Engagement with academic, business, and civic communities throughout Nebraska and the world;
- Research and creative activity that informs teaching, fosters discovery, and contributes to economic prosperity and our quality of life; and
- Stewardship of the human, financial, and physical resources committed to our care.

The first letters of the core values statements, read vertically, spell “leaders,” an expectation we have of faculty, staff and students in a university committed to excellence. “Leaders” also serves as a mnemonic device to aid in remembering the statements.

Developing the Planning Templates for Year 1 (AY 2004-05)

The first year of academic strategic planning was chancellor-driven, but not chancellor led. In his 2004 State of the University address, Perlman laid out the areas that he believed required attention in the first year's strategic planning effort. Although all UNL academic units were asked to respond to the planning charge, planning priorities were to be set by academic units themselves and not the chancellor or the Senior Administrative Team (see sidebar on page 44). Given this bottom up effort, it was imperative to design a process that would allow the Senior Administrative Team to deal efficiently with the masses of data due to arrive from the academic units on March 15. Also, we were hoping to create a process that worked for a wide variety of units and which gave them data they could examine and compare year after year.

The task of coordinating the campus effort to respond to our chancellor's planning charge was assigned to the Office of the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and the academic planning effort was led by the senior vice chancellor in Academic Affairs units and by the vice chancellor of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources in Institute units. Working with the Senior Administrative Team as a steering committee for the effort, the senior vice chancellor established a process for collecting planning data from academic units that addressed the overall criteria set by the chancellor, respected the existing planning procedures and expectations for faculty participation in individual colleges, connected the planning effort to ongoing institutional planning processes, and presented information in a format that allowed for faculty, staff, and the public to view and compare plans.

From the beginning, the process invested academic leaders at all levels in shaping the process. Plans were requested of academic deans and directors who reported directly to the chancellor, the senior vice chancellor, and the Institute vice chancellor. College deans in Academic Affairs were given leeway to handle the planning process as they thought best, given their units' culture, governance, and previous investments in planning efforts. Units in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources worked collaboratively to produce an integrated plan, reflecting the aims of all Institute units.

To facilitate comparison of plans across units, formats were designed to collect unit responses and allow for electronic distribution and sharing of plans. Following discussion between the deans and the Senior Administrative Team, response templates were developed initially to

Senior Administrative Team

The Senior Administrative Team (SAT) is composed of all campus leadership that reports to the chancellor. In addition to the chancellor, the five vice chancellors (Academic Affairs, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Business and Finance, Research and Student Affairs) are members of SAT. The other members are campus-level administrative offices, also reporting to the chancellor. They include the associate to the chancellor (chancellor's chief of staff); assistant to the chancellor for community relations; assistant to the chancellor for Equity, Access and Diversity Programs; director of Institutional Research and Planning; director of University Communications; director of Intercollegiate Athletics; and director of the Nebraska Alumni Association. The SAT meets weekly, typically on Monday mornings.

The primary responsibility of the SAT is to provide advice to the chancellor on a wide variety of campus-wide decisions and policies. Agenda items for consideration by SAT are offered not only by members of SAT but also by other campus-level administrators on recommendation of a member of SAT. Other campus administrators frequently visit with SAT to provide expertise on particular agenda items or to bring proposals as recommended by a member of SAT. Examples of recent presentations to SAT include the campus master space

continued on page 45

address the two key planning requirements:

- a response from each unit to the proposed UNL core values, and
- a statement of academic strategic priorities from each unit, addressing the criteria requested by the chancellor.

A brief outline of the planning charge and criteria was sent to all academic units that were conducting the planning and appears in Figure 3.2.

In addition to producing the “core values” and “strategic priorities” planning templates, five design teams were appointed to develop templates for gathering information on specific important areas of work [www.unl.edu/resources/3-3]. The object here was to integrate ongoing planning with academic strategic planning and thus work toward integrating all of our planning efforts and reducing sporadic requests for planning information. Furthermore, in asking for these additional data along with the statement of a unit's academic strategic priorities, units were expected to link all of their annual planning with their stated priorities. The ongoing planning processes for which units' responses on “planning templates” were requested are described in the sections below.

www.unl.edu/resources/3-3

Climate Impact Plan

UNL is collaborating with the Gallup® Organization to carry out a continuous assessment of campus climate. The UNL Campus Climate Survey was developed by the Gallup® Organization and is referred to from here on as the Gallup® Survey. Follow-up processes are designed to help create a positive workplace environment for all. All unit supervisors are directed to discuss survey results with their unit employees and produce biennially a climate impact plan with specific strategies for improving the workplace environment. Climate impact plans and commentary on the climate impact planning process were collected as part of the first year's academic strategic planning process. (Additional information about the Gallup® Survey and its uses will be found at several points in this self-study.)

Space and Equipment Plan

Information on facilities and equipment needs has traditionally been collected from academic units as needs arose and as funding became available. In short, the approach to space- and equipment-planning was responsive, rather than proactive. The space- and equipment-planning template was designed to collect information that projected future needs, with a special emphasis on present and future space and equipment required for sponsored research. Units were asked to relate these requests to their strategic priorities.

Figure 3.2 UNL Academic Strategic Planning Process Timeline for AY2004-05

Planning Timeline

- Department Plans— due January 31, 2005
- College Plans— due March 15, 2005
- Planning Hearings—first week in April

1. Proposed core values

The list of core values shown below is derived from UNL tradition, key documents and University leadership. It will form the base for planning and discussion this year. Throughout the year, forums will be held to gather university-wide response to this list, which subsequently will be refined to reflect these discussions.

- Commit to an uncompromising pursuit of excellence.
- Stimulate research and creative work that fosters discovery, pushes frontiers, and advances society.
- Establish research and creative work as the foundation for teaching and engagement.
- Prepare students for life through learner-centered education.
- Engage with academic, business and civic communities throughout the state and the world.
- Encourage, support and challenge every member of the university community to make meaningful contributions to our core values.
- Create a university culture that values diversity of ideas and people.

2. Planning Process

The planning process within Academic Affairs will be led in each college by the academic dean and by academic directors in units which report directly to the senior vice chancellor for Academic Affairs. The planning process within IANR will be led by the IANR associate vice chancellor in conjunction with the IANR deans. Chancellor Perlman will lead the process for academic units that report directly to him. Templates for responding to the planning components outlined below will be on-line by November 15.

- a. Confirm unit commitment to stated core values and other values that may embrace the university community (approximately one page)
- b. Identify and rank unit academic priorities that confirm core values (three-five pages total)

For each priority:

 - Explain relation to core values
 - Propose internal actions and resources to achieve priority goal
 - Identify actions required by others to achieve priority goal
 - Specify timeline to achieve goal and measures of success
- c. Address unit contributions to campus-wide initiatives (approximately one-page each)
 - Climate impact plan
 - Space and equipment priority needs
 - Hiring priorities and rationale
 - Enrollment management plan
 - Diversity plan

continued from page 44

plan, security measures for the university's Information System, and finalization of a campus-wide conflict-of-interest policy. Particularly in evaluating complex issues that evolve across time, an agenda item will be brought back to SAT on multiple occasions. Responsibility for an agenda items is often assigned to a member of SAT for follow-through.

Annually, SAT meets off campus for a two-day retreat to plan for the coming academic year. Members of SAT provide an update on achievements for their units for the previous year, and key issues identified during the previous year are the focus of extended discussion. These conversations usually provide the bedrock for the chancellor's State of the University address, delivered early in the fall semester.

Hiring Plan

The strategic planning hiring template required colleges to submit faculty hiring plans that relate to the priorities defined in their strategic plans.

Enrollment Management Plan

Following the news of our drop in freshmen enrollment for academic year 2004-05, the Senior Administrative Team determined that UNL needed to take a strategic approach to enrollment management. This template addressed undergraduate and graduate enrollment and units were again asked to link projections to their strategic priorities.

Diversity Plan

Chancellor Perlman had established a committee, the Chancellor's Committee to Revise the Diversity Plan, with a charge identical to its title. Given that the committee had just begun this work, it seemed an opportune moment to ask our academic units about their views toward institutional diversity and the efforts they were making to help create a welcoming climate for all students, faculty, and staff, regardless of their backgrounds; thus the request for a diversity plan. At the time of the writing of this self-study, the university diversity plan is still in development.

www.unl.edu/resources/3-4

The academic units were provided electronic forms along with directions for their use for submitting their planning information on templates, relating to the areas described above [www.unl.edu/resources/3-4].

Jumpstarting the Planning Process

Following Chancellor Perlman's State of the University Address, the senior vice chancellor and the Institute vice chancellor sent a letter to all university faculty and staff launching the academic strategic planning process. [The letter is displayed in Exhibit B at the end of this chapter; see also Figure 3.2.] The vice chancellors explained the general expectations for planning stated above and introduced two important parameters. First, the strategic planning process would be limited to academic units, directed by academic deans and directors, and culminate in planning hearings to be attended by all college deans, program directors that report to senior administrators, and faculty and student representatives. Second, the process would be monumental and messy. It was important to acknowledge this latter fact. The chancellor and vice chancellors were asking for a lot of work to be done in a little time, hard work that potentially could affect every member of an academic unit. For those colleges/units that were producing an integrated plan, plans were due March 15; for those units creating an assimilative plan, incorporating plans of subunits, department plans were due January 31.

There were quite a few fits and false starts. The intention to handle all planning electronically caused problems. Not all units had staff trained to enter data into the newly designed templates and the templates did not always work as they were supposed to due to limited electronic systems and software. Several difficulties were encountered in creating sorting mechanisms for analyzing the data. Final templates were distributed to deans and departments fairly late in the year (December), which created some irritation. Some academic leaders actively resisted putting their

plans into the formats requested, believing that they did not fit what they wanted to say—an issue that is still problematic.

While these technical problems were being addressed, the Senior Administrative Team considered how the information from the plans would be put to use and anticipated next steps. The team also responded to questions from the university community about the academic strategic planning process, and it considered how to involve students and external constituencies. The time frame for the process this first year did not allow for extensive review by outside groups, and the process was directed primarily at strategic decision-making by our academic leaders, not at achieving communal consensus; nonetheless, it was important to address how the process would relate to the larger university community. At the same time, the concern surfaced that the process, as currently structured, did not encourage collaboration across units — perhaps too much to hope for, given the short time frame — a vitally important issue because opportunities for collaboration are critical for state-of-the-art research and instructional programs.

The Senior Administrative Team agreed to a process for plan distribution, discussion, and adoption that included the following parameters:

- A two-day planning retreat would be held in April 2005 where all deans and directors would give a 10-minute presentation on their strategic priorities, focusing on opportunities for collaboration with other units.
- Each presenter would distribute a one-page outline of the plan, listing strategic priorities, relating them to core values, and indicating timeline and parameters for achieving these goals.
- All Senior Administrative Team members, deans, directors and representatives from the Academic Planning Committee (see sidebar), Academic Senate and Association of Students of the University of Nebraska would attend.
- Access to units' reactions to the core values statements and statements of strategic priorities would be made available to all deans, directors and senior administrators.
- All climate impact plans, space and equipment plans, enrollment management plans, and diversity plans would be made available to the chancellor, senior vice chancellor, Institute vice chancellor and the design teams responsible for creating each of these planning templates.
- All hiring plans for direct reports to the chancellor, senior vice chancellor, and Institute vice chancellor would be accessed respectively by these administrators.
- The academic strategic planning process would have implications for decision-making and resource distribution in a number of defined domains.

UNL Academic Planning Committee

The Academic Planning Committee (APC) is a university-wide group responsible for formulating and recommending academic and planning goals and initiatives for UNL in the areas of education (resident and Extension), research, and service to the Academic Senate, colleges and chancellor. These goals are coordinated with the responsibilities assigned to UNL as part of the structure under the control of the president of the University of Nebraska and the Board of Regents.

Specifically, the Committee:

- Recommends actions and procedures for new and existing academic programs.
- Reviews with the chancellor or appropriate vice chancellors the Comprehensive Facilities Plan, the campus master land-use plan, and facilities needs as they relate to academic- and support-program goals.
- Is empowered to recommend changes in programs, including elimination.
- Encourages academic planning within the colleges and other units of UNL on a continuing basis through joint faculty-administrative-student action. The committee comments on the review process and visiting team report to the appropriate vice chancellor.
- Assists the chancellor in seeking remedies for a financial exigency. Such remedies may include elimination of faculty, staff, and administrative positions.

The Academic Planning Committee consists of 16 members as follows: (a) six faculty members elected as provided by the Academic Senate to staggered three-year terms. These members shall represent biological sciences, social sciences, physical sciences, and humanities

continued on page 48

continued from page 47

with no more than two from a single college; (b) one faculty member at large selected by the UNL Graduate Council to serve a three-year term; (c) two academic deans selected by the chancellor to serve three-year terms; (d) the president of the Academic Senate (or designee); (e) one undergraduate student and one graduate/professional student as selected by the president of ASUN; (f) the director of Institutional Research and Planning for UNL who shall serve as secretary; (g) the senior vice chancellor for academic affairs; (h) the vice chancellor for the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources; and (i) the vice chancellor for research who sits as an ex officio non-voting member. The committee selects its chair from among its faculty members.

www.unl.edu/resources/3-5

The Planning Hearings and Administrative Feedback for Year 1 (AY 2004-05)

On April 25 and 26, 2005, some 18 unit administrators presented their strategic plans to the Senior Administrative Team and representatives of the Academic Planning Committee, the Academic Senate, and the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska. Admittedly, several participants feared that the presentations, slated to go on for hours, would be dull, boring, and — worse — useless for the purpose of advancing the process. Pleasantly, most were surprised to the contrary. The deans and directors gave carefully constructed reports and, for many, the presentations provided the first opportunity to hear the dreams and ambitions of their peer administrators in other units. The occasion gave deans and directors several opportunities for collaborative ventures. One immediate outcome was a collaboration involving NET (Nebraska Educational Telecommunications) and the colleges of Journalism and Mass Communications and Fine and Performing Arts to establish an intern program that would prepare journalism and arts students for professional work following their graduations.

Following the hearings, the chancellor, senior vice chancellor, and Institute vice chancellor committed to giving a more thorough reading of the plans and completing direct responses, in writing, by the end of the fiscal year — responses that would suggest actions to be taken and adjustments to be made in the next cycle of iterative planning. The senior vice chancellor also met individually with all deans and directors in Academic Affairs to discuss planning priorities and future unit ambitions. Some deans were struggling with how to present a comprehensive view of their colleges while at the same time being strategic, that is, prioritizing — which might cause them to leave something out. This clearly was a difficult assignment. These conversations helped shape expectations for the deans. For example, one dean who proposed 18 priorities in Year 1 came in with one priority in Year 2. While none of the plans in the first year could truly be called fully strategic, progress over previous campus-wide planning efforts was clearly evident and the experience led to considerable improvement the second year when more than half of the plans met all the expectations. Both academic vice chancellors reviewed separately the faculty hiring plans, giving approvals for the next hiring season, thus demonstrating that these plans would be acted on.

Finally, all deans and academic directors were asked to revise their strategic priorities, putting them in a brief form suitable for public presentation, for publication on the strategic planning website prior to the next academic year. These plans are available at [www.unl.edu/resources/3-5].

Timeline for Year 1 (AY 2004-05)

The time line for the work of Year 1 was both pre-planned and developed as the year progressed. Figure 3.3 shows how the year unfolded.

Figure 3.3 Timeline for UNL Academic Strategic Planning Process in AY 2004-05

<p>September 2004 Strategic planning process announced in chancellor’s State of the University Address; deans and directors examine key university documents and draft UNL core values statement.</p> <p>October 2004 Strategic Planning Process Guidelines developed.</p> <p>November 2004 Design teams formulated to produce templates for unit responses.</p> <p>December 2004 First forum on draft of UNL core values held.</p> <p>January 2005 Departmental strategic plans submitted (in those units where departments completed separate plans).</p> <p>February 2005 Second forum on draft of UNL core values held; Campus Master Planning linked to strategic planning process.</p> <p>March 2005 Academic units with direct reporting to chancellor and senior vice chancellor submit strategic plans to Blackboard site; IANR submits integrated plan to Blackboard site.</p> <p>April 2005 Academic units with direct reporting lines to chancellor, senior vice chancellor, Institute vice chancellor attend planning retreat; unit heads present strategic priorities to each other, the Senior Administrative Team, and representatives from Academic Senate, Academic Planning Committee and Association of Students of the University of Nebraska.</p> <p>April–May 2005 Unit diversity plans reviewed by Chancellor’s Committee to revise the University Diversity Plan; enrollment management plans reviewed by Enrollment Management Council; space and equipment plans reviewed by Space and Equipment Design Team.</p> <p>April–June 2005 Chancellor, senior vice chancellor, Institute vice chancellor meet with direct reports to discuss plans and offer responses.</p> <p>June 2005 Chancellor holds retreat with Senior Administrative Team; they discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• responses of Enrollment Management Council to academic unit enrollment plans;• academic unit responses to draft core values statements;• reports of chancellor, senior vice chancellor, Institute vice chancellor on their review of unit strategic plans;• next steps in the planning process (i.e., involvement of other university units). <p>July–August 2005 Senior Administrative Team reviews space and equipment plans with Campus Master Planning Team.</p> <p>August 2005 Academic units post revised strategic priorities on Academic Strategic Planning Website.</p> <p>September 2005 Revised core values posted on Academic Strategic Planning Website; Chancellor announces second phase of strategic planning in State of the University Address.</p> <p>October 2005 Chancellor, senior vice chancellor, Institute vice chancellor hold retreat with deans to discuss iterative planning process.</p>
--

What We Learned in Year 1

In completing the first year of the academic strategic planning cycle, we experienced a few joys, many frustrations and learned a great deal about what it took to focus priorities in a large, complex research university. We had many built-in mechanisms for feedback. The Senior Administrative Team discussed the planning process continuously in its weekly meetings and more specifically at its annual retreat in June; representatives from the Academic Planning Committee and Academic Senate responded to the planning hearings; and the planning template design teams gave feedback on the quality of responses to the planning templates. The following sections identify issues raised during our first year's efforts.

Strategic priorities identified by academic units were not well-focused or well-defined.

By and large, college deans and other academic leaders who completed plans found the exercise useful for defining their priorities, but few of their actual plans met all the criteria (see Figure 3.2) originally outlined, that is, few identified focused priorities, metrics to measure success, timelines for completion and sources of needed resources. Several conditions contributed to this result, among them the extremely short time frame for completing a response, the mismatch between this new planning process and some long-standing planning efforts in colleges and departments, and the reluctance of some academic leaders to publicly identify priorities that place some academic units in line to receive more resources than others. To be strategic, a plan must identify priorities, steps to take, sources of resources to be utilized, timelines, and benchmarks for evaluation of progress. But clear progress had been made in working toward planning strategically and the general feeling was that much had been learned.

Faculty engagement in the planning process varied greatly across academic colleges and programs.

Deans and directors were given leeway to handle the process differently in each college and unit. In some colleges, individual departments worked together to develop plans, in others an executive committee worked with the deans to develop plans, and in still others, the college worked as a small community to develop the plans. These disparities in the way the process was handled led some faculty members to conclude that faculty had not been given the opportunity to participate fully in the planning process, and this perception was highlighted by the leadership of the Academic Senate. What was needed was to make public the good examples that had been developed, and there clearly were some, so that all could learn from them.

Some enrollment management plans did not provide good direction for increasing enrollment.

Some colleges and departments submitted plans to develop new concentrations and majors without identifying resources required or the impact of these proposed offerings on existing programs at the university. In addition, some enrollment plans that were submitted did not appear to be responsive to student demand. But there were also some well-developed plans that demonstrated how they might be implemented to meet student demand while addressing academic priorities.

Technical problems with the templates caused irritation and frustration.

Aside from the fact that the planning templates did not fit with some colleges' previous planning processes, the very effort of completing the plans on the forms provided caused frustration for many. Clearly, this had to change, but we now knew what to change.

Interdisciplinary collaboration was not highlighted in the planning process.

Representatives of the Academic Planning Committee who attended the planning hearings noted the lack of cross-unit and interdisciplinary collaboration in the unit plans. In part, this was felt to be an outcome of the structure of the planning process, which required plans to be submitted through existing academic units. This too needed to be fixed but we had experienced at least one success, in the Journalism-Arts-NET example mentioned previously.

Resource implications of the planning process were not clear.

An initial outline was published indicating that resource distributions would be connected to academic strategic planning; however, since there were no resources to distribute at the end of the first fiscal year, confidence in the ability of the planning process to affect resource distribution was shaky at best. The chancellor and vice chancellors became more determined that this had to happen if strategic planning were to succeed.

Space and equipment plans were difficult to interpret.

Some colleges and units submitted clear plans for new facilities and equipment needs, others presented sweeping expectations for future developments, and still others indicated little understanding of current space and equipment needs. If we were to ask for space and equipment information in an iterative planning cycle, clearly another approach was needed. Learning what does not work also helps to discover what processes will work.

It was not clear how to involve the rest of the university in the academic strategic planning process.

Our plan from the beginning was to make academic strategic planning the basis upon which planning by support units would be developed. However, we did not have a clear plan for this next step. The positive of this outcome is that it put this issue clearly before us, not to be ignored in future years' work.

Planning in non-college academic units could have been better coordinated.

The academic strategic planning formats were largely designed for units that had degree programs, hired faculty, and recruited students (i.e. departments and colleges). Academic units that did none or few of these things (e.g., Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, Public Policy Center), yet reported directly to the chancellor, senior vice chancellor or Institute vice chancellor did not find the reporting formats or planning timeline to be suitable for their purposes.

UNL could benefit from a reflective examination of our planning process.

Our commitment to further develop the strategic planning process led in the summer of 2005 to a request to the Higher Learning Commission for permission to take part in the "Customized Accreditation Review Process" with a special emphasis on strategic planning for our upcoming North Central re-accreditation procedure (See [www.unl.edu/resources/3-6] for the request to the Commission). This was done for several reasons. We believed that explaining our process to persons outside our institution would make us develop greater clarity about what we were doing and why. We anticipated receiving helpful feedback from the visiting review team about the academic strategic planning work under way. And we believed this would ensure that efforts to prepare for our re-accreditation would support and not detract from our efforts to develop and implement our unique academic strategic planning process. We were pleased that the Higher Learning Commission granted our request.

www.unl.edu/resources/3-6

Despite the problems that were encountered in Year 1, the commitment to the academic planning process and its promise to help the university become more focused in its pursuit of excellence remained high among many on campus. The job for Year 2 was to address these issues, make adjustments in the planning process, and, in effect, make sure that academic strategic planning led to decisions that had real implications for program development and resource distribution.

Year 2: The Rubber Hits the Road

A key planning event for UNL is the chancellor's Senior Administrative Team retreat, held each June. At the 2005 retreat, the team reviewed the academic strategic planning activities of the previous year and discussed ways to improve them. The team also considered how to address yet another challenge: The drop in overall enrollment from the previous year and soaring energy costs were projected to result in a \$6-million shortfall in the UNL budget. (The actual shortfall was closer to \$5 million.) The academic strategic planning process is designed to help us identify strategic priorities so that we could move resources toward them: what are we to do with the plans if we face a budget cut? Furthermore, the University of Nebraska system Board of Regents recently had approved a new approach to revenue distribution across the NU system, making

each campus's budget reflect tuition revenue directly that is generated on that campus. This possibility makes the need for enrollment planning even more crucial. Consideration was given to which elements of the academic planning process should respond to this new policy and how to encourage units to be entrepreneurial and generate new revenue.

The Special Case for Enrollment Management

In the spring of 2005, the vice chancellors of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs together developed a strategy for using the enrollment management plans submitted by the colleges and encouraging better plans the following year. The aim was to invest the academic units more directly in attracting new students through explaining the effects of enrollment on the overall budget of UNL and defining a process for planning enrollment that was workable for academic units. Unit efforts needed to be placed in a context of “big picture” institutional goals for campus-wide enrollment.

It should be noted that the offices of Admissions, New Student Enrollment, Financial Aid and Undergraduate Studies had prior to this point adopted several effective strategies to encourage student enrollment and retention. These included targeted recruiting publications, special recruiting events, increased faculty and adviser contacts with returning students and new financial packages. The new enrollment planning strategy involved the following:

- Two administrative planning sessions were held in mid-spring with vice chancellors and key administrators. The goal was to define UNL's current and future enrollment potential. Patterns of remissions distribution, out-of-state recruiting goals, distance education goals, concurrent enrollment goals, and marketing and communication strategies used to achieve these aims were all considered.
- A full-day Enrollment Management Retreat was held with deans, vice chancellors, and professional staff from Student Affairs, University Communications and academic units. The goal was to explore the findings from the planning sessions, define barriers to student enrollment and ways to overcome them, and present a management tool for assessing enrollment outcomes.
- A follow-up session occurred at the deans' annual retreat in October, designed to achieve agreement on a structure for conducting annual enrollment management planning at the unit level as part of the academic strategic planning process.
- A comprehensive plan for student retention was also given attention. Realizing that enrollment management involves retention as well as recruitment, the Office of Undergraduate Studies in cooperation with Student Affairs and University Communications launched a plan for encouraging student retention (see Exhibit C at the end of this chapter). This plan was reviewed by academic deans and implemented by faculty and academic advisers, with periodic checks on progress presented to the Senior Administrative Team through the vice chancellors.

These enrollment management interventions were developed partly in response to the finding in Year 1 that some enrollment management plans did not provide good direction for increasing

enrollment. In addition to rallying academic leaders to encourage recruitment and retention of students, the intent was to develop a way for academic units to match their enrollment plans/analyses with UNL overall enrollment goals and with a strategy for creating university messages that support overall enrollment goals, messages that deans/faculty could use in recruiting and program brochures. Progress was made with these interventions in enrollment management, but additional interventions were needed between Years 1 and 2 of the planning process; these are displayed in the diagram of the UNL Academic Strategic Planning Process shown in Figure 3.1 and described in sections below.

Engaging the Campus in Iterative Planning for Year 2 (AY 2005-06)

In response to the discussions with the Senior Administrative Team and deans described previously, the academic strategic planning process was both streamlined and modified in Year 2 to address the issues listed in the sections below.

Redesign planning templates for submitting strategic priorities.

Because we had experienced the technical problems in Year 1 with the templates, the reporting templates for submitting strategic priorities were redesigned to require specific responses to the chancellor's original expectation that metrics and timelines for achieving stated goals be stated, and that funding required be identified, including department funds, college funds and funds expected from other sources, such as the Programs of Excellence. To aid in ease of data entry, all templates were redesigned as web-based forms. [www.unl.edu/resources/3-7]

www.unl.edu/resources/3-7

Require reports of faculty involvement in the planning process.

We believed that asking for a written report of faculty involvement would help increase and make more consistent faculty engagement in the planning processes that showed such variation among units in Year 1. All units submitting plans were asked to describe how various constituencies, such as faculty, staff, students, external advisers, alumni and others, are involved in planning.

Create user-friendly forms for submitting faculty hiring requests.

The format for annual faculty hiring requests, submitted to the vice chancellors for Academic Affairs and the Institute, was redesigned to enable web entry and modified to include a rationale relating requests to strategic priorities and information about resources, space and equipment required for new hires.

Link budget reduction and revenue generation plans to the academic planning process.

Steps were taken to make the resource implications of planning clearer than they had been in the first year. Formats for units to both plan for the anticipated budget cut and propose entrepreneurial ways of generating new revenues were developed. Unit directors were also invited to request re-seeding funds (anticipating the day when new revenue will be available for distribution), linking their requests — once again — to their strategic priorities.

Create a modified report format for non-college academic units.

This step was taken to coordinate better planning in non-college academic units than had been experienced in Year 1. Non-college academic units that report directly to the chancellor (e.g. Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, Lied Center for Performing Arts, Lentz Center for Asian Culture) were asked to present plans at mid-year to an audience of deans, giving deans an opportunity to incorporate these plans as appropriate in their own strategic plans, due at the end of the academic year.

Eliminate data collection where better coordination with other ongoing planning efforts will provide the information more efficiently.

The Year 1 (AY 2004-05) planning cycle also revealed that some of our methods of collecting data for ongoing planning processes had to be modified for Year 2 (AY 2005-06) for various reasons, as described below:

Climate Impact Plans. Climate impact plans were not requested again in AY 2005-06. They will be collected biennially, to coincide with the biennial cycle of the Gallup® Survey.

Space and Equipment Plans. The material submitted by academic units for space and equipment planning in Year 1 was difficult to assess. Rather than burden units with updating this information for Year 2, the data were given to the design team that had produced the response template for these plans. The team looked for: 1) projects that will benefit students or faculty across several units that warrant immediate funding (some were funded) and 2) projects that have implications for long-range university capital planning. How best to coordinate short-term and long-term space and equipment planning is still an issue.

Hiring Plans. During the first year of academic strategic planning, each college dean was asked to complete a template indicating hiring plans for the following three years, including hiring of tenure track and non-tenure track faculty, new graduate student lines and new staff positions. For each category, colleges indicated how positions related to their strategic plans and what funding resources were available or needed. Given the fluid nature of staffing needs and faculty turnover, the three-year hiring plan proved to be too cumbersome. Hence, for Year 2, we asked units for information related to faculty and professional administrative hiring only, and for one academic year. Units also were asked to provide more detailed information for each requested position, prioritizing all positions and describing the sources of existing and new funds. Also, hiring plans were integrated with other facets of strategic planning: under projected start-up, colleges now identify new space required or existing space to be remodeled; colleges also describe how their requested positions relate to campus priorities for research and graduate education, undergraduate education and diversity.

Enrollment Management Plans. Following the enrollment management retreat in the summer of 2005, a team of administrators from Undergraduate Admissions, Graduate Studies, Undergraduate Studies, and Institutional Research and Planning developed a format for an enrollment management data profile. The intent was to give each college and department a profile, showing their enrollment patterns by major, class rank and other parameters over the last three years.

The profile could then be used to help project desired future enrollments and aid in planning strategies to meet these goals. Creating the data profile for each college and department was more challenging than anticipated; at the end of Year 2, a new team, including the former team members as well as deans and department chairs, was formed to tackle this problem. Because the data profiles were not ready for the Year 2 planning cycle, departments and colleges were asked to update what they had submitted last year.

Diversity Plans. Material submitted by units in support of the university diversity plan was handed to the chancellor's committee to revise the University Diversity Plan; follow up will occur when the subcommittee completes its work.

Coordinating Academic Strategic Planning with Other Ongoing Processes

In many ways, the effects of the Year 1 Academic Strategic Planning process were not felt in Year 2; as noted earlier, there were no big dollars to direct toward them. Yet, in other ways, the planning process is having significant effects on other ongoing planning processes. As noted earlier in this chapter, one of our goals was to link strategic planning to other on-going processes. Following Year 1, several steps were taken to accomplish this. The diagram in Figure 3.1 (Page 41) lists in boxes across the top those on-going administrative processes that are now tied to the UNL Academic Strategic Planning process in a feedback loop. They are described in the sections below.



Administrative Evaluation

Formats and procedures for evaluating deans and directors in Academic Affairs have been modified to more closely relate to practices in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. All evaluation forms now include assessment of the administrator's support of the newly adopted UNL core values.

Academic Program Review

The long-standing UNL Academic Program Review (APR) procedures were already in the process of being revised by a subcommittee of deans and associate vice chancellors to make the process more effective and less duplicative of program accreditation procedures. The APR process revisions were further modified in fall 2005 to require that the APR self-study include an evaluation of program improvements related to department, college and university strategic plans. Likewise, programs are expected to identify as strategic priorities improvements that are proposed and supported by university administrators as part of the APR process. (See Core Component 4c [Chapter 7] for more information on the academic program review process.)

Programs of Excellence

The annual Programs of Excellence funding competition is a unique feature of the NU system. In 2002, when Programs of Excellence (POE) funds were first allocated by the NU system, UNL established a process for individual units and programs to identify priority programs in their areas consistent with the priority initiatives identified by the NU Board of Regents. Some 15 programs with potential for excellence were selected initially for funding. In succeeding years, departments and units were invited to submit competitive proposals in these and a few other identified areas; at present, we have 23 Programs of Excellence that have been funded. In addition, a few seed grants were awarded to help faculty further develop new areas that have great potential for achieving excellence.

At the end of Year 1 of our new academic strategic planning effort, we required that all Programs of Excellence proposals submitted in the UNL annual competition also be supported in unit/college strategic plans. We also established a process of review that formally described the role of the Academic Planning Committee and offices of the senior vice chancellor for Academic Affairs, the vice chancellor for the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the vice chancellor for research, and the dean of the Agricultural Research Division. [www.unl.edu/resources/3-8]

www.unl.edu/resources/3-8

Campus Master Plan and Capital Planning

When we collected space and equipment plans in Year 1, this part of our academic strategic planning process collided with five other space-planning initiatives under way: a revision of the campus master plan, a space inventory of all UNL facilities, an update of the University of Nebraska system capital planning process, an NU system budget request to the legislature for funds for major facilities renovation, and an independent consultant's analysis of campus potential for research space, funded by the UNL vice chancellor for research. The prospect of collecting information on space and equipment planning from academic units on a regular basis led to a review of all these processes and how they might be coordinated. This review effort, initiated by the senior vice chancellor and coordinated by the director of institutional research, is under way as of the writing of this report.

Economic Development and Engagement Priorities

The University of Nebraska system president announced a renewed commitment to economic development and engagement, an effort that was simultaneous with renewed commitment of the UNL chancellor, vice chancellor for the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources and vice chancellor for research to develop these efforts more fully (see Chapter 8). Strategic planning will be an important tool in making additional progress in this direction. Our hope for this and all of our ongoing processes is that the academic strategic planning process will shape their direction, just as the constraints and opportunities of the ongoing processes will influence academic strategic priorities.

Resource Allocation Process

As mentioned in the "Engaging the Campus" section above, academic strategic planning will guide resource allocation. The chancellor and Senior Administrative Team have not yet defined a process for budget allocation on this model, although a list of potential implications for resource allocation

was drafted (see sidebar). In anticipation of adopting a method of resource allocation based on strategic priorities, when submitting the required budget reduction during AY 2005-06, academic units were asked to identify areas for re-seeding, should new resources become available, based on their strategic priorities. They also were invited to submit plans for revenue generation that involved revenue sharing, again relating them to academic priorities.

Gallup® Survey

As previously mentioned, the UNL campus has conducted a biennial employee survey of campus climate, referred to commonly as the Gallup® Survey, the results of which are used by all university units to help employees and their supervisors work together to create a more satisfying and productive workplace climate. In the first year of the biennial cycle, a survey is taken of employee attitudes about workplace climate, and in the second year, results are discussed in each unit and plans developed to address problem areas. In AY 2005-06, five questions were added to the climate survey to assess campus-wide awareness of and engagement in academic strategic planning. The findings from these questions are presented later in this chapter.

Sponsored Funding and Development Priorities

Deans are asked to identify how their academic strategic priorities link to efforts to seek sponsored research funding and funding from foundations and private donors. Annual request to identify projects for possible earmark funding are also now related to academic strategic planning.

Planning in Non-academic Units

Academic Strategic Planning is an academic effort that informs ongoing planning in Student Affairs, Business and Finance, and other non-academic units. In discussions with vice chancellors of these areas, it was concluded that it was not necessary to create an elaborate structure for coordinating planning across all of these domains. Rather, planning processes in these areas should continue as in the past, being informed by the strategic priorities identified in academic areas. This is working reasonably well. A few examples of how planning is coordinated across other university units include:

- Processes are under way to coordinate space and equipment planning across Academic Affairs, the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Research, and Business and Finance. Enrollment Management planning is a collaborative effort of academic units, Student Affairs, Extension and Outreach, and Business and Finance.
- Communication of core values and academic initiatives is coordinated across Academic Affairs, the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and University Communications.

NU System Strategic Planning Framework

NU President James B. Milliken and our Board of Regents, working with NU system campus chancellors and university vice presidents, have recently developed an NU system strategic planning framework that articulates system-wide aspirations. Accountability measures for achieving these system-wide goals are in development. UNL has responded and will continue to respond to these goals as they are being developed in our ongoing planning processes, including academic strategic planning. All NU campuses have yet to determine how best to integrate their own planning processes with the system strategic framework.

Strategic Planning and Budget Decisions

(Draft–1/24/2005)

In Chancellor Perlman's State of the University Address of 2004, he stated that the strategic planning to be completed that academic year will "form the basis for our decisions on priorities and resource allocation." Academic units were asked to keep this objective in mind as they designed their plans and present and defended priorities. Unit strategic plans will inform administrative decisions about the following:

- Re-distribution of funds from faculty vacancies.
- Distribution of available one-time funding for facilities improvements and equipment that supports teaching and research priorities.
- Priority consideration of Programs of Excellence proposals submitted for next year's POE funding cycle (i.e., POE proposals submitted during AY 2004-05 must relate to priorities identified in unit/college strategic plans).
- UNL identification of disciplinary areas/clusters that should be developed as programs of excellence.
- Development of UNL priorities for projects to be financed with NU Foundation funds.
- Allocation of existing physical space for teaching and research programs.
- Identification of future capital projects.
- Allocation of teaching resources to match enrollment demand.
- Allocation of resources to support marketing and recruitment efforts.
- Distribution of diversity funding.

New Demands for Quality Improvement

In addition to having “ripple effects” on ongoing planning processes, as described above, Year 1 of the Academic Strategic Planning process brought to the surface several issues that require a cross-campus response. We mentioned earlier the enrollment management interventions, including the retreat on this topic. Demands for other interventions in the planning process were identified through follow-up discussions with the Senior Administrative Team, the academic deans, the Academic Planning Committee, and the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate. They are represented in Figure 3.1 and described in the sections below.

Taskforces on International Initiatives and Interdisciplinary Collaboration

The chancellor, senior vice chancellor, and Institute vice chancellor established a “Task Force on International Initiatives” and a “Task Force on Interdisciplinary Collaboration” to produce white papers for administrative review and action on those topics. In addition, the Academic Planning Committee was charged to envision a cross-unit mechanism for encouraging interdisciplinary work.

Strategic Leadership Development

Two leadership workshops were held with deans and department chairs to help them identify strategies for doing unit planning and to support their leadership in setting unit priorities. In December 2005, department chairs who had experienced success in setting strategic priorities presented their strategies to fellow chairs and deans; outlines of some of their presentations can be found in the virtual resource room [www.unl.edu/resources/3-9]. The presentations addressed three leadership themes: leading for excellence, developing entrepreneurship, and budgeting for success. In April 2006, a follow-up workshop was presented, emphasizing unit leaders’ roles in communicating university identity and priorities.

www.unl.edu/resources/3-9

Academic Visioning Sessions

The chancellor, the senior vice chancellor, the Institute vice chancellor, director of University Communications and academic deans participated in “visioning workshops” to help develop a coherent set of messages about the university’s academic strengths, priorities and core values. In two evening sessions, deans and senior administrators reviewed the academic strategic planning process and discussed its relationship to overall communications and marketing for the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. In preparation for these sessions, deans were asked to identify their individual perceptions of UNL’s top five academic strengths and the top 10 strengths of their own college, identifying units and faculty associated with them. After sharing this information, the participants identified a number of “academic themes” that describe excellent academic work across several units and colleges; and they also proposed a number of messages related to UNL’s core identity, many of which reflected our core values. As of the writing of this report, data from these sessions are being compiled and are to be discussed again with the deans. The anticipated outcome of this exercise is a list of common messages about UNL’s values and academic strengths that help us retain focus on our common aspirations.

Timeline for Year 2 (AY 2005-2006)

The time line for the work of Year 2 was both pre-planned and developed as the year progressed. Figure 3.4 shows how the year unfolded.

Figure 3.4 Timeline for UNL Academic Strategic Planning Process in AY 2005-06

<p>June 2005 Chancellor holds retreat with Senior Administrative Team; they discuss next steps in the planning process (i.e., involvement of other university units).</p> <p>Chancellor, senior vice chancellor, Institute vice chancellor respond to college/unit enrollment plans; work with ad hoc committee to plan enrollment management retreat.</p>	<p>Senior vice chancellor sends progress letter to campus announcing website and planning process.</p> <p>Space Planning Team meets to review/discuss Space and Equipment Plans.</p>
<p>August 2005 Chancellor, senior vice chancellor, Institute vice chancellor respond to overall strategic plans and hiring priorities; request colleges to submit revised priorities statement by September 1 for web posting.</p> <p>Campus-wide enrollment management retreat.</p> <p>Senior vice chancellor reviews academic strategic planning process for AY 2005–2006 with Deans Council.</p>	<p>November 2005 Space Team presents draft findings and questions to Senior Administrative Team.</p>
<p>September 2005 Senior vice chancellor charges Academic Planning Committee to work with the Interdisciplinary Task Force to review posted strategic plans (available September 15), identify cross-cutting themes, hold discussions, and give recommendations for developing cross-cutting themes by November 2.</p> <p>Revised core values posted on academic strategic planning website. Chancellor announces second phase of academic strategic planning in State of the University Address.</p> <p>Academic strategic planning website goes live at http://www.unl.edu/svcaa/planning/.</p>	<p>December 2005 Deans submit plans for implementing 2 percent budget reduction.</p> <p>Chancellor, senior vice chancellor, Institute vice chancellor hold Strategic Leadership Retreat with deans and chairs. Space Planning Team finalizes report/questions and forwards them to senior vice chancellor.</p>
<p>October 2005 Academic Affairs posts revised college and program strategic priorities on academic strategic planning website. Chancellor, senior vice chancellor, Institute vice chancellor hold retreat with Deans to discuss iterative planning process for AY 2005–2006.</p> <p>Final strategic planning templates distributed at deans meeting.</p> <p>Space Planning Team generates a list of questions and issues about plans that require clarification.</p>	<p>January 2006 Deans/directors identify positions for elimination, as applicable.</p> <p>Senior vice chancellor provides Space Planning Team questions to respective deans.</p> <p>Plans due from department chairs to deans for those units in which departments are submitting separate plans.</p>
	<p>March 2006 Strategic plans due to chancellor, senior vice chancellor, Institute vice chancellor. Budget re-seeding requests due and budget revenue generation plans due.</p>
	<p>April 2006 Academic Strategic Planning Hearings.</p>
	<p>May 2006 Deans review report from Interdisciplinary Task Force.</p>
	<p>June 2006 Chancellor’s retreat with Senior Administrative Team; review of the year’s academic strategic planning process.</p> <p>Deans review report from International Initiatives Task Force.</p>
	<p>Summer 2006 Chancellor, senior vice chancellor, Institute vice chancellor respond to strategic plans.</p>

Early Successes of Academic Strategic Planning

In direct support of a collaboration that grew from the Academic Strategic Planning hearings in 2005, the office of the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs granted \$100,000 in temporary funding for a new partnership among NET and the College of Journalism and Mass Communications and Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts. The proposed partnership is intended to develop and support a program of study that reflects the professional world that broadcasting, directing or design students will encounter when seeking careers following graduation. The funding supports a .50 FTE faculty position and four graduate assistants. Matches to this funding are the remainder of the .50 FTE faculty position, provided by NET, and \$25,000, provided by the two colleges together.

The partnership pools faculty and equipment resources from each of the three units to create learning opportunities for students that would not be possible for either college, working alone. The creation of such a partnership fits centrally in the portion of our strategic initiatives that focus on the creation or expansion of collaborations that cut across traditional department and college lines, to create new and interesting activities and courses, and when appropriate, programs of study, that could be of benefit to students in both colleges, as well as to the campus as a whole. This proposed partnership could result in program offerings that would become a permanent part of the degree program inventories in both colleges and would be delivered by faculty and staff that could hold stable appointments in one or more of the three partner units. This partnership would also serve as a critical component in facilitating a smooth transition

continued on page 62

Completing Year 2 of the Planning Cycle

At the time of the writing of this report, we have received all of the strategic plans from deans and directors reporting directly to the two vice chancellors responsible for academic strategic planning. Planning hearings were held on April 19 and 20; when our visiting review team arrives on campus, deans and directors will have received written responses from the chancellor, the senior vice chancellor and the Institute vice chancellor as was done the previous year. At the chancellor's retreat on June 8-9, 2006, the Senior Administrative Team reviewed the past year's planning process, considering ways to improve the process for next year's iterative planning cycle. Issues to be addressed as we continue the process in AY 2006-07 include:

- Improve technology used by colleges and departments to enter planning information;
- Provide workshop assistance for academic leaders to help them define strategic priorities that have direct and clear implications for resource investment;
- Complete "academic visioning" work with academic leadership and University Communications to define UNL's academic themes and overall messages; and
- Articulate a common set of priorities for UNL that reflect our past planning and respond to new emphases emerging from the academic strategic planning process.

Years Next: What Must We Do Now?

As mentioned earlier, we proposed to do a "special emphasis" self-study that focused on our new academic strategic planning effort in order to help us better coordinate our various planning efforts, focus on strategic priorities, and establish timelines and benchmarks for achieving them. As this chapter has described, the academic strategic planning process has evolved to address these goals and various situational constraints. We look to our reviewers to assist us in improving the process.

The first two years of planning have been developmental with little time for sustained reflection. We did, however, take the opportunity in AY 2005-06 to use our annual Gallup® Survey to evaluate campus awareness of the process and its importance to the university. In addition to including the customary questions about campus climate, the Gallup® Survey contained five questions related to academic strategic planning. Responses from faculty and staff provide some direction for work to be done to better inform the total campus about the academic strategic planning process and better engage our faculty participants. Figure 3.5 reports faculty and staff responses to the Gallup® Survey questions.

Because we had never before asked questions about academic strategic planning in the Gallup® Survey, we have no benchmarks for responses to these items. And because we have not yet received our other 2006 Gallup® Survey results, we have no points of comparison with other 2006 responses. We do know that in 2004, 3.65 (5 = strongly agree) was the mean response from all university employees on all items. In general, we can say that our faculty at large seem to be more aware of the academic strategic planning process and the university priorities than our staff, as we would expect. Responses to the last two items may suggest that both faculty and staff perceive a greater value in doing strategic planning for the campus overall than for a program or department.

The plans received from academic units in Year 2 suggest that the academic strategic planning process is helping UNL begin a cycle of continuous improvement to build on the ambitious goals of the *2020 Vision*, the reports developed in response to that document, and the various other planning efforts that preceded this process. It is too early to mark specific achievements attributable to the process, and, too, the process is still being refined to make it more user-friendly, less complex, and more adaptable to new contingencies and constraints. We want to make the academic strategic planning process more valuable to units and the university. It has been necessary to, in a sense, “try things out” as we are seeking the most effective processes, but at some point, it will be essential to develop a consistent process so that all will know what to expect from one year to the next.

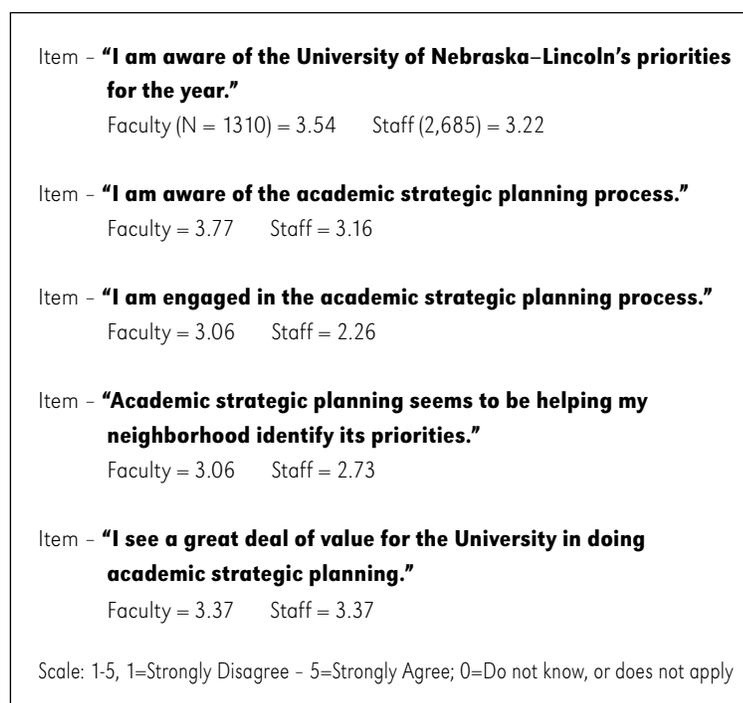
It is obvious that UNL is still in the early stages of developing an academic strategic planning process that will promote and support continuous improvement and progress in our quest for excellence. To succeed in this requires thoughtful evaluation. The effort of reporting on our activities for this self-study alone has been valuable, both as a way of helping us discover how various planning processes of the university relate to one another and of providing for our campus a more detailed description of the intent, purpose and history of the academic strategic planning process. In fact, several internal readers have admitted a greater understanding of this process and its intent after having read the drafts of this chapter. Evaluative deliberations described in this chapter have been part of our evaluation as are the items on the Gallup® Survey.

Here are some observations that we have made about our academic strategic planning process and some questions we hope to answer in consultation with our visiting review team.

Investment in academic strategic planning carries the assumption that it will work to help us identify and address our priorities and move the university forward.

- How can we best evaluate whether academic strategic planning is moving us toward our goals? And if it is not, what other method would help us meet them? How will we decide if the planning process itself is worth continuing?

Figure 3.5 2006 UNL Faculty and Staff Responses to Gallup® Survey Questions on Academic Strategic Planning



continued from page 60

of staff at NET that has begun and that will continue for a number of years into the future.

The program of study that would be designed would enable students to receive instruction and professional mentoring from seasoned professionals in broadcasting, directing and design, in conjunction with access to the newly renovated audio, video, interactive and multi-media production facilities at NET. The program offers increased opportunities for students from the two colleges to work collaboratively on capstone projects, as well as on special initiatives that serve the State of Nebraska.

A separate new partnership developed out of the academic strategic planning hearings between the Lentz Center for Asian Culture and the Libraries. After the Lentz director learned about the Libraries' plans to work with the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery on a digital imaging project, she contacted the Libraries about working with the Lentz Center's collections. Subsequently, information about the books in the Lentz Center are now in the Libraries catalog, and sound recordings from the Lentz Center have been moved to the music library to increase use of these materials. The sound recordings are protected by copyright and cannot be digitized, but the Libraries are investigating some online services that will provide the Lentz Center with access to music to use with their exhibitions. This partnership would not be moving as quickly without the sharing of ideas that occurs through the strategic planning process.

Additionally, the Libraries are partnering with Sheldon to add information about its extensive book collection to the Libraries' catalog. Talks will begin this fall as to how to best incorporate a gift of art exhibition catalogs into university holdings.

Setting priorities through academic strategic planning implies that decisions about academic investments will be made at higher levels on the basis of these plans.

- What kinds of responses to unit plans from senior leadership would best help move priorities forward while engaging unit leadership and faculty in the planning process?

Strategic planning takes time and effort that must be justified with measurable benefits.

- How should we assess the costs of the process at every level? How does it contribute to faculty morale and productivity? Is responsibility for producing the plans appropriately distributed?
- How can we best assess the benefits of the process? If the benefits are to include new distribution of resources, how can we best justify distributing resources to some areas and not others? How can we best determine whether there is a net gain from engaging in academic strategic planning?

Consistency of procedure is important to unit administrators, many of whom have requested that the process not be changed from year to year.

- Recognizing that new important issues will surface each year, how do we develop a process that is both consistent and flexible? What basic components should be included in each year's annual planning cycle? Is annual iterative planning a good idea? How can a balance between consistency and flexibility be accomplished?

The UNL academic strategic planning process is currently enacted by existing administrative units, which work independently to produce an annual plan.

- Might we alter the process to encourage planning across academic units?

The "bottom up" structure of the UNL academic strategic planning process emphasizes excellence at every level; at the same time, this approach makes it difficult to communicate UNL's priorities across all units.

- Is the academic strategic planning process helping us define priorities for decision-making at every level of the university so that we can best respond to future demands? Should we be concerned about developing and communicating a unified set of strategic priorities for the UNL campus as a whole?

The UNL academic strategic planning builds from units up and potentially involves many faculty and administrators; open disclosure of plans across the university is implicit in this effort.

- How do we help deans and program directors work together while advancing their individual goals and competing for resources? How can the process help us bring together college and unit goals to meet overall university priorities?

National conversations about accountability for higher education are having an impact on accreditation standards and educational assessment, a development that could have an impact on institutional and unit priority setting.

- Should UNL create a more overt relationship between our academic strategic planning process and the national conversation about accountability for higher education? If so, how?

The remaining chapters of our self-study address specifically how the University of Nebraska–Lincoln has met and continues to meet criteria for accreditation as specified by the Higher Learning Commission. These chapters demonstrate and evaluate the range and scope of activities at UNL in support of our mission and core values. In our process of evaluating how we meet these criteria, we related these efforts to our academic strategic planning process, where applicable. Our purpose in pursuing academic strategic planning is to assure a vibrant and robust university that meets and exceeds these expectations now and for generations to come.

Exhibit A: Announcement to faculty concerning review of core values statement

TO: UNL Faculty and Staff
FROM: Harvey Perlman, Barbara Couture, and John Owens
SUBJECT: Open Forum on Core Values
DATE: November 7, 2004

As you know, the University of Nebraska–Lincoln is now engaged in a strategic planning process launched earlier this fall. This planning is focused upon identifying and confirming our core values and establishing academic program priorities that express these commitments. As part of our planning process, we invite you to participate in the first of two UNL forums dedicated to a campus dialog about our core values. The first forum will be held on Thursday, December 2 from 11:00AM-1:00PM in the City Union.

In many respects, our campus community already has engaged in serious efforts to define and express our institutional values through the directed work of task forces, such as those which produced our “2020 Vision” and “Transitions to the University” reports, and through college and university-wide initiatives, such as the Programs of Excellence. To assure that our strategic planning in this and succeeding years supports priorities that express our core values, we need to articulate these commitments specifically and assure that they resonate with all who contribute to our university community.

With this objective in mind and needing a good place to start, we collectively engaged our academic deans to produce a draft statement of our core values—a statement to help us direct our efforts to identify strategic priorities this year and to encourage campus-wide discussion about the core values that these priorities address. This statement is repeated below this message.

We ask you: Does the draft statement reflect values that involve all of our UNL constituencies? Are there key commitments this statement misses? Do the stated values, in their current form, resonate with our faculty, staff and students? We hope that you will join us for the first forum on December 2 to help us answer these questions. This discussion has been timed for the lunch hour to allow for maximum participation. Please feel free to bring your lunch. Coffee and other refreshments will be available. We look forward to hearing from you on the 2nd.

- Commit to an uncompromising pursuit of excellence.
- Stimulate research and creative work that fosters discovery, pushes frontiers, and advances society.
- Establish research and creative work as the foundation for teaching and engagement.
- Prepare students for life through learner-centered education.
- Engage with academic, business and civic communities throughout the state and the world.
- Encourage, support and challenge every member of the University community to make meaningful contributions to our core values.
- Create a University culture that values diversity of ideas and people.

Exhibit B: Letter to faculty launching the academic strategic planning process

TO: Faculty and Administrative Leadership of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln
FROM: Barbara Couture, Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
John C. Owens, Vice Chancellor, IANR
c: Harvey Perlman, Chancellor
SUBJECT: Integrated Strategic Planning Process
DATE: October 18, 2004

In his state of the university address this fall, Chancellor Harvey Perlman announced a university-wide strategic planning effort to result in an action plan for the UNL campus which will lead our academic community to: set priorities that link to core values shared by our academic community, determine strategies for attaining these goals, and identify measures of success. This is an important effort for the UNL campus, one that will help us chart our future together, building a premier research university which engages students, faculty, and staff alike in the uncompromising pursuit of excellence.

This new strategic planning process will be integrated and iterative, relating to other university processes, such as faculty hiring and the Programs of Excellence, and occurring each year. Annually, the strategic planning process will culminate in a Planning Hearing attended by all college deans. The Planning Hearing will be the opportunity for college deans to share academic plans and priorities, and make a case for resource allocation, based on the strength of their unit

plans. Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Barbara Couture will coordinate the planning process for Academic Affairs and Vice Chancellor for IANR John Owens will coordinate the planning process for the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. They will work together to create a unified strategic plan for the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. This year, college and IANR plans are due March 15, 2004.

Within Academic Affairs, each academic dean will lead the strategic planning process in his/her college; academic directors will lead the process in units which report directly to the SVCAA. Within IANR, the planning process will be led by the Associate Vice Chancellor in conjunction with the IANR Deans. Chancellor Perlman will coordinate the planning process for those academic units that report directly to him. You will find attached an outline of the basic components of the planning process. In some colleges, deans will ask individual departments to provide unit plans by January 31, following the attached planning process; in short, the college plan will incorporate individual department plans. In other colleges, the college administrative leadership will pursue planning as a single unit. In many of our UNL colleges, strategic planning is already taking place; the intention of this new process is not to undo or put aside these efforts, but rather to integrate them into a process which engages all academic units and provides opportunities for cross-unit collaboration.

Central to the strategic planning process at UNL is the definition and confirmation of core values held by our university community. You will find in the attached planning rubric a list of core values which was derived from aspirations expressed in three reports that have been central to UNL planning over the past five years: “Intellectual Engagement and Achievement at UNL: Report from the Blue Sky Committee,” “A 2020 Vision: The Future of Research and Graduate Education at UNL,” and “Everyone a Learner, Everyone a Teacher: Report from the Transition to University Task Force.” As Chancellor Perlman indicated in his State of the University Address, we have already done the work of examining our environment and mission through producing these seminal reports. We are now ready to base our planning on the values and goals expressed in them. We ask you to confirm whether the values expressed there, and repeated in our attached planning process, indeed reflect commitments to excellence university-wide. We invite our academic units to suggest additions to this list of core values, along with explanations of how their additions apply to the mission of UNL as pursued across our diverse campus. In addition, as Chancellor Perlman announced recently, we will hold a series of open forums where these core values can be discussed by all members of our university community who attend.

Other components of the required college strategic plan include: a statement of unit priorities along with strategies and resources required to implement them and benchmarks to measure success; and separate documents to address: climate impact plans, facilities and equipment priorities requests, hiring priorities and rationale, enrollment management plans, and diversity



goals and objectives. Within the next two months, templates will be provided to college deans for submitting the college responses in each of these areas.

This first year of planning will be messy and difficult, but the rewards will be great. To become a premier research university, we need to be of a common mind about where to allocate our resources and build competitive strengths. We look forward to engaging with our academic leadership and faculty in this first year of strategic planning to achieve this aim. As an aid to keeping our process on track, we will provide quarterly updates telling how units are progressing toward completion of their strategic plans.

We are delighted to be working with the UNL campus toward creating a brighter future for us all and welcome your suggestions as this planning process proceeds.

Attachment: UNL Strategic Planning Process AY 2004-05 (see Figure 3.2)

Exhibit C: Plan for encouraging student retention

Academic Units: Best Practices for Retention of Students

Remind faculty and staff that retention of all students is every UNL employee's responsibility and is in the employee's best interests.

- Deans, Chairs, Heads and Directors should regularly share retention data for all student cohorts with faculty and staff and discuss ways to improve retention efforts (this could easily be accomplished through Blackboard).
- Recognize faculty, staff and student efforts regarding the recruitment and retention of students.

Organize a special welcome for new and returning students.

Several colleges and departments hold a welcome event for new first-year and transfer students. This type of event provides new students an opportunity to interact with faculty, staff, and advanced students. Some events include alumni and advisory board members. For example:

- the College of Engineering Student Advisory Board plans a "Tailgate" party to welcome new and returning students.
- the Department of Theatre Arts sponsors "Rock the Dock," a welcome held on the loading dock of Howell Theater for all majors, faculty and staff the first week of classes.
- the Department of Textiles, Clothing and Design hosts "Getting to Know You," a welcome for new students, that features the work and accomplishments of TCD students, alumni and faculty.

Encourage or require first-year students and new transfer students to attend the Annual Mid-Semester Check held the fourth week of classes in the evening at the Nebraska Union.

- Attendance at Mid-Semester Check is required of students enrolled in first-year core classes in the College of Business Administration and the College of Engineering and Technology, as well as students in Learning Communities.

Communicate with students on a regular basis.

- Using Blackboard as the communication vehicle, Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts developed a welcome message to send to new students which includes a survey that inquires about students' interests and expectations.
- Several departments use a list serve of students to send regular announcements and newsletters in addition to posting them in student resource areas and lounges.

Encourage course instructors to give some type of student assessment — a quiz or test — within the first 3-4 weeks of class — so that students may obtain feedback before the middle or end of the semester.

- Students enrolled in first-year writing courses in the Department of English receive formal evaluation on their initial writing assignments within the first two weeks of classes.

Consider, as a college or a department, offering a Central Referral Program.

- A central referral program provides faculty, staff and other students the opportunity to refer a student they believe whose academic progress is being affected by personal issues to a designated individual who will follow up with the student and direct the student to the appropriate persons/ resources.
- In 2003, the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources adopted a central referral program model and developed the CASNR CARES program. Of the 238 CASNR CARES student referrals in AY 05-06, 16 students graduated and 195 enrolled for Fall 2005-06. [www.unl.edu/resources/3-10]

www.unl.edu/resources/3-10

Encourage staff in academic and student services offices to attend professional development activities that focus on student development and best practices for interacting with students.

- Academic advisers were encouraged to attend the September 30, 2006 presentation by Charles Nutt — Advising for Student Success and Retention: A Review of Promising Practices. As a result, professional academic advisors on the Admissions, Advising and Retention sub-group of the Enrollment Management Council are now sharing best practices in advising at their monthly meetings.

Follow-up to priority registration.

At the end of priority registration, Registration and Records will identify students who have not

enrolled for the following semester and send names to OUS to coordinate the student contacts by either the respective academic or student services unit. All units will report results to OUS, which in turn will aggregate student responses to be shared across the institution. For example:

- in Spring 2005, the Director and staff of the OASIS programs contacted each of the 311 students of color who did not enroll for Fall 2005. By August 2005, 227 of the 311 students enrolled for Fall 2005 semester. Of the 84 not enrolled, 36 students were on probation and one was dismissed. Students indicated that the personal contact by the OASIS staff member motivated them to enroll for Fall 2005.
- the Associate Dean in the College of Engineering contacts students who did not receive a passing grade for the first year core class. Students are required to meet with him.