

Bemidji State University

The University Plan: Strategies for 2002-2007

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Vision Statement

Looking to the future, Bemidji State University is guided by the compass of educational leadership. Grounded in the wisdom of historical perspective, assured in our achievements as a regional University, we move forward with confidence toward new worlds of thought, opportunity, and time. Equipped with optimism and intellectual curiosity, we join our students on a common quest. Our path is widened by respect for diverse opinions; is smoothed by shared human values; is quickened by openness to innovation. Along the way our guideposts are clear: excellence in liberal education and career preparation; a faculty, administration, and staff devoted to student success; community empowered by technology; and a campus learning environment dedicated to personal responsibility, global thinking, and education for life.

Mission Statement

Bemidji State University, since its founding in 1919, has been a center of intellectual, cultural, social, and economic life in northern Minnesota. Beginning as a small teacher's college, Bemidji State has grown into a comprehensive university, part of a diverse, statewide system of higher education.

As its primary strength and function, Bemidji State University delivers, at the baccalaureate and graduate levels, substantial and affordable educational opportunities that enhance student access to leadership roles and encourage responsible citizenship. Thus poised to lead its students into the twenty-first century, the University further recognizes that sweeping changes in society and technology call for new ideas and new skills, yet ones ever more grounded in shared human values.

In order to fulfill its mission and its responsibilities as a public university, Bemidji State University will:

1. Promote an uncompromising pursuit of knowledge, excellence, civic responsibility, and environmental respect.
2. Focus on student success by offering high quality baccalaureate and graduate programs designed to build analytical skills and critical thinking abilities; by developing responsible educational goals and career planning through a heightened commitment to faculty advising; and by instilling in students the habits of scholarship and life-long learning.
3. Offer a pleasing and safe campus community enriched by native heritage and world cultures; united by human values centered on civility and mutual respect; and underpinned by facilities necessary for education in the twenty-first century.
4. Develop a high-quality, diverse faculty and staff engaged in on-going professional achievement and revitalization, and in innovative partnerships with education, business, and industry.
5. Incorporate new technologies by exploring, developing, and adapting to a human scale the capacities that give the University's students, faculty, and staff access to the world, and give the world access to the University.

6. Encourage a varied educational experience beyond the classroom through community service, internships, and travel, while providing a campus life rich in unique opportunities for developing a heightened knowledge of the self, others, and the world.
7. Ensure that each student who graduates can communicate effectively in writing and speaking, can distinguish knowledge from information, and is prepared to take her or his position as a responsible and productive member of the human family in a global society.
8. Develop increased support among external constituencies, for purposes of a deepened institutional stability and heightened flow of ideas.

Five-Year Goal Statement

To be the Midwest's premier student-centered university integrating liberal arts with career development to prepare students for life-long learning and leadership in a global society.

SCOT: Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats

University Plan 2002-2007 Analysis

Institutional Strengths

A Student-centered University

Bemidji State University is known among current and former students, their families, and educators at other institutions as a student-centered university. The university's student-centeredness is demonstrated in the diverse constituency it serves and in its utilization of learner-centered delivery modes. For example, Bemidji State serves American Indian/Native populations through ethnic academic programs, cooperation with tribal colleges, and, most recently, beginning construction of the American Indian Resource Center (AIRC). The AIRC will provide a focal point for American Indian students, and for the study and preservation of the indigenous culture. In addition to traditional-aged students, Bemidji State serves both adult learners and high school students enrolled through Minnesota's Post Secondary Enrollment Options program. Bemidji State has a long history of delivering degree programs to place-bound adult students throughout northern Minnesota, and is quickly developing a broad and strong reputation for quality e-learning initiatives. In addition to serving students from the state and region, Bemidji State benefits from a strong base of international students and supports international programming and study-abroad opportunities.

Bemidji State University is also known among current and former students as a student-friendly campus. When asked about this, students cite faculty accessibility and respect for students as primary factors in student satisfaction with the learning experience at Bemidji State. This reputation extends to student and university services and to co- and extra-curricular activities available to students; comments by alumni repeat this theme of positive interactions between students, faculty and staff.

Academic Programs and Academic Excellence

The integration of a broad Liberal Education program with strong career development opportunities provides students at Bemidji State University the underlying preparation for life-long learning and leadership roles. The university promotes and supports integrative curriculums, and students at Bemidji State enjoy one of the highest percentages of full-time faculty in the state university system. The excellence and success of Bemidji State's academic programs is enhanced by life-long learning for faculty, embodied in the Center for Professional Development, and in ongoing research and creative activities carried out by faculty members. The university's support for research and creative

activities extends to students and is highlighted each spring with a campus-wide Student Scholarship and Creative Achievement Conference.

Philanthropic and Regional Collaborations

The academic and student-centered climate at Bemidji State University is supported in part through the university's relationships with philanthropic, community, and intergovernmental partners. These dynamic relationships contribute to the university financially, promote the status of the university, and offer opportunities for the university to serve its region. Through the university's Center for Research and Innovation and the Small Business Development Center, Bemidji State is well positioned to contribute to economic vitality and cultural enrichment in northern Minnesota.

Technology

Bemidji State was among the first of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities institutions to provide its students with an open computer laboratory. The university's technology now includes high-speed Internet access from every room on campus, including residence halls, classrooms, and offices; dedicated labs for departments; "smart classroom" technology; Interactive Television for distance learning classes; web-based e-mail for students, faculty and staff; electronic records and registration, including student instant access to transcripts; a laptop computer program for faculty, with upgrades at three-year intervals; a Center for Extended Learning office, providing training and support for web-based course instruction and program development; and a Computer Services office, providing training and support for communication and computer application programs. A Master Technology Plan is in development and is linked to the university's strategic plan.

Unique Planning Process

Recognizing the importance of integrated planning and shared governance, Bemidji State implemented an "experimental" planning process in 2000. The process was designed to accommodate the challenges of a university served by multiple bargaining units (eight), and to insure that decision-making and budget expenditures worked together in support of the university mission. This planning process, which includes six university-wide planning committees and Executive and University Councils, continues today and brings into the planning process constituents from all bargaining and organizational units, including administrators, faculty, staff, and students.

The University Campus

Next to its academic and student-centered reputation, Bemidji State is perhaps best known for its compelling natural setting on the shores of Lake Bemidji. The University takes seriously its role in the stewardship of the land entrusted to it. It also recognizes that the physical environment of a campus contributes to its learning environment. University buildings, grounds, and other attributes are on a continuing schedule of maintenance, renovation, and innovation as directed by the Master Facilities Plan. Bemidji State University was recently recognized by the National Wildlife Federation for

its sound environmental practices, and its Outdoor Program Center ranks among the most active such organizations in the country and includes as part of its facilities the university's 240-acre forest.

Institutional Challenges

Increasing Financial Dependence upon Enrollment and Tuition

In a time of decreasing state support, the university's financial strength becomes ever more dependent upon student enrollment and tuition generation. Any fluctuation in enrollment or retention rates can create instability in terms of the university's financial outlook and academic programming. The development of new academic programs which could attract additional students sometimes requires the reallocation of increasingly scarce resources. Increasing tuition rates to cover rising institutional costs must be balanced with the need to remain financially accessible to our student population. The university must continue to address the delicate balance of enrollment, tuition, and retention rates as it makes decisions regarding academic and service programming.

Student Demographics

Bemidji State University is located in close proximity to three American Indian Reservations and plays a unique role in assisting with the educational needs of this population. Unfortunately, in recent years the enrollment of American Indian students at Bemidji State has declined. The university continues to seek programming to support the recruitment, retention, and graduation of American Indian students, and is working to implement such programming through the American Indian Resource Center currently being constructed on campus.

Distance Learning

While distance learning is a good delivery model for our dispersed adult learner population and helps to address the changing demographic trends of our region, distance learning models are not without challenges. Higher than average program development costs associated with distance delivery models mean that the university must prioritize its offerings during tight financial times. Collective bargaining agreements between the university's faculty and the system office have not kept pace with the changing nature of faculty work regarding web-based instruction; consequently, issues such as compensation for development of on-line materials and for teaching courses via the web are not fully addressed. The potential for conflict between "early adopters" of new technology and the mainstream organizational culture is well established in organizational change literature, and the university must work to promote trust and understanding for all parties to such change.

Administration of the University

Challenges to administering the university include the current organizational structure, the need for additional assessment tools, and some communication and definitional challenges associated with the new university planning process. The current organizational structure of the university includes the distribution of student life and

student services across Vice Presidential lines, sometimes preventing optimal coordination of student and university service offices. An administrative reorganization may be necessary to better enable the university to accomplish its mission. While several assessment tools are available and established to support academic decision-making, the administration continues to develop the assessment tools necessary to support budgeting and personnel decisions for the administrative and service roles of the university. Effective communications throughout the planning structure and processes continue to challenge the university community, as does the need to achieve agreement as to which activities are “planning” in nature and appropriate for the planning committee process, and which are “operational” and the responsibility of an operational unit on campus.

External Opportunities

Service to Student Populations

The opportunities to offer higher education to students from more diverse settings and more distant regions continue to expand. Bemidji State University’s programs to expand the base of students it serves include enrolling previously underserved student populations; offering additional programs to meet the needs of specialized student populations; continuing to develop and expand, as appropriate, programs delivered via distance learning; increasing American Indian associations, including utilization of the American Indian Resource Center; expanding cooperative agreements with tribal colleges; and increasing service to international student populations.

Improving Fiscal Circumstances

To improve appropriations to the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and allocations to Bemidji State University, the university will continue to develop its relationship with local, state and federal legislators and with the Office of the Chancellor. The university will also continue to develop its relationships with philanthropic and other regional and state partners, and will seek opportunities to develop grant and other opportunities.

Serving the Region through Stewardship, Partnership, and Representation

Since its beginning in 1919, Bemidji State has both served and been served by its region and the state. Today it continues to seek opportunities to bring the world to its doorstep, through its international student program, and to take Bemidji State to the world, through international study opportunities. The university continues to develop and model stewardship of the land and the region, to partner with communities to develop and enrich the region, and to grow its relationships with and support for business and industry.

External Threats

Declining State Support and Changing Regional Demographics

The decline in state support for institutions of higher education in Minnesota remains the number one challenge for Bemidji State University. As state support declines, enrollment-based tuition revenue becomes increasingly important to the financial strength of public institutions. Competition between institutions for student enrollments seems to

be leading to mission blurring between 2-year and 4-year institutional types. For Bemidji State University, these enrollment concerns are intensified by demographic trends in its main service area that indicate a decline in traditional-aged student populations.

The University Plan: Strategies for 2002-2007

Strategy A: Maintain, Expand, and Diversify Resources to Enhance Educational Excellence

Strategy B: Support Excellence in Learning Programs and Services

Strategy C: Align Resources with Priorities Identified in Five-Year Goal Statement

Strategy D: Enhance Institutional Decision-Making and Shared Governance

Strategy A: Maintain, Expand, and Diversify Resources to Enhance Educational Excellence

Initiative 1: Enrollment

Strategic, aggressive growth that retains currently enrolled students and draws from potential qualified student populations currently outside the university.

a. Academic Programs

Action Step 1

Enhance existing programs that contribute to academic excellence and have potential for sustained new-student growth.

Identify and support potential enrollment growth for existing academic programs. For example, programs offering Liberal Education courses may be able to enhance enrollment through on-campus PSEO offerings, or off-campus College in the Schools offerings, and major programs and graduate programs may be able to enhance enrollment by identifying new student cohorts for existing degree offerings.

Action Step 2

Pursue new programs that contribute to academic excellence and have potential for sustained new-student growth.

Identify and support programs not currently offered, including additional undergraduate, graduate, and licensure programs, summer conferences, and related opportunities.

b. Recruitment

Action Step 1

Improve matriculation rates of students in the university's primary constituencies, including underserved and under-represented groups.

Identify and support opportunities to improve matriculation of students for whom Bemidji State is an option, with a special focus on American Indian and first-generation students.

Action Step 2

Identify new markets of prospective students.

Identify and support recruitment from qualified student populations not addressed or emphasized in current recruitment efforts.

Action Step 3

Improve matriculation, and retention, through new incentive packages for students.

Identify and support financial packages leveraging student enrollment. For example, offer packages with resident tuition, targeted scholarships, or related benefits.

Action Step 4

Utilize the MnSCU allocation formula in the development of recruitment efforts.

Pay attention to the incentives provided by the MnSCU allocation formula when identifying and supporting recruitment of students.

c. Retention

Action Step 1

Evaluate the retention effectiveness of current academic and service programs, including evaluation by student group, and strengthen current and develop new programs as appropriate.

Gather and analyze retention data by program (majors, Liberal Education, and related areas), and by student group, such as American Indian, traditional/nontraditional and others, and modify current and develop new retention programs and services as appropriate.

Action Step 2

Evaluate the retention effectiveness of current student and university services areas, and strengthen current and develop new programs as appropriate.

Gather and analyze retention data relevant to student services, business services and related areas, and modify current and develop new programs and services as appropriate; consider accelerated educational options as a way to recruit and retain.

d. Extended and Distance Learning

Action Step 1

Evaluate effectiveness of extended and distance learning delivery models in generating additional institutional resources.

Analyze costs and benefits of Extended and Distance Learning offerings and services, and identify key thresholds appropriate to such offerings.

Action Step 2

Explore opportunities to expand current and identify new effective credit and non-credit offerings to appropriate learner segments.

Support appropriate current and new credit and non-credit offerings, including graduate programs, summer programs and camps, Elderhostel, conferences, continuing professional education (CEUs), and collaborations and partnerships with public and private educational institutions.

Action Step 3

Matriculate new students through off-campus delivery models.

Identify and support off-campus delivery models that will serve qualified students not currently enrolling at Bemidji State. Examples include additional ITV and Web offerings, 2+2 and 3+1 at community colleges, tribal college collaborations, College in the Schools (high schools), workshops, and related offerings.

e. Enrichment Activities: Co-Curricular and Extra-Curricular Activities, and Inter-Collegiate Athletics

Action Step 1

Evaluate existing co- and extra-curricular programs in relation to recruiting, retention, and academic learning, student growth and development. Develop and implement ways to enhance the impact of these activities on recruitment, retention, and student success.

Gather and analyze data relevant to clubs and organizations, student government, outdoor programming, the arts, intramurals, and related co- and extra-curricular offerings, and identify, support, and as appropriate create, co- and extra-curricular activities that directly contribute to improving recruitment, retention, and student success in measurable ways.

Action Step 2

Recruit students to fully utilize coaching and facility capacity.

Identify athletic programs where coaches and facilities are under-utilized, and recruit students to realize full capacities.

Action Step 3

Evaluate effectiveness of student athlete retention efforts, and partner with academic programs and student services to enhance retention of student athletes.

Gather and analyze success and retention data on student athletes, and modify and develop programs and services as appropriate.

f. Physical Environment

Action Step 1

Manage the campus physical environment with an eye toward recruitment, retention, and success of students.

Identify and support areas in need of improvement or enhancement, including parking, purposeful landscaping, sidewalks, residence halls, disabled access, levels of maintenance staffing, and health and safety issues; improve visibility of the campus in relation to the city of Bemidji.

Action Step 2

Manage the residence halls with an eye toward recruitment, retention, and success of students, and support of student involvement in campus life.

Explore and develop initiatives and creative revenue streams to enhance on-campus housing facilities, including the possible development of suites and apartments.

Initiative 2: State Allocation

Action Step 1

Continue to work collaboratively with Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, the Office of the Chancellor, state and local governments, and the citizenry of Minnesota.

Identify and support relationships with state, regional, and community decision-makers and constituents to strengthen and broaden the university's base of financial support within the state.

Action Step 2

Provide compelling case statements for appropriations, allocation, and bonding requests.

Identify, develop and provide documentation for legislative, bonding, and related requests and represent to the region and the state the university's leadership role in the economic, social and cultural vitality of its region.

Action Step 3

Where appropriate, utilize the MnSCU allocation model in operational decisions.

Understand the MnSCU allocation model, and identify and support its appropriate utilization in operational decision-making.

Initiative 3: Academic Resources

Action Step 1

Investigate opportunities to expand resources by realigning administrative structures.

Create a culture of strategic thinking that supports reviewing and improving effectiveness and efficiency of organizational structures.

Determine appropriateness, consistency, nonduplication, and similar qualities for lines of reporting and oversight, and modify as appropriate, including consideration of academic, administrative, and student support areas.

Action Step 2

Investigate opportunities to expand resources by realigning curriculums.

Consider array of programs and offerings, and benefits of creating groupings of related programs; determine appropriateness, consistency, nonduplication, and similar qualities of curriculums; and recommend modifications as appropriate.

Initiative 4: External Resources

Action Step 1

Continue to develop capacity for philanthropic giving to the university.

Identify and support ongoing and new philanthropic opportunities that support university priorities.

Action Step 2

Increase utilization of federal government opportunities.

Increase the university's presence at the national level through evaluation of and participation in an array of opportunities; leverage federal funding to support the university's curriculum and priorities.

Action Step 3

Continue to pursue public and private partnerships as appropriate to our vision, mission, five-year goal, and resources.

Identify and support community, city, county, regional and state partnerships with businesses, governments, educational institutions and similar entities.

Action Step 4

Expand university capacity through facilitation of appropriate agency relationships.

Identify and support relationships with agencies such as EPA, PCA, Big Bog, and the DNR, including internships, sharing of resources and facilities, and related measures.

Action Step 5

Obtain additional grant support for teaching and learning, scholarship, community-building, and related academic and university goals.

Encourage and reward mission-relevant grant writing across campus.

Initiative 5: Tuition

Action Step

Manage tuition to maintain quality and accessibility.

Identify and support appropriate means to create a balance between tuition, system allocation, outside funding opportunities, and cost-saving activities that promote affordable tuition coupled with high quality educational opportunities.

Strategy B: Support Excellence in Learning Programs and Services

Action Step 1

Through Liberal Education and Honors, prepare students for life-long learning and leadership in a global society.

Identify and support excellence and innovation in the Liberal Education curriculum, including the following:

- *program and learning outcomes assessment and curriculum development;*
- *appropriate technology and facilities, including the library, classrooms, laboratories, study and work rooms, offices, and campus environment;*
- *complementary opportunities that bring together co-curricular and formal learning, encourage teacher-student interaction and collaboration, and enhance a campus atmosphere of living and learning.*

Action Step 2

Through career preparation, prepare students for life-long learning and leadership in a global society.

Identify and support excellence and innovation in career preparation, including the following:

- *ongoing program curriculum development and review, learning outcomes assessment, timely completion and graduation rates in majors and graduate programs;*

- *related offerings that encourage high levels of engagement, such as research projects, cultural events, career development and associations, and lectures;*
- *appropriate technology and facilities, including the library, classrooms, laboratories, study and work rooms, offices, and campus environment;*
- *continued faculty preparation;*
- *complementary opportunities that bring together co-curricular and formal learning, encourage teacher-student interaction and collaboration, and enhance a campus atmosphere of living and learning;*
- *ongoing support of career development opportunities.*

Action Step 3

Based on a campus definition of “student-centered,” enhance student access to campus services.

Explore venues for increasing student access to campus services including, for example, advising, counseling, registration, health services, tutoring, student support services, career services, food services, and financial aid.

Action Step 4

Connect faculty and staff to ongoing professional development opportunities.

Identify and support opportunities for faculty and staff that promote engagement within their professional fields, including publishing, conferences, grant writing, and related experiences.

Action Step 5

Connect students with society through a culminating learning experience.

Identify and support opportunities for students that especially promote engagement with society and pluralism in a democracy, including career development, service learning, internships, volunteerism, and related integrative experiences.

Action Step 6

Prepare students for a global perspective and understanding through diversity and multicultural experiences.

Identify and support opportunities to infuse multicultural, international, and American Indian perspectives into the curriculum, and co-curricular activities.

Action Step 7

Prepare students for working and living in a technological environment and society.

Identify and support opportunities to infuse into the curriculum, and into co- and extra-curricular activities, understanding of the ethical and bioethical implications of technology decisions, appreciation of communication opportunities and implications, and technology application skills.

Action Step 8

Participate in the development and enrichment of our service region.

Identify and support cultural, community building, economic development, and other opportunities that express the ongoing, supportive relationship between the university and the region.

Action Step 9

Provide stewardship of the campus physical environment.

Explore means and methods to model responsibility toward the land and other natural resources, including continuation of waterfront protection.

Strategy C: Align Resources with Priorities Identified in Five-Year Goal Statement

Action Step 1

Identify university excellence priorities that emerge from the planning process. (See Strategy B)

Identify priorities for the following areas addressed in the Five-Year Goal Statement:

- Liberal Education, integrated with professional/career programs
- Professional/Career Programs, integrated with Liberal Education
- Student-centered university
- Educational excellence
- Life-long learning and global citizenship

Action Step 2

Identify sources of funding. (See Strategy A)

Identify current resources, including general revenues and those that might be realigned through organizational restructuring, and new sources of funding, including new student enrollment and fund-raising.

Action Step 3

Allocate resources to enable the priorities of excellence and enrollment growth.

Align allocation of resources in Action Step 2 with priorities identified in Action Step 1.

Action Step 4

Assure appropriate accountability measures.

Develop new approaches to ascertain the relationship between resource allocation and desired outcomes.

Strategy D: Enhance Institutional Decision-Making and Shared Governance

Action Step 1

Continue to enhance the communication processes on campus.

Identify and address challenges to effective communications and sharing of information among and between faculty, support staff, students, and administration.

Action Step 2

Continue to support the planning processes on campus.

Identify and address ongoing and new challenges to the planning process, including appropriate allocation of resources, clarification of the distinction between planning and operations, and timeliness in response to initiatives and opportunities.

Action Step 3

Continue to utilize the planning process to advance university issues.

For example, review, when appropriate, the university's name, vision and mission statements, and public image and, when appropriate, propose changes.

Action Step 4

Utilize the Planning Process to Avoid Crises Decision-Making.

Take advantage of campus planning process to identify anticipated institutional situations and to set aside resources for strategic investments in the event of challenging financial times.

Action Step 5

Support the development of leaders through a program of professional development, including knowledge of and participation in policy-making and decision-making opportunities.

Identify or develop opportunities for students, faculty, staff, and administration to gain a thorough and working understanding of educational policies and procedures, such as those relevant to accreditation, legislation, MnSCU.

Action Step 6

Continue to integrate all planning efforts.

For example, prioritize capital projects of the Campus Facilities Plan in alignment with the priorities of other plans, including the University Plan and the Academic Plan, and including concerns of space utilization, shared spaces with partners, parking, residential life, and the campus living and learning environment.