

Report of the Academic Planning and Collaboration Workgroup

Preamble

The Academic Planning and Collaboration Workgroup was charged to “Develop a collaborative and coordinated academic planning process that advances affordability, transferability and access to our programs and services across the state.” The workgroup enthusiastically embraced this charge and engaged in robust dialogue on how to move forward this primary Charting the Future recommendation. Among the areas reviewed by the workgroup were:

- a. Academic planning activities within selected system institutions
- b. Academic planning activities within other state systems
- c. Expectations within other planning areas – strategic framework and associated metrics, facilities, diversity, IT, and Higher Learning Commission
- d. Input from system CAOs on opportunities and challenges for enhanced system and campus academic planning
- e. System policy on academic program approval
- f. Strategy for quality online education

The following were considered as overarching principles of the workgroup-

- Focus on student success above all else
- Balance and contribute to program access, quality, and affordability
- Place emphasis and leadership for planning in academic affairs
- Elevate strategic opportunities for collaboration

Extraordinary Education

- Provide diverse and culturally relevant educational opportunities
- Provide a strategic forum for system colleges and universities to communicate programs to distinguish, grow, suspend, or introduce

Partner of Choice

- Develop regional and statewide models for academic programs and initiatives
- Leverage the collective capacity of the system to meet critical industry and workforce needs

Highest Value, Most Affordable Option

- Better utilize existing capacity across the system
- Identify state and national opportunities to raise the profile of the system

At the core of the recommendations is the workgroup sentiment that, both as a system and individual colleges and universities, academic affairs needs to drive academic planning as opposed to being driven by other forces. Certainly the workgroup acknowledges that academic affairs does

not exist in a vacuum with national and state policies, financial challenges, student expectations and associated services, and other external expectations impacting planning priorities. However, our recommendations focus on the importance of effective planning, engagement, and leadership from academic affairs that is needed to foster meaningful collaboration and better position our system and individual colleges and universities for the future.

The workgroup felt strongly that if we are going to be a unified system then we need to have a system academic plan that guides and elevates collaborative programs and initiatives emerging from campus interest. The workgroup also felt that each system college and university must have academic plans that include elements of common interest and recognize opportunities for collaboration with other system colleges and universities and external stakeholders.

The workgroup envisions the system academic plan would be revised every five years and would emerge out of consensus based conversations with chief academic officers from the state universities and colleges and equal representation from the faculty unions. The system academic plan will align closely to the common areas of the campus based plans that have gone through the shared governance process on the campuses. All of the work related to academic planning must be collaborative, driven by campus priorities, and facilitated by system office staff and resources, working closely with faculty, academic and student services, and chief academic officers representing the outcomes of campus-based shared governance processes. This includes implementation, policy development and approval. This process has the added benefit of increasing collaboration in academic areas by providing opportunities for faculty and campus chief academic officers to engage in joint and collaborative system academic planning.

While the campus academic plans must inform the system plan, the workgroup also recognizes that the system must take a leadership role in certain initiatives. For instance, some priorities generate from the Legislature or are naturally activities where systemwide coordination is more efficient (e.g., faculty credentialing/qualifications as stated by Higher Learning Commission; transfer pathways as mandated by the Legislature; academic technology infrastructure; library collections and digital resources, disability services and resources, etc.).

The recommendations outline such expectations as well as processes for planning and communication.

5/16/2016

Charting the Future Workgroup Report

CTF Workgroup: Academic Planning and Collaboration

Workgroup Recommendations

Recommendation 1: System policies and processes should ensure that academic planning drives budget, facilities, technology, diversity, and other planning priorities. The system and the campuses must have academic planning processes that:

- a. Foster engagement of faculty and administration in identifying academic priorities and collaborative opportunities
- b. Can anticipate and respond to evolving individual, community, and state needs
- c. Integrate and advance strategic planning priorities within academic plans

Action Steps

	Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe for Completion	Ease of Implementation	Resources Needed
#1	Provide ongoing forums for college and university faculty, administration, staff, and students to share planning priorities and identify areas for collaboration and coordination	Multi-Institutional	Medium Term (6-18 months)	Easy	
#2	Resolve inconsistencies among campus policies that create barriers for students, faculty, and staff who are learning and working at multiple colleges and universities	Multi-Institutional, Academic and Student Affairs	Medium Term (6-18 months)	Moderate	
#3	Provide incentives for collaboration and innovation through modifications in budget and human resource models	Multi-Institutional, Academic and Student Affairs	Medium Term (6-18 months)	Difficult	

Recommendation #2: The system will have a comprehensive academic plan that provides a framework for the collective academic aspirations and priorities of system colleges and universities.

The system academic plan will:

- a. Advance regional and statewide collaboration and collective strategies for providing relevant education in response to diverse and shifting demographics
- b. Align with the system strategic framework (extraordinary education, partner of choice, most accessible and highest value)
- c. Inform and provide leadership for the educational priorities of the state of Minnesota
- d. Anticipate opportunities and demonstrate leadership at the national level
- e. Identify, communicate, and support opportunities for broader collaboration emerging from campus level academic plans

Action Steps					
	Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe for Completion	Ease of Implementation	Resources Needed
#1	Identify contextual data and initial focus areas for system academic plan that includes sub-elements of recommendations 1 and 2	Academic and Student Affairs	Early Win (< 6 months)	Moderate	Resources to develop website or other online portal for sharing of academic plans, data, and information exchange
#2	Develop system academic planning guidelines for common areas to be included in campus academic plans	Academic and Student Affairs	Early Win (< 6 months)	Moderate	Project management and planning support (.25 staff)
#3	Integrate responses from campus academic planning priorities, including collaborative opportunities and critical issues, into system academic plan	Multi-Institutional	Medium Term (6-18 months)	Moderate	

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Recommendation #3: Each college and university will have a comprehensive academic plan that advances its distinctive mission, culture, and academic priorities.

College and university academic plans will address the following:

- a. Articulate how the institution achieves its unique academic mission and vision
- b. Serve student employment, career, and personal development goals
- c. Reflect collaboration with community stakeholders to anticipate workforce and industry needs
- d. Encourage innovation and tolerance for risk
- e. Identify opportunities for collaboration with other system colleges and universities, including operational risks and benefits
- f. Drive campus planning and assessment activities including, but not limited to, facilities, student services, and associated metrics
- g. Ensure compliance with program and institution accreditation requirements
- h. Demonstrate advancement of the system strategic framework

Action Steps					
	Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe for Completion	Ease of Implementation	Resources Needed
#1	Integrate system academic planning guidelines into campus academic plans	Individual Institution	Early Win (< 6 months)	Moderate	Planning support for system colleges and universities, as needed Project management and planning support (.25 staff)
#2	Respond to system request for areas of collaboration	Individual Institution	Medium Term (6-18 months)	Moderate	
#3	Review campus processes and planning in support of collaboration and innovation	Individual Institution	Medium Term (6-18 months)	Moderate	

Academic Planning and Collaboration Workgroup

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