

**UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
**Working Groups (December 17, 2007)**

**Charge to Working Groups**

Each of the Working Groups should design its own report in a way that most accurately reflects the nature of its work together. While all of the Groups will naturally concentrate on their assigned topic or issue, it will be helpful if each Group remains aware of the other issues being considered since all of the reports will eventually be woven together into a single document.

**The work of each Group can be divided into four parts:**

**Analysis:** Each of the groups will have all of the data currently available to Institutional Research that is relevant to the assigned topic. The Groups can also request additional data from Institutional Research or gather it independently. The data that the Group finds most helpful to its deliberations should be included in its report. Along with it should come the Group's own analysis of what the data means, what conclusions they have drawn from it, and how it is significant to the overall shape of their report.

**Issues:** In the process of analyzing the data and discussing the assigned topic, each Group is likely to discover certain critical tensions affecting the work of the university: tensions between mission and market, between academic ambition and available resources, between faculty and administrative priorities, among others. These tensions might be best expressed as issues to be resolved or questions to be answered. It is possible that the Group will identify many more issues than it has time or inclination to consider in depth; it will be important to winnow the number of issues to a handful of those that are the most urgent or the most strategic. (A strategic issue is one that affects the University's competitive advantage as it competes for students, for faculty, for attention from the media or resources from a variety of funding sources.)

**Action Planning:** The most important part of each Group's work will be reflected in the recommendations it makes for the future. Those recommendations will probably take the form of Goals and Objectives. Goals can be thought of as strategic directions, broad and bold initiatives that address some of the tensions the Group has already identified and attempt to resolve them. Goals can sometimes be best expressed in the form of outcomes: in the next three to five years, Xavier University will be larger or better or better known or more efficient as a result of . . . Objectives describe concrete actions the University can undertake to achieve a specific goal; they define who will do what, by when, or else.

**Metrics:** For each of the goals there should be measurable or observable benchmarks by which progress toward the goal can be measured.

## Group One—Mission/ How Different?

A strategic plan is derived from the mission of the institution, so the starting point for this Group's work is the current mission statement:

Xavier University of Louisiana is Catholic and historically Black. The ultimate purpose of the University is the promotion of a more just and humane society. To this end, Xavier prepares its students to assume roles of leadership and service in society. This preparation takes place in a pluralistic teaching and learning environment that incorporates all relevant educational means, including research and community service.

Goals Following from mission:

- Preparation for continual spiritual, moral and intellectual development
- Liberally educated in the knowledge and skills required for leadership and service
- Educated in a major field so that they are prepared to complete graduate or professional school and to succeed in a career and in life

The mission statement defines Xavier as a Catholic university and, more importantly, as an Historically Black Institution. The most critical issue this Group has to consider is: how should Xavier rededicate itself to its historic mission, recognizing how circumstances have changed in the period since its founding. Among the most significant changes that have occurred:

- Since fall 2000, the number of students in the College of Arts and Sciences self-identifying as black has declined from about 97% to about 79% in fall 2006. The College of Pharmacy has declined from about 66% self-identifying as black in fall 2000 to about 51% in fall 2006.
- The percentage of Asian students has increased from about 2% to about 8% (fall 2000 to fall 2006) in the College of Arts and Sciences; in the College of Pharmacy, the fraction of Asians has increased from 13% to 26% over the same time period.
- The fraction of students in the CAS not designating a racial ethnic category has increase during the same period from less than 1% to more than 10%; in the COP this fraction has grown from less than 1% to about 7%.
- When the 2007 freshmen class was surveyed for BSSE (Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement), 82% identified as black, 8% as Asian, 3% as multi-racial and only 2% preferred not to respond (about 88% of the freshmen responded to the survey [581/664]).
- Nationally, predominantly white institutions are aggressively recruiting the most talented black students. Some HBCUs are targeting Hispanic-American and foreign students as a response to these factors.
- According to a recent poll conducted by the Pew Research Center, November 13, 2007, 37% of black respondents do not believe that "Black" describes a single race anymore.

As the Group addresses the issues arising from this data, consider the following:

- A. What are the challenges Xavier faces in continuing to carry out its mission?
- New set of competitors (for instance, competition by top tier institutions for talented minority students)
  - Changes in society: More open and pluralistic; by mid-Century likely no longer Caucasian majority; New minority groups emerging as competitors.
- B. Given the challenges and given Xavier's goals related to its mission in what ways might we be able to better achieve these goals? What kind of strategies might be used?
- C. Which of these strategies will most help Xavier differentiate itself as an institution?
- D. Given the new potential strategies proposed above, what are the major barriers Xavier would confront in implementing each strategy (e.g., competition, cost, consistency with mission, etc.).

## **Group Two—Student Recruitment and Retention/ How Good?**

A university like Xavier is defined by its students: those it recruits and retains, and those it graduates. That is the case because the university is highly tuition-dependent, it is learning-centered, and its reputation rests largely on the impact its graduates have made and continue to make on society. Given Xavier's commitment to academic excellence, the issue for this Group to consider is how do we measure excellence in the profile of the students we are trying to attract: in terms of input measures like SAT/ACT scores, high-school rankings and the like, or in terms of outcomes, like success in graduate or professional school or in careers?

Among the most significant data for the Group to consider:

Dot points

- Xavier's year-two retention rate has fallen from 80-81% in the late 1990s to 75-76% in the three years prior to Katrina (using a rolling three year average). In the two years since Katrina Xavier's retention rate has risen to about 80% (based on smaller entering cohorts and a different blend of student). A graphic of the long-term trend is attached.
- Noted in discussion that there is overlap between Group 1 and Group 2 (and other group overlaps); Dr. Scheye did not feel this would be a problem, might actually facilitate convergence of themes among the groups
- Suggested some students are lost because they are not academically prepared; others because of financial reasons. Pointed out we historically have recruited less academically prepared students who go on after attending Xavier to successful careers and lives.
- Among Xavier's HBCU private school competitors, using the IPEDS data for 2003-04 to 2006-07 (table attached), Xavier trails Howard (88%), Spelman (87%), Morehouse (81%), Hampton (80%) and is above Clark-Atlanta (70%), Tuskegee (69) and Dillard (66%). The rates are summarized in the accompanying table.
- Suggested we compare XU retention rates to our competitors and peer HBCUs; also that we look at comparative entry ACT/SATs. Comment from group: Historically, a bunch of Ds and Fs generated. Do we want to increase retention via grade inflation, which would also increase graduation rate, or do we want to maintain reputation of XU students getting higher GRE, MCAT scores and better placement within companies, professional/graduate school?

- Also may want to look at others' support services, academic and counseling. Encouraging students to use tutoring services will improve retention without lowering standards.
- In the 2007 *U.S. News* Ranking of Best Black Colleges, the top five schools had average retention rates ranging from 84% (Fisk) to 91% (Spelman). When Xavier's average was adjusted for the Katrina class of 2004, its average retention rate was 78%.
- Since 2003-04 the number of Pell recipients in the CAS at Xavier has ranged from 49% to 51%; the average percentage of freshmen Pell recipients in the three years before Katrina was about 53%; after Katrina about 59%. Comment from group: Pell-eligible is not synonymous with academically challenged, but might mean that individual is less scholastically prepared due to feeder school environment
- Using a rough revenue projection model, for each 1% rise in tuition for the CAS there will be about \$308K.
- The attached table shows admission trends (seven year period) and pre- and post-Katrina averages for these trends. Overall, post-Katrina completed applications are down 60% over pre-Katrina levels; admissions are similarly down by 58%; enrollment is down by 41%. The biggest declines are from out-of-state, the smallest declines from Louisiana outside New Orleans.

\*Q-scores are calculated by looking at high school GPA and ACT scores (SAT scores have been converted to ACT when the applicant only submits SAT scores).

Top-Q = ACT  $\geq$  25 (high) and GPA  $\geq$  3.0 (high)  
 Bottom Q = ACT  $<$  25 (low) and GPA  $<$  3.0 (low)  
 Mid-Qs = combination of either high-low or low-high

As the Group addresses the issues arising from this data, consider the following

B,C, D, E (Tom—did you intend that A be omitted?)

- A. What kind of students do we want to attract? If we choose to remain primarily Black, what are the ramifications?
- B. What kinds of challenges/barriers/constraints will we face in attempting to attract these types of students? (Instances would include, cost, reputation, consistency with mission, racial diversity, geographic diversity, income diversity)
- C. Given the type of students we want to and can attract, what do we want to be able to do for these students—how might we help them “add value” to their lives?
  - a. What characteristics do we want our students to have when they graduate?
  - b. What is to be the focus of Xavier’s impact through its students on society (for instance, the types of positions and places they will hold in society)
- D. Given the kinds of students we want to/can attract, what types of institutional changes do we need to make to be able to get our students to where we want them to be? What types of strategies might we implement toward this end?
- E. With regard to the strategies identified, what challenges/barriers/constraints will we face in implementing them?

### **Group Three—Teaching, Scholarship and Research Capacity/ How Good?**

Academic excellence at Xavier is also related to the work of the faculty in teaching, scholarship and research. The issue for this Group to consider is: What is the proper balance between teaching and research? And, what are the implications of this question as it affects the teaching load of most faculty members.

- How adequate is Xavier's current research capacity?
- Don't forget service and advising components of faculty evaluation criteria. Noted that some faculty have as many as 50 or more advisees
- If we enhance research capacity, how will that affect faculty recruitment? What are the implications for teaching load, recruitment of students, faculty retention, and commitment to research?
- Perhaps the group should focus on faculty development.
- Noted that faculty members engaged in scholarship are better teachers.
- Need hard numbers on faculty load. Theresa Bodin (sp) has done a study. Should get data from the study.
- Issue of policies affecting faculty scheduling: what is possible?
- Budgets for academic departments must address financial support needs; this will in turn drive fundraising efforts.
- How do we articulate the value that EACH of the departments adds to all students' educational experience?
- Noted that 30% to 40% of XU's revenue is from private and federal grants. Some of these funds are directly tied to research. What are the barriers to sustaining a certain level of research, and implications on teaching?

- A. To what extent would it be desirable for Xavier to attempt to stimulate and assist its faculty in their ability to carry out scholarly and/or research activities? How might this enhance the quality of teaching? How might it help attract and retain good faculty and/or students? How might this impact the reputation of the University? How might this positively impact the financial condition of the University?
  
- B. To the extent desirable, what strategies might be implemented to enhance Xavier's scholarship and research capacity? How might the desirability of this goal differ in the college of Arts and Science and the College of Pharmacy? (E.g. reduced teaching loads, improved library, better start-up packages, enhanced equipment/facilities? More funds to attend professional meetings? )
  
- C. What challenges/constraints/barriers exist to implementing these strategies? Cost? Impact on the quality of teaching?

## **Group Four—Role of Faculty in Governance**

The paradigm of shared governance is evolving nationally from one based on shared authority to one based on shared responsibility. We should be asking, then, not only what should the faculty have authority over but also what should the faculty be responsible for?

(Tom: Did you intend that these bullets be omitted?)

- Faculty governance members should be included in this team
- Faculty does not have a large role in self-governance at XU
- Micromanagement is a concern
- What about post-NCF? Faculty will be more involved in governance; successor will be less well-renowned than NCF.
- Also noted that NCF was hand-chosen by SBS.
- Comment made that a lot of faculty are discreetly putting out feelers with other institutions, that there is a certain amount of worry over upcoming and inevitable transition post-NCF. Noted that worry among staff members, as well.

### **Group Five—Serving City and Region**

While Xavier clearly enjoys a national reputation based largely on the success of its graduates, the success of the university is inextricably tied to the city and region it is dedicated to serve. The issue for this Group to consider is: how can Xavier leverage its national reputation and the commitment to service among its students, faculty and staff, to benefit the city of New Orleans and the region?

- A. To what extent would it be desirable for Xavier to attempt to stimulate and assist its faculty and students in their ability to carry out more community service activities? How might this enhance the quality of teaching? How might it help attract and retain good faculty and/or students? How might this impact the reputation of the University? How might this positively impact the financial condition of the University?
- B. To the extent desirable, what strategies might be implemented to enhance Xavier's community service activities?
- C. Which of these strategies would most help Xavier differentiate itself as an institution?
- D. What challenges/constraints/barriers exist to implementing these strategies? Cost? Impact on the quality of teaching?

## **Group Six—Student Life, Facilities and Environment**

The majority of Xavier students go to class 15 hours a week and study another 10 hours. That leaves another 100 hours each week when students are awake and active. The commitment of the academic community of the university should be that education is going on all the time and everywhere, not only in the classroom or the library, so there should be a relationship between the lessons taught through the curriculum and the experience of the students in their daily lives on campus. Both research and observation confirm the finding that learning occurs most effectively when it is directed toward outcomes, enhanced by experience, encouraged through collaboration and inspired by excellence. The issue for this Group to consider is: how should the University plan to enhance its facilities and environment to support student learning.

(Did you intend that this bullet be omitted?)

- There is a “service learning” team that is already working on this topic, and which should have input into this USPC team
  - A. Given the kind of students we want to and can attract, to what extent do our campus, current facilities, dorm life/rules/management, opportunities for recreation/entertainment, student sense of engagement/commitment to the University, and the social/spiritual life on campus help us do this? To what extent does it hinder us from accomplishing this goal?
  - B. Given what we want to do with our students once they are at Xavier, given the value we want to help them add to their lives while they are at Xavier - the characteristics we want our students to have when they graduate and the types of professions/positions in which we want them to be able to serve and impact society - to what extent do our campus, current facilities and the social/spiritual life on campus help us do this? To what extent does it hinder us from accomplishing this goal?
  - C. What types of strategies might we implement to address the issues described in A and B above and more greatly differentiate Xavier from competitor universities?
  - D. What kind of challenges/barriers/constraints will we face in attempting to implement these strategies?

### **Group Seven—Flagship Programs/Famous for What?**

Xavier's academic reputation depends to a large extent on its flagship programs in Science and Pharmacy and the opportunity these programs afford students to conduct research independently. The issue for this Group to consider is: whether Xavier can leverage the reputation of its current flagships to identify other programs the university could be famous for. Instead of naming specific programs with the potential to earn flagship status, the Group should perhaps attempt to define those characteristics, internal and external, that would define a flagship program at Xavier.

### **Group Eight—Role of Technology**

All of us are aware of the ways in which technology has transformed the way in which we live our daily lives; it has the potential to transform the way in which we teach and learn with equally dramatic effect. The issue for this Group to consider is: how can Xavier harness the technology that is available or will become available to transform the way in which teachers teach and students learn.

(Have omitted question "A" here)

- A. How and where can technological advancements help Xavier to become more effective, given its competitors? What types of advancement in technology could help our faculty do a better job in teaching and scholarship/research? Our administrators do a better job in managing?
- B. With regards to implementing the above potential technological advances, what constraints/barriers/challenges would each face?