Introduction:
Washburn University is a nationally ranked institution of higher learning. The majority of programs offered at the University receive national accreditation from their respective accrediting bodies. As noted in the mission statement of Washburn University, academics are central to the life of the university that students may “develop and to realize their intellectual, academic, and professional potential leading to becoming productive and responsible citizens.” To address the strategic direction of academic programs at Washburn University, this White Paper is organized into three major themes: Program Development, Organizational Structure, and Support Structures of the University.

I. Programs

A. Ensure academic units meet the current and changing educational needs of students.

Rationale: To enrich our broader community, Washburn needs to serve as a primary resource for K-12 education, industry, government, research interests, and business in the continuum of educating and graduating responsible citizens.

1. Continue to enhance foundations in math, sciences, critical thinking, the arts and humanities, and ethical and moral values.
2. Emphasize organizational structures that promote interdisciplinary learning and application of knowledge.
3. Develop collaborations and support services with area schools, and provide and increase the quality/visibility of WU K-12 education teachers to meet the needs of area students.
4. Increase the ability of academic units to respond quickly to changing scholarly, social and cultural, market and professional expectations for graduates.
5. Build close relationships with community organizations and businesses to understand hiring demands placed upon employers.
I. Programs (Continued)

B. Develop, support and promote signature learning experiences

*Rationale:* The opportunities and accomplishments of Washburn graduates, the regional and national recognition of academic units, and the excellent educational enrichment provided by esteemed Washburn faculty toward individual student success needs public recognition to define our campus, elevate our academic climate, and grow student enrollment.

1. Continue to provide a personalized private education at a public price.
2. Continue to support general education as a signature Washburn experience.
3. Provide transformational experiences in scholarly/creative, community, leadership and/or international travel for all students.
4. Develop and sustain a model Honors program.
5. Provide infrastructure for the multi-faceted recognition and communication of academic success stories (programs, students, and faculty).
6. Develop high relevancy and/or high demand undergraduate and graduate programs that meet the needs of the region.
7. Support the School of Law’s plans to improve its regional and national standing.
8. Develop high relevancy and/or high demand online programs.

C. Provide a highly visible, centralized location for all of the health care programs on campus

*Rationale:* The health care sector is a growing area in the U.S. economy. As such, the demand for and diversity of health care programs has increased. To accommodate the multiple educational programs for health care workers on the Washburn campus and to make efficient use of the educational resources required to maintain these academic programs, the development of a health professions centralized location is necessary.

1. Provide opportunities for greater collaborations between various health care units on campus.
2. Increase experience of students with other health care professions.
3. Integrate health information systems into the health care educational curriculum.
4. Continue to respond to changing regional and state-wide demands in health care.
5. Enhance existing medical services offered by the Student Health Services center.
I. Programs (Continued)

D. Develop plans to evaluate all General Education courses to ensure their validity within the 21st century General Education program currently under development.

Rationale: The Washburn General Education program serves to engage students in both foundational learning in the tradition of the liberal education, and their development as responsible citizens and professionals.

1. Enhance foundational learning in Global Citizenship and Global Studies, Technology and Information Literacy, Quantitative and Scientific Reasoning, Communication, and Critical and Creative Thinking.
2. Provide incentives to allow faculty to incorporate best practices in online and traditional in-person general education offerings.
3. Provide incentives to allow the faculty who are the strongest technologically, to assist others to develop best practices in online general education.
4. Ensure the ongoing evaluation of general education courses to ensure they are producing the desired learning outcomes.
5. Provide ongoing evaluation of the general education program to ensure its value as a signature learning experience.

II. Organization

A. The Washburn University administrative structure needs to promote the primacy of academics.

Rationale: Academics need to be recognized as central to Washburn University operations in order for students to “develop and to realize their intellectual, academic and professional potential leading to becoming productive and responsible citizens” (Mission Statement 8/31/09).

1. Establish a Provost system of academic governance and/or better utilize the current academic leadership structure.
2. Ensure faculty centered academic initiatives.
3. Enhance transparency and communication to ensure representative participation of all units in campus governance.
4. Promote development programs for those faculty interested in administrative careers.
II. Organization (Continued)

B. The growth of existing programs and the creation of new programs will be funded by the reallocation of existing budgets

Rationale: While Washburn enjoys a variety of funding sources (tuition and fees, State Grant, County Sales Tax, and WEA funding), it is our expectation that level of state and local funding will remain relatively flat for the foreseeable future.

1. Washburn must build on the areas where it has comparative advantages.
2. Evaluation of all campus programs (academic, athletic, student life and support areas) must occur in a systematic way and appropriate actions taken.
3. The process must be transparent, involve faculty, staff, students and the external community, and involve both quantitative and qualitative factors in the analysis.
4. Existing programs with potential for growth and new programs must receive an increasing share of available resources.

III. Support

A. Technology at Washburn University must first support the academic mission of the institution.

Rationale: The demand for technology literacy is advancing in the global market and specifically in the Topeka area. Consistent with its Mission, Washburn needs to be a technological leader and resource for the community. Critical to the future of teaching, learning, scholarship, creativity and outreach is academically centered technology support and leadership.

1. Infrastructure (hardware, software, web presence, administration, and support services) needs to provide outstanding service to all stakeholders (faculty, staff and students) at the time of need.
2. Academic units must receive outstanding technological support to plan for the constant evolution of technology and its uses in an academic environment.
3. The use of technology needs to place Washburn faculty and students at the forefront of innovative learning, research and outreach in order to excel in their academic fields.
4. Graduating students will understand and be able to use new technology specific to their discipline.
5. The Washburn University community needs to lead the region in the use of technology as a transformative tool in the 21st century.
6. The University Libraries need to be continually at the forefront of technological innovation.
III. Support (Continued)

**B. Create a comprehensive academic support program to include a First Year Center (FYC).**

*Rationale:* In order to academically engender and sustain a diverse and successful student population with a range of aptitudes and experiences, Washburn needs to welcome and introduce students to the opportunities and expectations of the University.

1. The FYC will adapt services to meet the needs of diverse student populations and expose all first time WU students to the Washburn experience, including a structured first year orientation and seminar series.
2. Consolidate and improve academic support services to assist students from their first year until graduation.
3. Faculty will continue to receive education to enhance learning in diverse populations.

**C. Establish a permanent Center for Faculty Excellence as a resource for faculty development.**

*Rationale:* A great university is dependent upon the existence of a great faculty. To recruit and maintain such people at Washburn University requires the institution to support their learning and professional development.

1. Offer support for first year and senior faculty development.
2. Provide support for the multiple roles faculty perform on campus and in the community.
3. Increase interdisciplinary communication and activity.
D. Central to the intellectual, cultural and social growth of the campus are the University Libraries.

_Rationale:_ Critical to the future of teaching, learning, scholarship, creativity and outreach is, therefore, an institutional commitment to the University Libraries. The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Universities has drawn attention to the need to address library issues at Washburn University after both its last two campus visits, in 1998 and 2008. The HLC report noted the need for “improvements in facilities, funding, service, and staffing.”

1. Directly and substantially address the concerns of the 2008 HLC report.
2. Support the Library as the center of campus interdisciplinary life.
3. Support the Library as a central element in student achievement.
4. Support the Library as a central function of student life.
5. Support the Libraries need to remain at the forefront of technological innovation.
Appendix A: Ideas behind Strategic Initiatives

I. Programs

C. Provide a highly visible, centralized location for all of the health care programs on campus

1. This proposal is not endorsing the reorganization of departments/schools rather than to promote a more efficient use of resources and to increase collaboration amongst the health professions.
2. In order to enhance the existing medical services that are administered at the “Student Health Services” center, a more interdisciplinary team needs to be utilized. The university health profession faculty and students could be called upon to provide services that are within their professional scope of practice.
3. A centralized location would include the following health professions programs
   a. Allied Health
   b. Athletic Training
   c. Human Services
   d. Nursing
   e. Social Work
   f. Student Health Services

D. Develop plans to evaluate all General Education courses to ensure their validity within the 21st century General Education program currently under development.

1. Utilize the best teachers to grow programs – teaching the featured courses

II. Organization

A. The Washburn University administrative structure needs to promote the primacy of academics.

1. The Presidents external time commitment off campus will only grow as attention turns toward the Capital Campaign.
2. Administrative structure needs to be in place so academic programs may still function when the President is not available on campus.
3. All regents institutions in Kansas has the provost structure.
Appendix A: II. Organization (Continued)

B. The growth of existing programs and the creation of new programs will be funded by the reallocation of existing budgets

1. New academic programs and the growth in existing academic programs will require the investment of financial resources.
2. Tuition and Fees make up approximately 55 percent of total Washburn revenues. With increased competition from community colleges, other brick and mortar institutions, and on-line programs, there will be real limits to the ability of the institution to pass along the costs to students in the form of higher and higher rates of tuition and fees.
3. The State of Kansas grant for Washburn constitutes 18 percent of total Washburn Revenues. The state government has both a cyclical and structural deficit problem, and it is expected that higher education is likely to receive even a smaller portion of the state budget pie in the future.
4. The growth in economic activity in Shawnee County will be relatively slow in the near term, and is unlikely to surge in the long term. The Shawnee County provides 27 percent of the total Washburn General Fund budget, and would only growth in size concurrent with the growth of taxable sales within Shawnee County.
5. Take process of program review seriously.

III. Support

A. Technology at Washburn University must first support the academic mission of the institution.

1. Place academic computing under the governance of the Vice President of Academic Affairs
2. Washburn technology is needed to serve both administrative functions and academic programs. Administrative technology is sustained by the structure established 5 years ago at Washburn; however, the pervasive position of faculty and academic administrators is that technology currently does not adequately support, and sometimes frustrates academics. Both the current infrastructure and apparent interest in supporting academics is insufficient to meet the real needs of academics – information, communication, collaboration, teaching, scholarly and creative work.
Appendix A: III. Support (Continued)

B. Create a comprehensive academic support program to include a First Year Center (FYC).

1. First-year experience interventions are a major part of the efforts of American universities efforts to improve retention and graduation rates. Reference Appendix C for additional information.
2. Define student problems in the classroom.
3. Focus instruction on current problems rather than a “general” skill.
4. Aid students in career exploration as they seek to identify their academic interests.
5. Use instructional design strategies to produce effective instructional units, usable in a variety of formats.

C. Establish a permanent Center for Faculty Excellence as a resource for faculty development.

1. Offer support and recognition of interdepartmental and cross-campus collaborations.
2. Offer support and recognition of research activities.
3. Highlight and promote the best practices in distance education.
4. Offer support and recognition for developing hybrid courses.
5. Offer support and promote the best practices in the use of technology within the classroom.
6. Offer support and promote the best practices in student advising strategies.
7. Track, encourage and celebrate faculty contributions to the community.
Appendix A: III. Support (Continued)

D. Central to the intellectual, cultural and social growth of the campus are the University Libraries.

1. Historically, libraries serve as the intellectual and cultural heart the university. They speak to the purpose of an institution’s existence, and are crucial to a university for many reasons, not least of all the recruitment and retention of students. The caliber of a university’s libraries, it is generally accepted, is a reliable indication of both the quality of education offered and the scholarship produced at the institution. The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Universities has drawn attention to the need to address library issues at Washburn University after both of its last two campus visits, in 1998 and 2008.

(Language from Pages 23 & 24 of the Assurance Section of the 2008 Higher Learning Commission Report regarding the Washburn University Libraries.)

2. Progress Report
   Progress report on improvements in facilities, funding, service, and staffing for Mabee Library due 7/1/2010.

3. Rationale and Expectations
   As acknowledged in the self study, the funding, staffing, and physical space for Mabee Library has been a continuing concern for Washburn University. Throughout the visit, the team heard concerns from students, faculty, staff and the administrative leadership of the library about the facility and services of Mabee Library. While planning exercises have taken place in the past and there has been some improvement in the staffing of the library since the last comprehensive visit, issues raised during the visit make it clear that there are still major problems to be addressed. Funding for the library, while having increased in the past 10 years, currently sits at approximately 2.8% of the university budget. This has not been sufficient to reach the goal stated in the strategic plan that was produced in response to the last comprehensive visit for the creation of an 'information commons.' At this point, general access computers available to library patrons consist of 6 older computer units. In addition, there are 13 network computing devices available in the public areas which provide patron access to the electronic databases and library catalogs.

   The team heard reports that when more than 16 individuals use the wireless connection in the library that the library connection will crash, providing additional evidence that the stated goal has not been reached. The library has conducted 2 failed searches for a new head of the library, resulting in the appointment of a faculty member as the interim dean. Given the fact that over 90% of the students
enrolled at Washburn University live off of campus, a well designed and staffed library can play a major role in the academic life of students while on campus.

The team recommends that the progress report include specific plans for the role that Mabee Library will play in the academic life of Washburn University, a timeline and budget for the creation of a facility and necessary staff that will support that role, the identification of a funding stream to implement the plan, and, at a minimum, a new strategy for hiring a full time dean to oversee this process. We understand that the interim dean is leading another strategic planning effort to upgrade Mabee Library and we applaud that renewed effort to take concrete steps to improve Mabee Library. Given that focus, the team feels that a two year time frame for providing a progress report will give time for thoughtful consideration while still moving this process forward.
Appendix B: Data

Washburn Community:
Steve Jenkins, Senior VP–Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce
Jim Daniel, Director of Strategic Planning, St. Francis Health Center
Brenda Deitrich, Superintendent, USD 437 School District

Academic Unit Strategic Plans
Dean, College of Arts & Sciences
Dean, Maybe Library
Dean, School of Applied Sciences
Dean, School of Business
Dean, School of Law
Dean, School of Nursing
VPAA, Washburn University

Open Forums
Student (1)
Staff (3)
Faculty (3)
Appendix C: Information in support of First Year Center, Initiative III B.

First-year experience interventions are a major part of the efforts of American universities efforts to improve retention and graduation rates. They provide an avenue of improving the transition of students into higher education (Henscheid, 2004; Hunter & Linder, 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). These credit courses are designed to facilitate and improve learning and development, be it about one’s self, the university, or a particular topic or set of topics (Hunter & Linder, 2005).

Research on the effectiveness of these courses has centered mainly on the positive relationship between FYE participation and persistence to the second year of college, with these benefits found among all categories of students. A limited number of studies have examined additional benefits of first year experiences, all positively related to persistence, such as increased interaction with faculty and other students, engagement outside of the classroom, and satisfaction with the college experience (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Programs that have set the standard for the FYE rely on the record of success at the model at the University of South Carolina. Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis and University of Texas at Dallas are considered successful programs.

IUPUI

“With nineteen degree-granting schools, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) is Indiana’s most comprehensive higher education institution. Despite its record of achievement in academic programs and research, IUPUI has faced challenges serving entering students. It has been a successful upper-division campus (62% of graduates have at least 15 hours of transfer credit), but outcomes for beginning students have not always been as successful.

Many risk factors jeopardize student success: nearly half of our students are part-time; 82% work 32 or more hours per week off campus; they are under-prepared—60% are admitted conditionally, not meeting stated admissions requirements; they live off campus—there is housing for only about 1% of the student population; 62% are first generation; and they do not have strong financial support—60% are financial aid eligible.”

Freshmen Year Experience

“The Center of Integrated Learning (COIL) at IUPUI provides support for general education and integrative learning through a focus on IUPUI’s Principles of Undergraduate Learning (PULs). One of COIL’s projects is Themed Learning Communities (TLCs), which integrates two or more disciplinary courses with a first-year learning experience. Data on survey items such as the frequency of class presentations, working with other students outside of class, participation in community-based projects, along with items related to students’ perception of a supportive campus environment, are used as evidence to suggest that students who participate in TLCs report higher levels of engagement than those who do not participate.”

In this brief conference paper, Taylor and Stamatoplos provide an introduction to first-year experience programs and highlight the FYE programs at DePaul University and Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI). Both programs demonstrate effective means of including librarians in the development and implementation of FYE programming that includes an integrated approach to information literacy instruction. The authors also pose a number of questions that must be addressed by any academic library planning to become involved in provision of instruction for large-scale FYE programs.

**UT Dallas**

“Starting as a research institute – and later developing graduate and undergraduate programs – UTD provides a unique learning environment. It is host to seven schools, offers an array of interdisciplinary degree programs, and features a student population as diverse as its areas of study.

Since its inception in 1961 as the Graduate Research Center of the Southwest, an outgrowth of technology giant Texas Instruments, UTD fosters a strong tradition of academic excellence. UTD became part of the U. T. System in 1969, offered only graduate degrees until 1975, and admitted its first freshman class in 1990. Today, it ranks at or near the top in the number of computer science degrees awarded each year in the United States.

With a current enrollment of more than 14,500 students and a world-class faculty that includes two Nobel laureates, UTD aims to provide Texas and the nation with the benefits of educational and research programs of the highest quality. By merging theory with practice in classrooms and at the university's 29 research centers, we challenge curious minds to find the answers to their questions.

Apartment-style living on campus is available to all students, including freshmen. In short, UTD provides a quality education and a wealth of opportunities to anyone striving to reach their potential.

The UTD campus continues to grow, breaking ground in 2004 on an $85 million, state-of-the-art Natural Science and Engineering Research Building, fueling UTD's drive to become a "tier one" academic research institution. The 25-year campus master plan, which was recently approved, details a slate of new projects scheduled through the year 2027.”

**Freshman Year Experience**

“There’s nothing quite like your first year of college. A new world awaits, and UT Dallas wants to help you make the most of the experience.
In collaboration and partnership with the Office of Undergraduate Education, Student Affairs coordinated an effort to pull pre-existing first-year programs together to define the Freshman-Year Experience (FYE) Program at UT Dallas. The FYE Program includes programs and services to ensure students experience a smooth transition into higher education and independent living and to help them make the most of their first year in college.

In addition to the programs already reviewed in the New Student Programs section of this report, Freshman Convocation, Rhetoric 1101, Living Learning, Experience Dallas, Residential Life Programs, Volunteer FEST and the freshman year-end party, all pre-existing programs, were also identified as components of the Freshman-Year Experience Program.

The first-ever Summer Book Club was piloted as part of the FYE Program during the summer. The Summer Book Club provided an opportunity for incoming freshmen to read Chris Bohjalian’s Before You Know Kindness and join an online discussion with fellow students. The Cometline to Success was also created as a part of the new FYE Program website to give a list of opportunities and suggested tasks freshmen should consider completing during their first year at UT Dallas.

A comprehensive program plan was developed to define the mission, goals, core program components, desired learning outcomes, and assessment methods of the FYE Program. A FYE Program Advisory Committee meets on a regular basis to ensure the cohesiveness and success of the FYE efforts. "http://www.utdallas.edu/fye/


Henscheid (Ed.), Integrating the First-Year Experience: The Role of Learning Communities in First-Year Seminars (Monograph No. 39) (pp. 1-8). Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.
