



Minot State
UNIVERSITY

VISION 2013

*A Vision for the Future
of Minot State University*



Be seen. Be heard.

Minot State University

Minot State University will achieve national distinction as one of the premier public, regional universities in the “great” Great Plains.



FAITH, GROWTH, AND WONDER

“Though I do not believe that a plant will spring up where no seed has been, I have great faith in a seed...Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to expect wonders.”

—from “The Succession of
Forest Trees,”
Henry David Thoreau

Contents

Acknowledgements	ii
Planning and Budgeting Council.....	iii
Background.....	1-2
The Rationale for a Distinctive Vision and Future.....	3-6
Vision 2013: The Future of the University.....	7
Mission	8
Strategic Goal and Vision 2013.....	9
Realizing the Vision.....	10
Strategies and Priorities: Achieving the Distinctive Goal	11-17
Strategy One: Creating a Distinctive Mission Focused on Engagement and Place.....	11
Strategy Two: Fostering Engaged Learning and Place for the Benefit of the Students.....	12
Strategy Three: Valuing Faculty and Staff Within an Engaged Community ...	13
Strategy Four: Building a Diverse and Multicultural University Climate.....	14
Strategy Five: Focusing on Student Success and Future Achievements	15
Strategy Six: Creating a Commitment to Civic Engagement, Service, and the Common Good.....	16
Strategy Seven: Ensuring Future Institutional Viability, Vitality, and Growth.....	17
Implementing the Plan.....	18-22
Conclusion.....	23
Appendix	24-28
Glossary	29



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Minot State University and its members of the Planning and Budgeting Council wish to acknowledge and thank the many faculty and staff and outside community members who attended open forums and events and who contributed to general discussion and offered insightful comments about the university's strengths, weaknesses, and needs for the future. A very special thank you is due to Deb Wentz, executive assistant to the president, who prepared so well for the meetings, kept meticulous records of the proceedings and results of the meetings and focus groups, and prepared reports summarizing and analyzing the results. She and all members of the Planning and Budgeting Council listed afterward deserve a special acknowledgement and a note of appreciation.

Planning and Budgeting Council

The Planning and Budgeting Council members, nominated by their respective senates and boards, embarked on a thorough process of research and fact finding in both external and internal environments. The council was charged with the development of a plan and processes for implementing it with a focus on Minot State University's 2013 Centennial. The purpose of the planning processes was to provide direction to ensure Minot State University's competitive advantage, quality, and growth. External demographic data, assessments, literature, and reports were collected and reviewed. Focus groups, open forums, surveys, and a variety of reports and internal data provided information about the university's internal environment. (See appendix for summary of results.)

The current planning initiative and the new vision and strategic initiatives and plan are outlined in this document. A more comprehensive report, available in the President's Office, has been distributed to the campus.

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Background

Years of considerable planning and effort by the citizens of Minot and the Northwest region of North Dakota led to the passage of the 1907 and 1909 legislative bills establishing the State Normal School at Minot. As reported in the 1916 *Magician*, the first published annual for the institution, “an overwhelming majority” of the North Dakota voters approved the constitutional amendment in November 1911. Minot pioneer Erik Ramstad donated 60 acres for the location of the institution. The school opened September 30, 1913, in temporary quarters and during the spring of the academic year the Pioneer Hall dormitory and “Main Building” (Old Main) were completed and occupied. The community, students, and staff were enthusiastic about the new college and its future.

Since 1913-1914, the school has grown from 11 faculty, 99 students, 60 acres, and two buildings to approximately 500 faculty and staff, 3,800 students, 102 acres, and 21 buildings, including five residence halls, two apartment buildings, seven classroom buildings, the student union, library, domed athletic facility, a concert hall, two theaters, and two art galleries. In its early years, the State Normal School at Minot offered two-year certificates and prepared teachers for rural schools. Undergoing a number of name changes over the years, the institution is now called Minot State University, a comprehensive institution offering undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Despite the significant changes and growth during the nearly 100 years of existence, the university remains steadfastly focused on its original commitment to students, to service, and to its place in Northwest North Dakota. The university’s ideal of “service first” has indeed been responsible over these years in vitalizing the special identity of Minot State University.



“THE PERSONALITY of President A.G. Crane and his consistent upholding of the ideal of ‘Service First’ have been dominant factors in vitalizing the spirit of the school. The progress thus far stands as a monument to the spirit of co-operation [sic] which has prevailed among the students and faculty and has been reinforced by the people of the entire north-western [sic] section of the state.”

—*Magician*, 1916

The spirit of cooperation and the strong support of the people of North Dakota's northwest region will continue to offer the foundation on which the university will reach and celebrate its centennial. That foundation and the strategic plan described in this report will help realize a vision for the future and the beginning of the next 100 years.



The Rationale for a Distinctive Vision and Future

What emerges from the research are themes for a new vision, goal, and list of strategic priorities. The new vision must be focused intentionally and unwaveringly on service to its people, its community, and its special place and location. The focus should also be on high expectations for learning and institutional performance. Expecting rigorous study and scholarship, teaching students how to make good judgments informed by ethical and moral principles, and engaging and motivating others purposefully in the best of what we know for the betterment of others, both locally and globally, should provide the foundation for a distinctive vision and future.

The Philosophy of Place and Engagement

Minot State University of the future will be known as one of the premier public regional institutions in the Great Plains because of its direct connection to place, to campus, to the northwest region of North Dakota, and to the larger global environment.

This vision rests on the assumption that the university experience will provide an extraordinary connection between academic subjects and the reality of life on the Great Plains, between theory and practice, and between the local and the global. From that local and close-up study, through service learning, through internships, through field trips, through experiential learning activities, through an intense study of local ecosystems, and through use of local issues and topics as the focus of study, student perspective and character should necessarily grow and flourish. From such close focus and proximity comes wonder. Underpinning that is an educational philosophy all of us can endorse without compromising our own academic freedoms and perspectives.

The philosophy is grounded in an idealistic expectation that all students can learn, grow, and succeed if given the support, guidance, and engaging experience. The philosophy is also grounded in a pragmatic that expects that learning, theory, and the development of ideas depend on reflection, engagement, and practice. This philosophy underlying this vision centers on active engagement and place.

“We can and do supply ready-made ‘ideas’ by the thousand; we do not usually take much pains to see that the one learning engages in significant situations where his/[her] own activities generate, support, and clinch ideas—that is, perceiving meanings or connections.”

—JOHN DEWEY
Democracy and Education

“EDUCATION is not filling buckets,
but lighting fires.”

—WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

From such an educational focus and study should come motivated learning that leads to development of moral and ethical convictions, qualities that develop character, integrity, creativity, and an understanding of our obligation to the common good. With an appreciation, understanding, and devotion to a place and its people, the motivation to think beyond one’s self becomes pronounced and realizable.

Implementing a Vision of Place and Engagement

What would this mean for Minot State University? A 2001 AASCU report, titled “Stepping Forward as Stewards of Place,” argues that a primary responsibility of public higher education institutions is to contribute to the common good through what is referred to as public engagement. The report included an outline of what institutions can do to be more directly involved in their communities’ and regions’ welfare. For students, the AASCU report explains, “working on community and regional issues:”

- Provides a more substantial linkage between theory and practice than might otherwise be presented in a traditional setting;
- Helps to keep the curriculum more current and responsive;
- Brings critical thinking/problem solving alive, thus making the classroom experience more interesting;
- Allows for more effective and lasting integration of skills such as leadership that will contribute to ‘competitive advantage’ in the workplace and beyond;
- Brings ethical issues into the classroom;
- Offers a foundation for meaningful discussion about the responsibilities of citizens and the nature of dynamics of a successful community;
- Supports service learning initiatives; and
- Prepares (students) for a lifetime of informed and participatory citizenship.

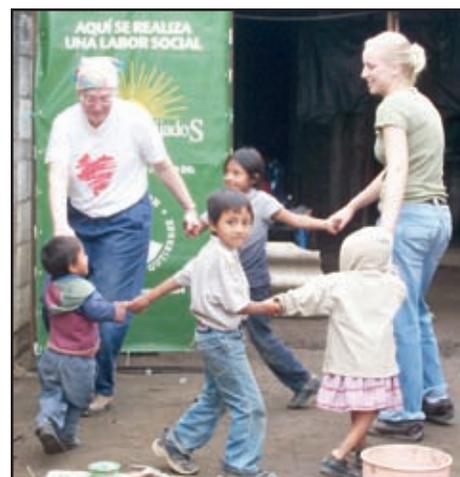


Through such activities and curricula and a distinctive institutional focus, students develop a strong intellectual sense of and commitment to this place and to learning. Connecting knowledge, theory, practice and place to the realities of human existence, problem solving, and life remains a compelling reason to foster the students' engagement in their learning, and to focus on the university's place in the Great Plains.

Minot State University's commitment to learning and place confirms its commitment to the value of grounding education in both the theoretical and the practical, and thus to helping students value, respect, and contribute to the welfare of people and place. This integration also offers students opportunities for stimulating their intellectual curiosity, their emotions about learning, and their sympathies for each subject of study.

To realize the vision, Minot State University will raise expectations exceptionally high for the quality and rigor of student learning, study, knowledge acquisition, skill development, and professionalism. The university will:

- Promote and support students' engagement in and respect for the learning processes.
- Define and publicize standards for student work and accomplishments.
- Set and publicize equally high expectations for the quality of teaching and the contributions of faculty and staff.
- Value and support contributions and needs of faculty and staff within a unified community focused on high-quality learning.
- Set high expectations and standards for student success.
- Become an engaged, diverse, respectful, and collegial campus community.
- Complement high expectations for learning and success with civic engagement experiences, field-based and experiential learning activities, and other means for integrating theory, knowledge, and practice.
- Maintain a campus culture focused unwaveringly and pervasively on student abilities, character development, integrity, and potential for success.





- Demonstrate a persistent and strongly held commitment to a learning community, based on academic assessment, institutional review and research, and quality improvement.
- Engage in institutional research and assessment to set key benchmarks and indicators and monitor progress in reaching these goals and meeting these high expectations and standards.

In short, Minot State University will create a community that is pervasively focused on: student growth, learning, and success; the development of students with integrity, character, and intelligence; institutional commitment to civic engagement; stewardship of its local and global place; and meaningful service for the welfare of others.

Vision 2013: The Future of the University

Core Values and Purpose

Core values are deeply imbedded in the minds of the people who serve and sustain the institution and are readily recognized and appreciated by those served by the institution. Planning for the future depends on the affirmation of Minot State University's core values and core purpose. Minot State University is built upon a core commitment to students, learning, service, and cooperation, and upon a respect for people and place.



CORE VALUES

MSU cares deeply about its students, their learning, and their growth.

The university is proud of its values and long-term commitment to:

- Teaching and learning with excellence, integrity, and engagement
- Serving students and others respectfully and responsibly
- Following high ethical and moral principles
- Supporting the values of community and place, where all community members are valued and respected for their work, contributions, and freedom of expression.

CORE PURPOSE

Minot State University helps people appreciate life and learning and contribute meaningfully to the lives of others.



Mission

Minot State University is a regional, public institution located in the northwest region of North Dakota, serving students from Minot, the region, state, nation, and other countries. Undergraduate and graduate courses and programs are offered on campus and at a distance, through face-to-face, online, and alternative modes of delivery. Non-credit and professional training and experiences are offered to students and community members.

“EDUCATION either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.”

—PAULO FREIRE

Committed to high academic standards and professional support for students, the university is dedicated to student success, engaged and life-long learning, advancement of knowledge, effective student service, and development of students of character. These commitments are grounded in effective and motivated teaching and learning, scholarship, and service. General studies and a variety of programs are offered in the arts and sciences, business, and education and health sciences. A wide range of student support services is provided to on-campus and off-campus students.

The university values critical and creative thinking, vitality of communities and cultures, stewardship of place, and the multicultural and global environment. The university honors and supports the dignity and rights of diverse individuals, freedom of expression, academic freedom, ethical and moral behavior, integrity, fairness, and honesty.

Minot State University is first and foremost dedicated to the success of all students: their growth and development as educated citizens, their confidence, and their life-long devotion to the common good and the welfare of others.

Strategic Goal and Vision 2013

The university will serve students and others so that they can grow through continued learning, and make a difference in the world for others. To do that requires not only advancing knowledge but engaging and motivating others purposefully in the best of what we know for the betterment of others. Achieving this goal depends on a powerful and distinctive vision focused on service to students, place, and learning.

Goal

Minot State University will achieve national distinction as one of the premier public, regional universities in the “great” Great Plains.

Vision

The university of the future will achieve a national reputation as an institution of place and engagement that is dedicated to high-quality student learning within an inclusive community, to student growth, character, and success, to diversity and multiculturalism, to valuing and supporting faculty and staff, and to a life-long commitment to the common good.

Concomitantly, the MSU graduate of the future will be known for vision, creativity, compassion, tolerance, character, sound judgment, and commitment to the life of the community and the common good. Confident, insightful, and learned, and devoted to life-long learning, the MSU graduate will be well prepared for the future, and capable of realizing positive achievements and accomplishments in career, life, and service to others.



Realizing the Vision

To realize this vision and mission will depend on how well the university can take effective and appropriate actions to get there. Calls for a distinctive vision and mission, for engaged learning and a dynamic campus environment, and for the support of exceptional and dedicated faculty and staff within an engaged community are clearly heard and understood from many of the university's stakeholders. The need for an engaged campus community that values and honors diversity, multiculturalism, and inclusiveness is derived from a common understanding that the university must demonstrate its commitment to all people and cultures.



Equally critical for the university is the need to make sure its students achieve success as individuals, as contributing members of society, and in their future careers or endeavors. Moreover, their future success must be built upon their philosophical and practical devotion to the welfare of others and upon their continued interest in civic engagement and contribution.

To accomplish these goals, the university must remain strong, viable, competitive, and positioned for future growth. To get there, all of the university's personnel and its external stakeholders and friends must be dedicated to keeping the university strong, so that it can continue to dedicate itself to students' growth, welfare, and success.

The seven strategies that follow are primary means by which the university can reach its vision and goal. Priorities enumerated under each strategy define general directions. Specific action plans will be developed by the campus community for each priority. Strategic priorities, initiatives, and action plans will remain flexible and responsive for the campus to make progress in realizing the vision and achieving the goals.

STRATEGY ONE

Creating a Distinctive Mission Focused on Engagement and Place

Create and promote a distinctive mission, vision and premier institutional character based on curricula and services known for high quality, engagement, relationship to place, and the integration of knowledge, theory and practice.

Minot State University will create a new and distinctive mission and purpose focused on place and engagement, including distinctive niche programs, clear institutional focus, and a pervasive sense of empowerment and direction for the future. This distinctive mission will be grounded in the substance of its teaching, learning, and services, reflected in its academic and campus programs, and highlighted by special and reputable niche programs. The distinctive character of the university will garner a clear commitment and professional enthusiasm from faculty, staff, and students, and it will lead to a distinctive national reputation.

Priorities:

1. Schedule and host campus-wide forums to engage faculty, staff, and students and help them understand and realize this new vision.
2. Conduct institutional audits and assessments to determine the baseline of engagement and activities related to place.
3. Set goals and performance standards for achieving this vision of engagement and place.
4. Identify performance objectives to raise the university's academic program reputation and achieve the distinction as an institution that holds exceptionally high expectations for student learning, through a rigorous course of study, the merger of theory and practice, and objectives related to place.



STRATEGY TWO

Fostering Engaged Learning and Place for the Benefit of Students



Raise academic standards and expectations exceptionally high for quality teaching and engaged learning; create and sustain a dynamic place and engaged campus atmosphere and design conducive to high-quality learning and student support.

Minot State University will fulfill its primary obligation to students and learning by directing its efforts to identify high academic standards for teaching and learning. Attentive to the needs of individual students and defined outcomes for student success, the university will fulfill its distinctive mission, realize its vision, direct its resources, and support its personnel to motivate students and offer engaging, rigorous, and long-lasting learning.

Minot State University will further provide for an engaging campus atmosphere and student life that integrates living and learning, and support a well-conceived campus design and infrastructure for use by campus and community members. The atmosphere will be enhanced by effective, accessible, convenient, and engaging student services and activities and programs and activities appropriate for people both on and off campus.

Priorities:

1. Study current standards and performance results to determine benchmarks and specific objectives for high-quality teaching and learning; identify key indicators and examine current expectations and professional information to establish metrics for high academic performance and first-rate student support services.
2. Plan and develop a first-rate comprehensive program to support first-year students, their retention, and their success.
3. Enrich and strengthen teaching and learning with new and distinctive strategies for engaging students in the integration of theory, practice, and sense of place.

STRATEGY THREE

Valuing Faculty and Staff Within an Engaged Community

Recruit, retain, and support well-qualified faculty and staff as valued members of an inclusive community, dedicated and devoted to the institutional mission, to engaged learning, and to student support and success.

Minot State University will meet its high standards for learning and student success by valuing and supporting high quality faculty and staff who are devoted to student engagement, quality learning, and meaningful service. The university will establish a priority to recruit and retain highly-qualified, effective teachers and scholars, who are devoted to the institutional mission and philosophy that integrates theory, knowledge, and practice. The faculty will see its primary responsibility as service to and support of students and their learning, and will carry out its responsibilities collegially, with deep sense of a community. The university will further recruit and retain staff members who believe that all students can succeed and that student welfare and support are their primary responsibilities. Faculty and staff will be well qualified in their particular specialties and devoted to the view that all students can succeed.

Priorities:

1. Set high performance standards and expectations for the work of faculty and staff and their contributions to student success.
2. Achieve competitive compensation goals and packages for all employees.
3. Offer professional development support for faculty and staff (professional opportunities in a quality environment), to ensure their commitment to the mission and vision.
4. Recruit and retain well-qualified faculty, who pursue scholarship in their disciplines, demonstrate excellence in their teaching, and support the institutional goals for engaged learning and community service.



STRATEGY FOUR

Building a Diverse and Multicultural University Climate

Develop and support a diverse, multicultural, and inclusive campus community.

Minot State University will become a campus known for its dedication to cultural diversity and its effective support of multiculturalism apparent in its programming, services, curricula, activities, design, and philosophy of inclusiveness. The university will demonstrate to students and others its abiding respect for and engagement with all cultures, people, and points of view. All ethnic groups and cultures will be accorded respect and support for sharing their backgrounds and for equal participation in the life of the campus and the learning in its classrooms. This dedication to multiculturalism will be further demonstrated and supported through partnerships and outreach with Native American colleges and communities, other ethnic populations, other countries, and international university exchanges. Specific programs focused on accessibility and support for persons with disabilities will be strengthened and expanded. The internal support and the external outreach will offer the campus opportunities to demonstrate the university's strong commitment to diversity and multiculturalism.



Priorities:

1. Use the diversity climate survey results to identify weaknesses, strengths, and new initiatives to improve the multicultural climate and the diversity of the campus.
2. Strengthen the university's relationships with Native American colleges and peoples.
3. Internationalize the campus with increased international student recruitment and support, international faculty and student exchanges; increase the number of cooperative agreements with foreign institutions, and study abroad and study tour opportunities.
4. Nurture a campus atmosphere devoted to multiculturalism and inclusiveness; foster an atmosphere on campus that respects and honors diversity and respect for different points of view and different cultures with programs, activities, displays, and locations to honor and foster multiculturalism; continue to monitor and improve the university's plan for supporting and serving persons with disabilities.

STRATEGY FIVE

Focusing on Student Success and Future Achievements

Provide students with a strong and engaging academic experience for intellectual and personal growth, formation of sound character, and development of abilities and skills required for success in future careers and endeavors.

Minot State University will provide high-quality teaching and learning, and maintain a concerted focus on student character development and on the abilities necessary for making good judgments, thinking critically, and treating others respectfully. Student academic and personal development will offer the foundation to provide for life-long learning and professional success. In this way the university will build and strengthen student abilities required for leading a meaningful and rewarding life, achieving professional success, performing responsibly and effectively in any chosen career, and contributing to the common good.

Priorities:

1. Develop an effective, proactive advising system that will provide students appropriate guidance in achieving success in their studies and in their future career choices.
2. Expand and improve the university's career counseling and training; gain a reputation for placement and effective preparation; expand and improve the university's internship program.
3. Develop methods to emphasize ways to teach, inspire, and model for students how to acquire the knowledge as well as the critical thinking, problem solving, communication, life skills, and people skills necessary for a successful and meaningful career, continuation in graduate school, and the pursuit of other professional directions.
4. Publish and prominently post clear standards and expectations for students' ethical and moral behavior in the classroom, on the campus, and in the community.

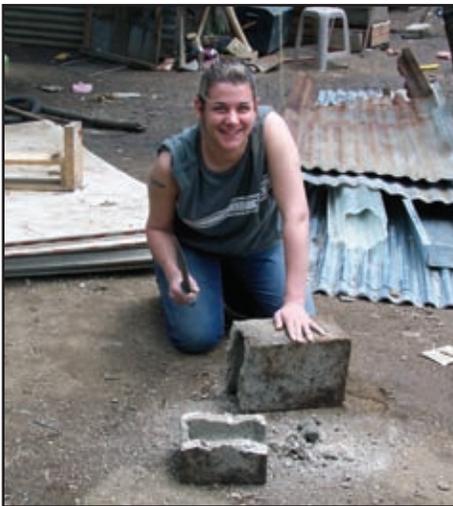


STRATEGY SIX

Creating a Commitment to Civic Engagement, Service, and the Common Good



Enhance and strengthen the university's mission and purview to include civic engagement, experiential learning, and activities focused on collaboration, partnerships, community relations and involvement; complementing the institution's educational function through a concerted and deliberate effort to connect higher education and common good.



Minot State University will complement the high expectations for learning and success through civic engagement activities, field-based and experiential learning, and other forms of practical application of theoretical and factual knowledge. In this way, learning will be connected to practical applications and fostered through a commitment to the common good. Minot State University will become a campus known for its dedication to helping students understand the value of providing meaningful service for the welfare of others, participating in civic engagement efforts, and working as stewards of place and community. This strategy presupposes the primary educational responsibility to develop citizens and individuals knowledgeable and skilled in serving and helping others.

Priorities:

1. Implement a variety of opportunities for civic engagement training and experience in general education and majors through service learning initiatives, activities associated with the American Democracy Project, internships, and other means. Provide faculty and staff professional development support for this new expectation.
2. Develop support to promote and stimulate civic learning and service learning.
3. Conduct an analysis of the extent to which the university currently participates in civic engagement activities, and use these data as a benchmark for future assessment.
4. Strengthen and expand community relationships and partnerships with educational organizations, businesses, government agencies, and others. Continue to pursue new opportunities for collaboration with MSU-Bottineau.

STRATEGY SEVEN

Ensuring Future Institutional Viability, Vitality, and Growth

Ensure MSU's future viability, the vitality of its campus proper, and its success and competitiveness

Minot State University must remain focused on institutional growth, flexibility, and support. Working together, the university's faculty and staff will effectively and prudently manage its resources, seek other revenue funds, and remain competitive in student recruitment, securing grants, and engaging in partnerships for mutual benefit. The university will also market itself exceptionally well to a national and international audience, revealing the distinctiveness of the vision and mission, the quality of its programs, and the extent of its accomplishments and achievements. MSU will remain attentive to a campus master plan focused on learning and scholarship. It will maintain a well-landscaped and beautiful campus that is inviting and accessible and that provides a satisfying and engaging experience for students, employees and members of the public, including those with disabilities. Well-designed, well-maintained, and environmentally-friendly buildings will support effective learning and a collegial and satisfying environment and community interaction.

Priorities:

1. Engage in institutional research and assessment to set key benchmarks and indicators; monitor progress in reaching strategic goals and meeting high expectations and standards of performance.
2. Develop and support a strong and responsive integrated marketing program and plan to significantly increase the visibility and reputation of Minot State University on local, regional, and national levels.
3. Create a highly effective and responsive recruitment and retention service in order to increase enrollments strategically and to ensure campus vitality and focus on mission and vision.
4. Ensure the university's financial viability through resource management and development; pursue increased and new revenue sources; and fundraising.
5. Complete the new campus master plan and set objectives for completion and funding.





From the outset, this planning process has involved the entire campus community and other critical stakeholders in the community and region. The work involved critical and honest thought, and it revealed scenarios devised by a great many people about an ideal future for the institution. This plan has been developed with the input of many and will be implemented by many. Implementation of the plan is not the responsibility of a few; it depends on the active involvement of everyone. The plan and its various parts, from the action plans, to the strategies and priorities, to the goal and vision, offer direction and define general guidelines. The plan and its respective parts does not offer guarantees, nor do they imply assurances. Instead, the plan is a document describing possibilities and opportunities.

The vision and plan will succeed or fail based on the extent to which faculty, staff, and students, as well as departments, colleges, programs, projects, and other areas work to align their operations and planning with the direction set by the institutional plan. Successful implementation of this plan will depend on all faculty and staff and other stakeholders assuming responsibility and contributing to its advancement.

- Action teams which will identify, define, and focus on the priorities for each strategy. These teams will work directly on key action plans for each of those annual priority items. Those priority initiatives will be aligned with the cornerstone goals and thus will provide a clear link between the university's plan and the Roundtable initiative.
- Major administrative units and areas on campus—academic and non-academic (e.g., those areas represented in the University Cabinet)—will develop their own strategic plans and work to align them with the vision, goal, and strategies of the institutional plan. The first year of implementation will be devoted to development of plans and review of ways to align the unit plan and the institutional plan.

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- The campus will embark initially on a review of the university's basic infrastructure and processes—those processes used for recruitment, professional development, compensation, and evaluation. This review will be guided by a need to align the vision and goals of the plan with the processes the university follows in hiring and evaluating personnel. It is important that the hiring processes and the evaluation processes reflect the institutional priorities and vision. Student recruitment and marketing will involve a careful review and revision to reflect the goals of the plan.
 - The plan will be advanced by communicating regularly, publicizing the goals and objectives, and reporting on the progress and achievements.
 - The Faculty Senate, the Staff Senate, the Student Association, the University Cabinet, the Alumni Board, and the Board of Regents will be consulted frequently and encouraged to identify key priority initiatives in the plan and relevance to their constituencies.
 - The Planning and Budgeting Council will coordinate these processes, communicate with the campus, seek reports on progress, monitor the progress on the plan, and publicize the results.
 - Each administrative and governance unit will be asked to begin processes of setting goals and identifying action plans, coordinating recruitment criteria and evaluation rubrics, in concert with the institutional vision. Supervisors, directors, and administrators will be responsible for seeing that a mission and specific purposes for the individual unit are defined and shared with all members of the unit.
 - Annual goals and action plans for the unit and for the faculty and staff within the unit will be developed to align with the institutional vision and mission. Annual reports and annual evaluations should include specific documentation showing the extent to which the goals and plans have been accomplished.





Relationship to SBHE Plan and Roundtable Goals

In the first year of each two-year cycle, the institution will identify specific action plans in the strategic plan that will fulfill each of the Cornerstone goals. Identified as two-year projects to align with the schedule of the strategic plan, the action plans will be assessed and reported at the end of the first year, with possible continuance into the second year of the cycle. Priority items for each strategy will be aligned with the six Cornerstone goals: Economic Development, Education Excellence, Flexible and Responsive System, Accessible System, Funding and Rewards, and Sustaining the Vision.

Review and Revision Schedule

Bi-annual review and evaluation will be coordinated by the Planning and Budgeting Council and distributed to the campus. The first year of the two-year cycle, which parallels the legislative biennium, will be devoted to definition of action plans. The second year will be devoted to a review of the results of the action plans and the revision of the strategic plan. The revision will lead to publication and distribution of the results and the new initiatives. The campus focus will be on action plans, measurement, and review in the second year of each biennium. An annual report and review of data will be completed at the end of the second year of the cycle. The first year of each two-year cycle will begin in the fall with review by the Planning and Budgeting Council of the vision, values, strategies, priorities, and action plans; examination of the assessments of accomplishments, and communication of results to campus for feedback and discussion and revisions of plan. In the spring semester of the second year revisions and drafting will occur, with presentations made to senates, boards, Board of Regents strategic planning subgroup, followed by the full board; and other groups. At the beginning of the next two-year cycle, the revised plan and priorities will be shared with the campus and distributed widely.



Assessment and Measurement

Each of the approved action plans for the institutional strategic plan will include brief and specific steps to accomplish the governing strategy and priorities. Each action plan will include a list of definite tasks to be completed, a specified timeline and completion date, an individual and/or group assigned to complete the task, and specific indicators or metrics that will show the completion. Responsible individuals are to monitor completion and provide a final report showing the results.

Financing the Plan and Action Plans

The plan, its strategies, priorities, objectives, and action steps will be used as the center-piece for future action and budgeting. Further, the plan will provide the campus with the rationale and specific direction for fundraising, grant writing, financial decisions, allocations, and legislative budget proposals. State, national, and private grants, budget allocations, and institutional fundraising will be proposed with the plan and its initiatives in mind.

Minot State University's Advancement Office and Alumni Services will use the strategic plan as the primary document for annual fundraising and for a major comprehensive capital campaign focused on the university's Centennial in 2013. Key initiatives of the strategic plan and the campus master plan will provide strong cases for major contributions to the campaign.

The Planning and Budgeting Council, by virtue of its charge and name, is responsible for connecting budgeting priorities to the planning priorities of the university. Campus open forums will continue to be held to discuss how the strategic plan and funding priorities are aligned.

“EDUCATION does not mean teaching people what they do not know. Rather, education is a painful, continued and difficult work to be done by kindness, by watching, by warning, by precepts, and by praise, but above all—by example.”

—JOHN RUSKIN

Communication

A draft of the plan was distributed to all faculty, staff, and student leaders at the campus open meeting at the beginning of the fall semester 2006. The finished document includes all the background material, the mission, vision, and strategies. The unabridged version will provide the campus a “working” plan.

This published document will be distributed to other stakeholders, such as selected alumni, the Board of Regents, and other external constituencies. At that time, explanations will be provided about the plan, questions solicited and answered, and general directions provided as to how the plan will be implemented.

The vision, goal, and strategies will be communicated to faculty, staff, students and other stakeholders through a variety of communications and publications. The goal of these communications will be to make sure that the plan, its rationale, and its implementation strategies are well understood and used.



Conclusion

In view of the study of the external and internal environments, a compelling case can be made to support a bold vision for the future for Minot State University. The vision depends on the university building on its documented strengths and responding directly and effectively to the challenges, threats, and weaknesses. The future of Minot State University is not a future of business as usual, of holding on to the status quo, or resisting changes necessary for continued growth and effectiveness as a regional institution. The future will not be determined by rationalizing that public support will keep us out of trouble, or merely reacting quickly to changes and pressures.

This vision depends on a unity of purpose and a commitment by all faculty and staff to think and act strategically and proactively. In the next 10 to 15 years and beyond, educational institutions must make significant changes to remain viable and competitive. Those regional institutions that are unable to make those changes or to plan strategically and responsibly will continue to lose enrollments, public support, revenues, and the abilities to serve its students and the society effectively. Minot State University will not be one of those institutions. Minot State University instead will be a university with national distinction as one of the premier public, regional universities in the “great” Great Plains, with the ability to contribute meaningfully to students and the common good.



Appendix

The Present and Future

PERSPECTIVES OF OUR INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CONSTITUENTS

- Minot State University is perceived as a supportive community, safe, caring, flexible, and interested in individuals, not numbers. One-on-one work with professors is seen as an advantage, as are the small size of classes and the competitive tuition rates. The campus is respected for its positive ambience—its cleanliness, beauty, and utility.
- The university's mission or purpose is not well understood or easily articulated. Constituents, however, provided many suggestions, such as the need for a new and distinctive mission and vision.
- Participants pointed to a number of institutional strengths related to programs, faculty, and facilities. Dedicated faculty who are committed to students, comprised of people who are knowledgeable, approachable, and willing to participate in the community, was identified as a notable strength of the university.
- Internal issues were cited as predominant weaknesses of the university. Observers described the university as a closed campus, requiring improved customer service accessibility. The lack of marketing was cited as a serious weakness needing to be addressed in both the short term and the long term. Others expressed criticisms of campus life, its limited activities, and restricted hours of campus operation. Faculty members expressed concern about insufficient opportunities for students to interact and participate in campus life. Faculty noted that students' lack of involvement is commonly due to job and family conflicts. Concern was repeatedly expressed that students feel disconnected on campus. The lack of internships and job opportunities were cited as a weakness, resulting in an additional disconnect with the community and the surrounding area.

About the Future: Recommendations, Threats, and Predictions

- The most common and pressing recommendations for the future referred to the need for improvements in campus infrastructure, marketing and communications, student service and support, and recruitment and retention.
- Concern was expressed about the need to improve the university identity and status.
- Constituents expressed the need for improved housing, student services, and student support.
- Others pointed to the need for more support for faculty and staff, improved campus life, and a system to evaluate and assess needs. The evaluation of current programs and assessment of student and societal needs, based on broad input from many stakeholders, were recommended as important means to identifying new and competitive programs and to determining how current programs can be improved. Some programs were perceived to be stagnant and in need of careful review. Through such assessments and evaluations, new niches, centers, and distinctive programs could be identified and current programs strengthened to enhance the university's identity, status, and reputation.

- Participants identified two notable threats to MSU, one dealing with internal issues, and the other funding and legislative support. The internal issues referred to a lack of pride, lack of team playing, resistance to change, and lack of campus focus. The lack of a clear sense of the university's mission or purpose contributed to differing attitudes about the university's statewide image.
- Inadequate financial support from the state legislature, rising tuition, low faculty salaries, and restrictive budgets were often cited as significant threats. External threats, such as the state demographics, declining population, the economy, and status of the Minot Air Force Base were also noted.
- A variety of predictions for MSU's future were offered. The university will be a regional center of learning, a center of culture, and a repository of history, with an extended influence throughout the region. There will be greater interaction among students and faculty, with other schools in the region and with the community at large. If the university can respond to the threats, optimistic predictions envisioned the campus will enroll 6,500 students (4,500 on campus and at remote location centers; 2,000 online). There will be stepped-up marketing and recruitment, including enrollments beyond North Dakota, with many students from Canada and other countries. As a result, there will be more diverse student and faculty populations. Graduate enrollments will be significantly increased. There will be more centers of excellence programs on campus, and the Rural Crime and Justice Center (RCJC) and the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities (NDCPD) will continue to garner national recognition. The university's endowment will grow to \$50 million as a result of increased fundraising. In short, Minot State University will enjoy a continuing pattern of slow, steady growth. There will be greater pride and awareness of MSU outside the campus. Continuing competition among the state, regional, and national institutions of higher learning will keep Minot State University focused on quality improvement and growth, and the identification of several niches, which will affect the definition of MSU's role and its mission.

Indicators in the External Environment

THE PRESENT:

- Declining financial support for higher education is one of the most serious threats to colleges and universities.
- Declines in the populations of rural North Dakota communities have resulted in severe challenges for colleges and universities to recruit students from other areas and markets. The prediction that by 2017 the state will graduate 30 percent fewer high school students has raised a serious concern for colleges and universities.
- A college degree is touted as essential for financial security and future career success. The financial advantages of earning a college degree are well documented and provide prospective students a compelling reason to go to college directly out of high school or to enroll in college later in life.
- College students are spending an inordinate amount of their time working at jobs while attending college.

- A rapidly growing consumer perspective—find the best deal, with the best quality, at the best price, with the most convenience—is forcing colleges and universities to make significant changes to their operations. Unfortunately, that consumer perspective fosters, for some, an expectation of an “easier” and less demanding route to a degree. That expectation as well puts further pressures on colleges and universities to compete in an environment in which other institutions market accelerated and shortened paths to degrees.
- Advances in technology and the pervasive consumerism affecting people of all ages have made online courses and programs especially attractive as an alternative to courses offered on campus. Technology and consumer pressures will continue to force change in the way colleges and universities, especially regional public institutions, operate and offer teaching and learning opportunities.
- In this environment, with the demographic and population changes, an increasing number of low-income and culturally diverse students are seeking access to colleges. New forms of course and program delivery, and increased pressures for accessibility and accountability are compelling institutions to prove that students are satisfied consumers. The pressures for accountability and accessibility will continue to affect the way colleges and universities operate and respond to external dictates and inquiries.
- Questions are frequently raised about the effectiveness of K-12 schools in preparing students for college. It is often asked whether the increasing numbers of college-educated people are capable of performing at a level expected from college-educated adults.

THE FUTURE

- Financial pressures and the heightened consumerist attitude on the part of students will continue to test the abilities of colleges and universities to provide high quality teaching and learning. The challenge for Minot State University and other public institutions in the Great Plains is to determine how to remain financially viable without compromising quality or without losing sight of the fact that they are working with students, one at a time.
- Remaining viable and keeping focus on student growth and success requires effective quality and persistent strategic planning. Reactionary thinking and acting will not lead to effective solutions in the same way that conscientious planning will lead to sustainable and long-term results. In this context, strategic planning, involving many individuals who are well informed about external and internal facts and figures, is particularly important for Minot State University.
- It is critical that the university contemplates its future and endeavors to make appropriate adjustments to its operations in response to the many pressures and opportunities in the higher-education environment, such as:
 - ***Multiculturalism***
Opportunities for attracting international students and for United States students to study abroad are many. Despite international tensions and conflicts, U.S. and international institutions are forming partnerships and exchanges. The potential for improving diversity on college and university campuses

has never been greater, with a growing number of culturally diverse populations entering higher education. Cultural diversity on college campuses, especially on those that are predominantly Caucasian, will continue to add a new and rich multicultural atmosphere in which students can appreciate and honor different cultures, backgrounds, and ideas.

■ ***Civic Engagement***

Educational organizations have been instrumental in encouraging and supporting the engagement of colleges and universities in the civic welfare of society. Institutional involvement in civic activities enriches curricula, offers students new and motivating learning experiences, provides them most-needed civic skills, and contributes to the advancement and improvement of society. Keeping the vision on the common good and the finer aspects of our culture and life will necessarily allow students to understand the values of civic engagement, helping others, volunteering, working as stewards to protect our environment, and appreciating and contributing to our local and global place. Becoming a good citizen, contributing meaningfully to society, and leading a purposeful and satisfying life remain high and realistic ideals for education

■ ***Assessment***

The research on the integration of online and in-class activities is revealing new approaches to integrating new forms of instruction in exciting and effective learning environments. The ever-present call for academic assessment, when understood as a valuable means of studying and understanding teaching and learning in the classroom, has led to effective initiatives to rethink and improve curriculum.

■ ***Renewed Cause for Enhanced Learning***

Opportunities for continuing to provide students with new knowledge, the best of culture, and valuable skills are more prevalent now than ever before. With heightened consumerism, a college and university education is especially essential for providing students the skills necessary for making good judgments, acting morally and ethically, being able to recognize and avoid manipulation, and understanding how to see beyond the prevalent call for material goods. The justifications for appreciating culture and the finer features of life and contributing meaningfully as informed citizens to the common good are being espoused and recognized as compelling causes for higher education.

■ ***Retention***

In a 2005 study (*Student Success in State Colleges and Universities*, AASCU, September 2005), 12 state colleges and universities, known for their favorable retention and graduation rates, were examined to determine why they enjoyed such a high level of student success. The study identified three characteristics in these colleges' cultures that are common and distinguishable: 1) there is a "pervasive attitude that all students can succeed, reinforced by a wider culture that is not content to rest on past success"; 2) there is "a sense of inclusiveness on the part of all members of the campus community frequently characterized as a 'family'"; and 3) "there is a strongly held sense of institutional mission that recognized the campus as 'distinctive' or 'special'" (9).

With Minot State University's student-centered mission and its continued interest in supporting students and improving retention, the results of this study are informative for the university's strategic planning initiatives. The opportunities for Minot State University are 1) to strive to support a pervasive attitude that all students can succeed, 2) that the campus itself will enjoy a sense of inclusiveness, and 3) that it will define and support a distinctive mission and vision.

Glossary

Definitions: (from Joel Lapin, Review of Literature on Strategic Planning, unpublished report, Baltimore, Maryland, 1999)

Mission

A general statement describing the current purposes and scope of responsibilities of an organization.

Vision

“A realistic, credible, attractive future for an organization. Visions are about possibilities, about desired futures. Simply, a vision is an ideal and unique image of the future.”
(Joel Lapin, 1999)

Goal

“A broad statement that describes ultimate ends and achievements for an organization and provides a general focus for organization action.” (Joel Lapin, 1999)

Strategies

General descriptions of the broad direction and steps an institution must take to reach its future goal or vision.

Priorities

General directions and steps to fulfill a strategy. These are steps an institution must take first, in a sequence of stages, to fulfill the strategy and eventually the institutional goal. Usually priorities take precedence over initiatives and are to be completed in the immediate year. However, the plan must remain flexible enough to reorder and revise priorities in response to current and future needs.

Initiatives

Initiatives are the same as priorities but do not assume the immediate status of a priority. The initiatives remain general in nature and describe essential steps to fulfill a strategy.

Core Values

“(V)alues that are widely understood, publicly endorsed and consistently acted upon by the organization and each of its members.” (Charles Schwahn and William Spady, 1998)

Action Plans

A specific action necessary to fulfill a priority or initiative completely or in part. These plans describe specific and realistic actions that identify what outcome will be accomplished, when it will be accomplished, who will accomplish it, what the anticipated costs will be, and what measures will be defined to understand if the plan is accomplished.

Core Purpose

The essential reason for the existence of an institution and the work of its people. It is not a general mission statement, but a statement that captures the inherent and driving reason for the work of an institution and all of its stakeholders.

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