

**Chancellor's Exploratory Group on Strategic Planning
Final Report
May 31, 2019**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On February 5, 2019, Chancellor Sandeen charged a short-term work group to define potential processes by which UAA will conduct strategic planning. Membership included faculty, staff, and administrators from across the Cabinet areas, as well as representation from the community campuses.

CHANCELLOR'S CHARGE

Background

UAA's current strategic plan, *UAA 2020*, will expire in one year. At the same time, UAA is beginning its next seven-year reaccreditation cycle with NWCCU. In addition, UAA will be developing major themes for its comprehensive campaign. This is an opportune time for the university and communities connected to it to align these planning activities and to envision a robust future for UAA.

Purpose and Deliverable

The purpose of this group is to define potential processes by which UAA will conduct a broad based strategic planning process. This group is not asked to develop the strategic plan, but rather to help us think about various ways we can go about our next cycle of planning and how the strategic plan, core themes for accreditation, and campaign themes might align and support each other. Recommendations are due to me (Chancellor Sandeen) by May 31, 2019. As with other groups we will share your final report throughout the UAA community in the spirit of transparency and to obtain broad input.

Some General Areas Initially Suggested by the Chancellor for Exploration:

- Length of our next planning cycle
- Degree to which the strategic plan and core themes are developed together and process and timeline for doing so
- Degree to which the strategic plan should or could align with fundraising campaign themes
- Articulate the similarities, differences, and alignment of our strategic plan, core themes, and campaign themes
- Description and critique of the processes used to develop *UAA 2017* and *UAA 2020* as well as processes used by other peer institutions
- Should we engage a consultant to assist us in our planning efforts or do we have internal resources to complete the plan?
- Other issues as identified by the group

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Within two months of the Chancellor's charge, the state's growing fiscal uncertainty necessitated a decision either to continue this exploratory group's immediate work, or to delay until fall 2019. Given the need to press forward with accreditation tasks, campaign themes, and other planning exercises, this group elected to complete its work by May 31, 2019.

Therefore, this exploratory group, following its research and deliberations, prepared the following set of recommendations. This set of high-level recommendations is more fully discussed at the end of the accompanying report.

- **Build on UAA's Strengths.** NWCCU recognized UAA for its "inclusive planning process for *UAA 2020*."
- **Develop a plan with a five-year horizon** that allows for adaptation along the way.
- **Develop a plan with a small set of strategic priorities** supported by a few, concrete, measurable and realistic goals.
- **Create and sustain alignment of the strategic planning, accreditation, and campaign theme processes** and integrate other planning foci such as the *Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan*, *Strategic Enrollment Plan*, and the *Master Plan*.
- **Conduct a robust pre-planning process** that results in useful data and clear guidance for the planning process.
- **Engage a planning team** to facilitate a timely, responsive, data-informed planning process with opportunities for input and feedback from a variety of internal and external stakeholders.
- **Use a consultant** (internal or external) to develop a broad communication and engagement plan.
- **Require an implementation plan** that integrates a regular cycle of evaluation and improvement, uses existing or develops necessary structures and processes, connects decision-making and resource allocation with the strategic plan, and allows for redirection along the way.

FINAL REPORT OF THE CHANCELLOR'S STRATEGIC PLANNING EXPLORATORY GROUP

Over the course of the spring semester, the Exploratory Group met 13 times, with additional individual and small group assignments. To respond to the specific questions posed by the Chancellor, the group reviewed strategic planning literature, analyzed UAA's previous two strategic planning processes, researched strategic planning at other institutions, and identified effective practices. In the end, the group arrived at a set of recommendations that respect the culture of the institution and prioritize an inclusive and transparent, yet timely, process. At the same time, the recommendations require vision, leadership and ongoing engagement of the Chancellor and her Cabinet.

As originally charged, the Exploratory Group membership crossed all major leadership areas of the university and included Sharon Chamard, Associate Professor of Justice (co-chair); Scott Downing, Associate Professor of English; Larry Morris Foster, Professor of Mathematics; Erin Holmes, Associate Vice Provost, Institutional Research; Brian Ibsen, Director, Philanthropy; Susan Kalina, Vice Provost, Academic Affairs (co-chair); Gokhan Karahan, Associate Professor of Accounting and Finance; Monica Kane, Chief of Staff and Contract Administrator, Administrative Services; Theresa Lyons, Executive Director, Student Outreach and Transition; Shayne Nuesca, Social Media Specialist, University Advancement; Dan O'Connor, Campus Director, Prince William Sound College; LuAnn Piccard, Associate Professor of Project Management; and Denise Runge, Dean, Community and Technical College. The original membership also included an alumni representative.

This report addresses the general areas noted in the Chancellor's charge. Additional and supporting documentation is archived for future reference and use by the strategic planning team.

DEGREE TO WHICH THE STRATEGIC PLAN AND CORE THEMES ARE DEVELOPED TOGETHER AND PROCESS AND TIMELINE FOR DOING SO

As UAA moves into its next seven-year reaffirmation cycle with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), the Commission itself is revising its standards and processes. NWCCU will no longer require core themes as a means to determine mission fulfillment. In line with other regional accreditors and emerging national practice, the draft revised standards focus on mission fulfillment primarily through the lens of student learning and student achievement. While student learning will continue to be assessed within courses, programs, and degrees, a major shift in the draft standards is the additional focus on core competencies that apply to all graduates, regardless of degree level. Institutions will determine a set of core competencies and the means of assessing student achievement of these competencies, using national best practices and framework(s) for these decisions. Institutions will also be required to report on student achievement data, such as retention and graduation rates, and to identify a set of metrics for student success.

To meet the March 2020 NWCCU Mission Fulfillment report deadline, UAA must determine its institutional assessment plan, including a set of core competencies and student achievement metrics, by the end of fall 2019, to be finalized by Cabinet in early spring 2020.

This group urges that the core competencies, student achievement data and selected metrics align with and contribute to meeting the goals and outcomes of the new strategic plan. We recommend that common metrics be used by both the strategic plan and accreditation. We do not recommend that the accreditation metrics encompass the entirety of the strategic plan, but that they contribute to those parts of the strategic plan that focus on student learning and student achievement. It is important to note that the next accreditation cycle has already begun and decisions must be made about the core competencies and student achievement metrics, regardless of the strategic planning effort.

To realize alignment, the Annual Academic Assessment Seminar on September 13, 2019 could kick off the broad and inclusive processes for both accreditation and strategic planning. These processes should be complementary and coordinated and, to the extent possible, result in shared metrics, and assessment and improvement processes in areas where there is overlap between the two plans. The accreditation metrics for core competencies and student achievement should align with the goals of the strategic plan and contribute to meeting those goals. This group proposes that UAA aim to submit the final strategic plan for approval at the June 2020 Board of Regents meeting.

Table 1 outlines a recommended process and timeline. To ensure faculty representation, attention must be paid to appropriate workload adjustments.

Table 1: Strategic Planning and Accreditation Processes and Timelines

Date	Strategic Planning Process	Accreditation Process
Summer 2019	Pre-planning preparation: internal and external scan; progress on <i>UAA 2020</i> ; draft guidance	Pre-planning by accreditation metrics team
August 15, 2019	Chancellor call for membership	
September 1, 2019	Chancellor charges strategic planning group Strategic planning group gets organized, reviews the pre-planning information, lays out its process Consultant helps produce broad communication and engagement plan	Provost charges accreditation steering committee Consultant helps produce broad communication and engagement plan

Date	Strategic Planning Process	Accreditation Process
September 13, 2019	Annual Academic Assessment Seminar: Keynote “Shifting from Core Themes to Core Competencies – What This Means for the Institution”	Annual Academic Assessment Seminar: Keynote “Shifting from Core Themes to Core Competencies – What This Means for the Institution”
September 13, 2019 - November 15, 2019	Information gathering stage	Develop core competencies and student achievement metrics
November 15, 2019 - December 1, 2019	Continue information gathering stage; early stages of drafting	Continue to develop core competencies and student achievement metrics
December 1, 2019	Continue information gathering stage; early stages of drafting	Submit core competencies and student achievement metrics to Cabinet
December 15, 2019	Drafting and feedback	Cabinet finalizes core competencies and student achievement metrics
December 15, 2019 - January 15, 2020	Continue drafting and feedback	Writing
January 15, 2020 - February 15, 2020	Continue drafting and feedback	Feedback
March 2020	Continue drafting and feedback	Finalize and submit report
April 2020	Finalize	
May 2020	Submit for UA Academic Council review and BOR review	
June 2020	BOR review and approval	
July - September 2020	Roll out; communication and implementation; evaluation and improvement cycle; likely venues: Fall Convocation, College-wide meetings, governance meetings, Annual Academic Assessment Seminar	Roll out; communication and implementation; evaluation and improvement cycle; likely venues: Fall Convocation, College-wide meetings, governance meetings, Annual Academic Assessment Seminar

DEGREE TO WHICH THE STRATEGIC PLAN SHOULD OR COULD ALIGN WITH FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN THEMES

In November 2018, the Regents identified four overarching goals for the campaign. These goals are further defined by the UA System, in Table 2. The Regents’ goals are intentionally broad, allowing each university to align its fundraising efforts with its strategic plan. As the campaign planning develops further on the institutional level, UAA must identify “distinct, concrete initiatives and projects that attract principal and major gifts,” (EAB, *Strategic Plans Inadequate*

for Fundraising: What Got Us Here Won't Get Us There). These initiatives and projects should tie directly to the objectives and goals of UAA's strategic plan and contribute to achieving them. With alignment between the strategic plan, accreditation process, and the campaign, the campaign can be used dynamically as a means to drive private support towards initiatives that move the university thoughtfully in the right directions.

Table 2: UA Campaign Themes Crosswalk with Regents' Priorities¹

Campaign Themes = Alaska's Greatest Needs	Regents' Priorities
Culture of Education: Accessible and Equitable, Focused on Student Success	Increase degree attainment.
Workforce: Adaptive, Focused on High Need Sectors	Provide Alaska's skilled workforce.
Research Relevant to Alaska and the Arctic Region: Solving Real-world Challenges	Grow our world class research.
Grow and Diversify Our Economy: Expanding Alaska's Knowledge Base	Contribute to a more diversified economy.

ARTICULATE THE SIMILARITIES, DIFFERENCES, AND ALIGNMENT OF OUR STRATEGIC PLAN, CORE THEMES, AND CAMPAIGN THEMES

Using the current strategic plan *UAA 2020*, the draft revised NWCCU accreditation standards, and the UA campaign themes, Table 3 demonstrates what alignment might look like. It also demonstrates how UAA's processes can generally align with the broad goals of the UA System *UA 2025*.

While *UAA 2020* did not directly address research, scholarship and creative activity, these are implicit in the first goal, "Advance the culture of institutional excellence that inspires and enables students, faculty, and staff success." In order to create better alignment moving forward, this group recommends that UAA's next strategic plan explicitly address the institution's approach to research, scholarship and creative activity.

Table 3: Example Alignment of Strategic Plan, Accreditation and Campaign Themes

Strategic Plan 2020	Accreditation	Campaign Themes	UA 2025
Advance the culture of institutional excellence that inspires and enables students, faculty, and staff success.	Student Learning	Research Relevant to Alaska and the Arctic Region: Solving Real-world Challenges	Grow our world class research.

¹ PowerPoint provided by Megan Riebe, Executive Director, UA Foundation & Associate Vice President of Development, UA System

Strategic Plan 2020	Accreditation	Campaign Themes	UA 2025
		Grow and Diversify Our Economy: Expanding Alaska’s Knowledge Base	Contribute to Alaska’s economic development.
Improve student persistence and completion of their educational goals.	Student Achievement/ Student Success	Culture of Education: Accessible and Equitable, Focused on Student Success	Increase degree attainment.
Graduate more students to fill Alaska’s needs.	Student Achievement/ Student Success	Workforce: Adaptive, Focused on High Need Sectors	Provide Alaska’s skilled workforce.

DESCRIPTION AND CRITIQUE OF PAST UAA STRATEGIC PLANNING

UAA 2017

Description: The planning process for *UAA 2017* spanned two years. A large Strategic Planning Steering Committee oversaw the process and reported directly to the Planning and Budget Advisory Committee (PBAC), which was co-chaired by the Provost and the Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services. Professor Will Jacobs, Professor Emeritus and former Vice Provost, was hired to lead and facilitate the planning process with administrative support from the Provost’s Office. External consultants were used at the very beginning of the process. Phase I lasted nine months, merged pre-planning and data gathering, included more than 40 forums and input venues, and resulted in an Interim Strategic Guidance with five priority areas. The interim guidance served as the foundation for the final strategic plan and for interim decision-making. Phase II had the following goals: finalize the strategic plan; review, revise and align institutional and unit plans to the strategic plan; prepare a financial plan; and organize for implementation that ensures a connection between planning and key decision making.

Strengths: The process was led by a stable, respected and experienced planning team. It was holistic in concept and took into consideration all aspects needed to ensure successful implementation, e.g., incorporating broad participation, integrating other plans, establishing a decision-making structure, and developing a financial plan to support implementation. The resulting plan aligned with the UA System plan *UA 2009*, as well as allowed for local flexibility. *UAA 2017* was well understood by the university community and was built into ongoing processes, e.g., new academic program proposals. Progress on select metrics was reported on in the *Performance Report*. Finally, the accreditation core themes were drawn from the strategic plan.

Opportunities for Improvement: The priority areas were all-encompassing and without ranking by relative importance, making it difficult to use the plan to drive priorities in decision-making. Implementation was facilitated by an annual Guidance Document, developed by the

Chancellor's Cabinet in response to the current environment. Although the vision for strategic planning was all encompassing, from planning to implementation to improvement, the structures and processes that supported closing the loop eventually faded and have not continued into *UAA 2020* implementation. Broad priority areas worked well for the time, but might not be as effective given the current budget situation, as well as the heightened focus on student success. Finally, a plan for communication throughout the planning and implementation process, as well as a plan for visualization of the data throughout should be implemented alongside the plan.

Lessons Learned

1. Decide early on whether the plan will be goal driven or priority managed.
2. Decide early on whether the plan will focus on the institution's strengths or weaknesses, or try to balance both.
3. Employ a mechanism for an experienced team to engage an inclusive process across the institution.
4. Free up or buy out the team leader from other competing tasks and responsibilities.
5. Develop and actuate an implementation plan.
6. Integrate a mechanism for adjusting the plan's priorities over time, i.e., real-time plan management.
7. Incorporate a mechanism for keeping the plan "alive," i.e., there needs to be an ongoing communication/PR plan for the lifespan of the plan.

UAA 2020

With the expiration of *UAA 2017*, UAA created a new strategic plan, *UAA 2020*. Recognizing a new, more fiscally-constrained operating environment in the state of Alaska and its impact on UAA, this plan has a shorter timeframe and a reduced set of priorities. *UAA 2020* keeps the current mission and sharpens its focus on student success.

Description: The planning process for *UAA 2020* spanned six months. A planning team was initiated by the Dean of the College of Business and Public Policy, who had extensive planning experience, included a number of individual working subcommittees (Executive Planning Committee, Communications Planning Team, Goal Specification and Development Planning Team, and Data Collection Planning Team). A steering committee of nine people, including faculty members, college deans, and senior administrators, was established to coordinate the work of the planning team and its subcommittees and to provide input to the Chancellor's Cabinet. Support for the strategic planning process was provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The planning process integrated with the accreditation effort, using the self-study kick off and core theme open forums, and it also included a campus-wide online survey, nine focus groups, and a meeting of 75 campus leaders. An external consultant was used for the kick off and to facilitate the nine focus groups. A website was established to communicate the status of *UAA 2020*. Final decisions were made by the Chancellor's Cabinet.

Implementation of the student success aspects of the plan included the creation of the new Vice Provost for Student Success position and the Student Success Advisory Committee. A set of leading indicators were identified to assess progress against the goals with semester reporting. Each organizational unit was asked to develop its own set of SMART (Specific, Measurable, Assignable, Realistic, and Time-bound) objectives aligned with the *UAA 2020* goals.

Strengths: The Chancellor’s decision to build on the prior 2017 plan and create a three-year, focused plan was instrumental in keeping the effort on track and delivering an aligned outcome. The data-driven, collaborative, and consensus-building processes that yielded the *UAA 2020* core values and goals were notable. That work was completed over a relatively short time span of six months. The *UAA 2020* Core Values chosen were simple and could be easily related to by everyone to guide their day-to-day decision making. The emphasis on a unifying theme, student success, was key. Establishing a leadership position to champion and guide student success activities created high-level focus and made it possible to make significant progress on the goals. The establishment of clear, measureable goals laid a foundation for implementation.

Opportunities for Improvement: Criteria for decisions along the way were not always widely understood. The initial guidance should have included how, when, and by whom decisions would be made. There were multiple, significant initiatives going on before and in parallel with *UAA 2020*, in particular NWCCU accreditation and the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force. Aspects of these initiatives were not always perceived to be well-aligned or cohesively communicated which created some level of confusion. Alignment with the UA System’s 2018-2025 Goals and Measures was not explicit, although some of the *UAA 2020* goals were similar.

Lessons Learned:

1. Keep the planning process short and the scope narrow.
2. Determine the timeframe for the strategic plan before engaging the process.
3. Allocate resources for the planning process, including support.
4. Engage a diverse and comprehensive stakeholder community, including students.
5. Build a cohesive and engaging internal and external communication strategy that shares progress, and invites and responds to input.
6. Focus on a few, well-aligned, clearly-understood goals with measures that people at all levels and in all units can “see themselves” in and connect to their daily work.
7. Align key initiatives and demonstrate how they fit together in the big picture.
8. Develop an implementation plan with a budget and a champion(s).

DESCRIPTION AND CRITIQUE OF THE PROCESSES USED BY PEERS TO DEVELOP STRATEGIC PLANS

Institutional Research reviewed literature that cited outstanding Strategic Plans including a Hanover Report on “Best Practices in Higher Education” (July 2013). Universities were added to

this list based on a preliminary evaluation of planning materials on websites.

An initial review was conducted by Institutional Research that rated each institution on five criteria: Obvious Process, Accountability, Transparency, Integration and Implementation Plans. This group elected to review in depth the highest scoring institutions.

An initial list of the following peer institutions was created and included other institutions added by group members. Those institutions reviewed are listed in Table 4.

Table 4: Institutions Reviewed for their Strategic Planning Processes and/or Plans

Arizona State University	Indiana State University	State University of New York at Fredonia
Boise State University	Montana State University	University of Arizona
California Polytechnic State University	Morgan State University	University of Nevada Las Vegas
California State University Fullerton	Norfolk State University	University of Texas at San Antonio
College of William and Mary	Portland State University	University of Washington
Georgia State University	Radford University	Western Governors University
Idaho State University	Southern New Hampshire University	Wright State University

Individual group members were asked to conduct a thorough review of assigned institutions based on a framework that reviewed the pre-planning, information gathering, drafting and implementation and evaluation processes. The framework, which is attached as Appendix A, was informed by the Inside Higher Ed publication, *Smart, Succinct, and Agile: Strategic Planning in an Age of Uncertainty*. The results of these reviews were presented to this Strategic Planning Exploratory Group for discussion and further exploration.

From these discussions, model practices as well as four exemplar planning peers were identified. These model practices and exemplar planning peers contributed to the group’s final recommendations.

MODEL STRATEGIC PLANNING PRACTICES

- **Was the process meaningful, transparent and inclusive to internal and external constituents?** Both the [Radford University website](#) and the [Portland State University website](#) demonstrated desired levels of transparency. Characteristics of transparency that both websites exhibited were thorough documentation of process through committee minutes, communications, and final documents; defined decision process; and measurable outcomes.

A communication plan was created for Portland State University. These plans designated individuals responsible for communicating and documenting the process as well as facilitating input from constituents.

Inclusive institutions exhibited broad participation from both internal and external constituents through active solicitation or invitation. Both Radford and Portland State had high levels of participation across broad areas of the campus and larger communities.

- **Were there connections to, or alignments with, other institutional processes and plans?** Institutions with visible connections to other planning processes in their strategic plans or to alignment with processes such as accreditation included Idaho State University, Indiana State University and University of Texas at San Antonio. Idaho State explicitly connected its NWCCU accreditation process with the planning process. Indiana State University tied its budgeting process to its strategic planning process with clear outcomes and language. University of Texas at San Antonio connected to its facilities masterplan, budget model, and strategic enrollment management plan, and incorporated its foundation goals into its strategic plan.
- **What was the context of the planning process? Were there external factors that constrained or encouraged the planning process?** There were linkages from strategic plan to external factors apparent in the strategic planning processes at a number of institutions. Portland State University cited budgetary constraints, labor unrest, and the dissolution of its system office.
- **Were there explicit implementation plans? Did those plans have measurable, stated outcomes?** Both Indiana State University and University of Texas at San Antonio had implementation plans that were explicit, measurable and had detailed timelines.
- **Were there unique features of note within the strategic plan?** Equity Lens – Portland State University; Other ways of knowing – Camosun College, BC; Destinations – University of Texas at San Antonio; Successful use of consultant – Portland State University; Writing team – Radford University.

EXEMPLAR PLANNING PEERS

Based on the review and analysis of the institutions by the group's members, this Strategic Planning Exploratory Group recommends that the following institutions be used as Exemplar Planning Peers:

Idaho State University

Excellent website that describes and documents the process. Alignment with accreditation. PowerPoint

“classes” that lay out ways individuals can participate at each phase. Iterative plan.

Portland State University

Transparent process with an excellent website and communication plan. Used an “Equity Lens” to evaluate impact of plan on marginalized groups.

Radford University

Excellent, well-organized and detailed website. Transparent and inclusive process with a high level of collaboration from leadership. Planning subgroup submissions include strategies, substrategies, and a budget. Implementation includes annual progress reporting.

University of Texas at San Antonio

Excellent website. Use of “Destination” nomenclature as a visioning strategy to describe where UTSA would like to be in 10 years. Included an integrated implementation plan as well as clear peer selection process.

EXEMPLAR PLANNING PEERS STRATEGIC PLANNING LINKS

Idaho State University: <https://isu.edu/strategicplan/>

Portland State University: <https://www.pdx.edu/president/strategic-planning>

Radford University: <https://www.radford.edu/content/strategic-planning/home.html>

University of Texas at San Antonio: <https://www.utsa.edu/strategicplan/>

RECOMMENDATIONS

UAA has a history of broad, inclusive and robust planning, whether for the strategic plan, accreditation, or initiatives such as the *Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan* or community engagement. This exploratory group urges the institution to celebrate and build upon its accomplishments to date as it embarks on a planning process that is inclusive, transparent, and forward thinking. We propose the following:

Build on UAA’s Strengths: NWCCU commended UAA for its “inclusive planning process for UAA 2020, which brought the campuses together in an unprecedented joint effort focused on Student Success.” Build forward from this process. Keep what is still relevant, ensure alignment with the selected accreditation metrics, be able to demonstrate how other planning contributes to meeting the goals of the strategic plan, and be willing to explore new directions.

Sustaining Alignment of Processes: Align timelines, planning, and functions related to accreditation, strategic planning and the capital campaign. Some possible approaches to

sustaining alignment include developing a “big picture” understanding and visualizing it with a graphic, centralizing and visualizing the data in a one-stop user-friendly format, reviewing and discussing progress on the goals and metrics at an annual meeting, and revising the *Performance Report* to the new strategic plan. At the same time, the big picture should consider other major plans, such as the *Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan*.

Length of the Planning Cycle: Given the pace of change in higher education, current practice is moving toward shorter planning horizons. The group recommends a strategic planning process during AY20 that results in *UAA 2025*, aligning with the accreditation Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability Evaluation scheduled for fall 2025.

UAA STRATEGIC PLANNING TIMELINE

PRE-PLANNING			PLANNING				IMPLEMENTATION		
Summer 2019	Aug. 15, 2019	Sept 1, 2019	Sept. 13, 2019	Sept.-Nov. 2019	Nov.-Dec. 2019	Dec. 2019-March 2020	April-June 2020	July-Aug. 2020	Sept 2020
Pre-planning preparation: Internal and external scan; progress on <i>UAA 2020</i> , draft guidance	Chancellor call for membership	Chancellor charges strategic planning group Strategic planning group gets organized, reviews the pre-planning information, lays out its process Consultant helps produce broad communication and engagement plan	Annual Academic Assessment Seminar: Keynote “ <i>Shifting from Core Themes to Core Competencies – What this Means for the Institution</i> ”	Information Gathering Stage	Early stages of drafting	Drafting and feedback	Finalize strategic plan Submit for UA Academic Council Review and BOR Review Present to BOR	Roll out Implementation begins Evaluation and improvement cycle begins	First annual check-in on implementation

PRE-PLANNING

- **Assess progress on *UAA 2020*:** Over the summer, perform an assessment of the progress on *UAA 2020*. Determine if the goals have been met, why or why not, and what that might mean moving forward.
- **Conduct an internal and an external scan:** Consider things such as budget constraints, enrollment trends, state needs, etc. Include local, national and global data to contextualize local information within the greater higher education landscape.
- **Develop high-level guidance:** Pre-planning should result in clear guidance from the Chancellor. The guidance should include the type or purpose of the plan. Is it meant to be transformational? Build on strengths? Focus on filling gaps? Will it be priority-driven or goal-managed? What roles must it fill? The guidance should also manage expectations of stakeholders. It should state any strategic priorities that are already determined and be

clear about what latitude there is for adding priorities. It should set out any predetermined timelines and milestones and clarify roles, responsibilities, reporting structures, and decision-making authority for the planning team, the Chancellor's Cabinet, etc.

- **Identify the principle plans that must integrate** with the strategic plan, for example the *Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan*, the *Strategic Enrollment Plan*, and the *Master Plan*.
- **Ensure Chancellor-level engagement** throughout the planning and implementation process.
- **Identify a consultant** who will help develop a communication and engagement plan that extends the life of the strategic plan, not just the planning process.
- **Initiate the communication plan** to be continued throughout the process.
- **Identify and allocate resources and staffing** to support the planning process.

PLANNING (INFORMATION GATHERING, DRAFTING, FEEDBACK)

- **Engage a timely broad, inclusive and responsive process** that includes opportunities for input and feedback.
- **Establish a planning team:** Ensure membership that brings the requisite skills and characteristics to bear, e.g., planning, data analysis, communications, cross-Cabinet representation. Establish clear roles, responsibilities, reporting lines, milestones and deadlines. Include students, faculty, staff and administrators, as well as external stakeholders, for example, members of the Chancellor's Advisory Board, a representative of the Board of Regents, a mayor or appointee from one or more of UAA's communities.
- **Review the data and analysis** from the pre-planning process.
- **Establish a writing team** from the beginning.
- **Decide the terms to use consistently across planning efforts** (objectives, goals, values, etc.).
- **Establish how strategic planning, accreditation and campaign teams coordinate.**
- **Establish rules of engagement** that afford maximum opportunity for participation.
- **Consider the following approaches:** Appreciative Inquiry is a human systems focused approach that recognizes the strengths, possibilities, and successes of that system rather than its shortcomings or flaws. The Equity Lens, used by the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission and others, is aimed at identifying "institutional and systemic barriers and discriminatory practices," creating "intentional policies, investments, and systemic change" to achieve an equitable education system, and establishing structures to ensure accountability for progress. Indigenous ways of knowing should also be considered.
- **Encourage different avenues for participation** with a broad range of internal and external stakeholders. Significant thought and attention should be put into stakeholder engagement that aligns with the goals of the process and the current environment.

THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Develop a shorter-term plan of five years with opportunities along the way to adapt. For example, if a goal is met, what is next? What if the external environment changes?

Focus the plan on a small set of strategic priorities supported by a few, concrete, measurable and realistic goals.

Keep the plan manageable and results-oriented.

IMPLEMENTATION

- **Require an implementation plan** that includes recommended roles, responsibilities, and make-up of an implementation team.
- **Resource and prioritize** implementation.
- **Integrate other plans** with the strategic plan.
- **Integrate implementation throughout the institution** down to the lowest organizational level. (All units should be able to map how their efforts contribute to meeting the strategic priorities.)
- **Establish** a regular cycle of assessment and improvement.
- **Link progress** on the strategic plan to regular and ongoing institutional assessment processes.

CONCLUSION

The development and authorship of the above report likely mirrors the preparations process for UAA's next Strategic Plan. In particular, this Exploratory Group task commenced with a Chancellor's Charge to a broad and inclusive panel that carefully reviewed both past and current best practices for collegiate strategic planning whilst being mindful of UAA's own evolution within a larger system. Hence, this Exploratory Group noted the need to align UAA's accreditation functions and campaign themes within the larger UA 2025, while retaining UAA's foci of student success and achievement. Moreover, given rapid changes within UAA itself, this Exploratory Group also identified parallel planning tasks that, while still early in their own implementations, will likely achieve significant maturation near the launching of UAA 2025.

In keeping with this Exploratory Group's Charge, the above recommendations are both concise in text while broad in scope, and are grounded in careful research and deliberation. UAA is known for open dialogue and this Exploratory Group welcomes questions and comments. Please feel free to communicate with any of the Exploratory Group members.

APPENDIX A: PEER REVIEW CHECKLIST

1. Pre-Planning

What kind of evaluation of the previous plan was conducted and how did that inform the new process?

What kinds of questions were asked during the pre-planning process?

What were any competing initiatives or interests at that time? Burning issues?

What were the internal or external mandates the institution considered when developing the plan?

How were areas of uncertainty and associated risks considered?

Who conducted the process?

Who else was involved and how?

How were external constituents and stakeholders identified and included?

What kind of guidance resulted from the pre-planning process?

What was the projected timeline for the planning process and what kinds of milestones were identified?

Who had decision making authority along the way and for what kinds of decisions?

2. What was the information gathering process?

Who conducted the process?

Who was involved in the information gathering process and what approaches to getting participation were used?

Were the areas of focus already established?

Were there subcommittees to address specific areas of focus? Was that a good approach?

3. What was the drafting process?

Who was involved?

At what point were decisions made? By whom? Were there criteria?

How were other plans, external and/or internal, considered?

How was the draft shared out?

What was the approach to gathering feedback?

How were decisions made about incorporating feedback?

How were different groups, e.g. the governing board, kept apprised?

What were the implications of decisions, and how was the impact on the organization of those decisions considered?

4. What was the implementation process?

5. What was the measurement and evaluation process for progress on the goals?

6. What were the reporting mechanisms? Where did the reports go? How were they used?

7. How did the previous plan work? What is the relationship of the current plan to the previous plan?
8. What were any unintended consequences of the planning process or the plan itself?
9. Overall, what do you think went well?
10. What would you do differently?
11. Rank the overall planning process and resulting plan using the following rubric:

The Planning Process:

Criteria	Rating (3 highest)
Included a comprehensive, thoughtful and effective preplanning process	1 2 3
Was transparent with ongoing communication	1 2 3
Included internal stakeholders and feedback	1 2 3
Included external stakeholders and feedback	1 2 3
Considered key internal mandates	1 2 3
Considered key external mandates	1 2 3
Considered external issues, such as demographic shifts, trends in higher education	1 2 3
Integrated other internal planning processes	1 2 3
Integrated other external planning processes	1 2 3
Had a clear timeline and milestones	1 2 3
Was clear about how decisions were made along the way	1 2 3
Total	

The Resulting Plan and Process:

Criteria	Rating (3 highest)
is mission focused	1 2 3
aligns with other institutional initiatives	1 2 3
is focused and manageable	1 2 3
includes specific goals	1 2 3
includes measurable goals	1 2 3
includes achievable goals	1 2 3
includes time-bound goals	1 2 3
drives improvements	1 2 3
drives culture change	1 2 3
drives the reallocation of resources	1 2 3
is integrated into the daily work of the institution	1 2 3
is integrated into the decision-making of the institution	1 2 3
is flexible enough to allow for re-direction	1 2 3
includes an implementation plan	1 2 3
Total	