

AGENDA ITEM

B-2. Discussion of Strategic Plan Working Documents: Benchmark II.....R. Doyle Parrish

Situation: Benchmark II of the strategic planning process requires each Committee to identify the major issues facing higher education in this strategic priority area, as well as explore solutions peers are implementing to address these issues.

Background: Through the strategic planning process, which is currently underway, the Board of Governors seeks to develop a set of goals to drive the work of General Administration and constituent institutions for years ahead. The Board of Governors aims to approve a small set of system-wide goals this fall, which will form the basis for the University of North Carolina’s strategic plan.

Assessment: The attached working documents for Benchmark II require additional Committee discussion. After completing this portion of the work plan, the Committee should have a common understanding of the major issues facing higher education in this strategic priority area, as well as some approaches peers are implementing to address these issues.

Action: This item is for discussion only.

Benchmark II: Evaluate National, State, and University Landscape

Due Date: September Board Meeting

Instructions: The committee should use Benchmark II to assess what is happening nationally and statewide in this strategic priority area. This benchmark will identify the major issues facing higher education in this strategic priority area, as well as explore solutions peers are implementing to address these issues. To complete Benchmark II, the committee should respond to the questions outlined below.

Questions:

What do research and practice show as the key issues higher education is facing across the country/state in this strategic priority area?

1. Excellent and diverse institutions and systems are distinct, mission-focused, and high-performing.

University systems strive to maintain distinct, mission-focused institutions that attract and meet the needs of a wide variety of citizens seeking diverse educational and professional outcomes. In doing so, systems provide **high value** to their states.

Some university systems have sought to take full advantage of their unique position to apply the collective talents and capacities of distinct constituent institutions to complex “**big picture**” issues. Issues may be societal, environmental, economic, educational, health-related, or other. Institutions uniquely contribute to collaborative goals that enhance the well-being of local communities, states, the nation, or the greater global community.

Whether “big picture” initiatives or otherwise, systems are striving to **measure** progress and performance against specific goals and objectives. This requires robust institutional and system capacity for data collection and analysis.

2. Excellent and diverse institutions and systems are committed to the fullest development of all human capital.

Public university systems strive to remain connected and aligned with the needs of their state. States, public universities, **K-12 institutions**, and others share a desire to help all citizens achieve their personal, professional, and economic goals. Many university systems have sought to collaborate closely and consistently with K-12 institutions to realize improved student outcomes at all levels and to expand access to higher education.

Considerable work is then needed to ensure that all students who enter public university systems receive inclusive and **equal educational opportunities**. For example, an increasing number of universities are seeking to understand and remedy gaps in providing all students with equal access to undergraduate research, internships, first-year seminars, or other evidence-based, high-impact practices.

To achieve excellence, universities and systems need to leverage efficient and effective human resource policies and practices for faculty and staff. For example, the inability to implement fully competitive compensation and benefit programs can hinder the ability of public universities to recruit, develop, reward, and retain the necessary talent. Some peer universities and systems have sought and achieved greater **personnel management** authority, resulting in creative and flexible approaches that positively impact recruitment and retention.

What are peer systems or states doing to address these issues? Examples may include institutional initiatives that may be scalable to the system level.

The following examples of goals set by other institutions, states, or associations each cut across multiple aspects of our Excellent and Diverse Institutions definition. Some are too recent for outcomes to be known.

University of Texas system “Quantum Leaps,” 2015-2020

EDI features: “big picture” thinking; high public value; K-12 collaboration; measurement

The University of Texas system is comprised of fourteen institutions, six of them medical centers, and educates over 217,000 students. The University of Texas system’s eight “Quantum Leap” goals for 2015-2020 will ensure that the full capacity of the UT system’s distinct institutions are brought to bear on key opportunities, facilitating lasting impacts of significant scale. The bold goals were chosen to accentuate the strengths of the system and to meet identified stakeholder needs. Among these eight goals are improving elementary literacy, advancing brain health research and care, leading the country to address issues of national security, and serving the various needs of the city of Houston¹.

Restructuring Act of 2005, Virginia

EDI features: personnel management; high public value; measurement; K-12 collaboration.

The University of Virginia Human Resources FAQ page states²:

“In 2004, in a move designed to reduce pressure on the state budget and to support continued excellence in higher education in Virginia, three of the state’s leading universities – Virginia Tech, the College of William and Mary, and the University of Virginia – developed a proposal to establish a new relationship with the state. Referred to as “restructuring,” the Restructured Higher Education Financial and Administrative Operations Act gives Virginia’s public colleges and universities greater flexibility and internal control of each institution’s administrative operations, including the creation of a new HR system that would be more flexible, dynamic, and responsive to the needs of the University workplace and its employees.”

In exchange for greater operational autonomy, Virginia institutions committed to 12 state goals or “state asks” around access, affordability, academic offerings, academic standards, student progress and success, articulation, economic development, research, enhancing K-12, six-year plans, finance and administration, and campus safety and security.

¹ Chancellor’s Vision and Quantum Leaps for the UT System 2015-2020, retrieved from <https://www.utsystem.edu/offices/chancellor/chancellors-vision-university-texas-system>

² University of Virginia Human Resources FAQ, retrieved from <http://www.hr.virginia.edu/other-hr-services/university-staff-hr-plan/university-staff-plan-faq/>

AAC&U Initiative: Committing to Equity and Inclusive Excellence

EDI features: equal educational opportunities; high public value; “big picture” thinking; measurement

NC A&T State University is one of twelve institutions selected in August 2015 to participate in this American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) project, funded by USA Funds totaling nearly \$500,000.³ Participating institutions are collecting baseline evidence on “existing campus efforts to track, improve, and close gaps in the achievement of key learning outcomes for all students.” They will develop action plans to, among other things, increase underserved students’ access to high-impact practices and their achievement of learning outcomes, as well as completion, retention, and graduation rates. The project will result in expanded research on equity in student achievement and in replicable, evidence-based interventions to improve student learning and success.

Berkshire Compact for Education, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts

EDI features: “big picture” thinking; K-12 collaboration; equal educational opportunities; high public value; measurement

In 2005, the Berkshire Compact for Education was created in response to a study that called for a regional conversation on the local education pipeline. The Berkshire Compact for Education is a group of over 150 regional civic, education, and business leaders “who seek to ensure the well-being of each individual and the strength of our economy and community by raising the educational access, aspirations and attainment of Berkshire County residents.”⁴ Specifically, the Compact encourages all Berkshire County residents to view a minimum of 16 years of education or training as the norm, regardless of their circumstances. Elementary book distributions, third and sixth grade college visits, eighth grade career fairs, and high school internships are among the various strategies and activities of the Compact. To date, the regional collaborations have resulted in “higher test scores, more low-income students attending college, and increased skill levels in the local workforce.”

³ AAC&U Committing to Equity and Inclusive Excellence: Campus-based Strategies for Student Success, retrieved from <https://www.aacu.org/committing-to-equity>

⁴ Berkshire Compact for Education, About Us, retrieved from http://www.mcla.edu/About_MCLA/area/berkshirecompact/aboutthecompact/index