

TO: President Zulma Toro
FROM: University Planning and Budget Committee
RE: Review of CCSU Strategic Plan

DATE: 23 June 2017

As you requested, the UPBC reviewed the existing Strategic Plan to ascertain which objectives might serve as a guide until we can complete a thorough revision. The current Plan, developed between 2005 and 2008, has been updated periodically but remains largely unchanged. It consists of eight broadly defined goals:

1. Promote student learning
2. Increase persistence, satisfaction and success rates for students
3. Prepare students for productive lives as professionals and citizens and support economic development
4. Enhance and sustain faculty and staff satisfaction and success
5. Promote global awareness and respect for diversity
6. Gain financial support necessary for a highly regarded public university
7. Initiate and sustain environmentally sound capital projects
8. Enhance and maintain effective operations information services and infrastructure

The [most recently updated version of the Plan](#), dated April 2016, contains numerous objectives in support of these goals. For each objective, the Plan identifies the ExCom member/s responsible for oversight, assessment tool, baseline, goals, and progress to date. Broadly speaking, the UPBC has supported these goals and objectives, occasionally reviewing them and making suggestions for minor revisions. Annual budget proposals reference these objectives.

All of this said, the current Strategic Plan was not designed to support the integrated planning and budgeting approach required by the New England Association of Schools & Colleges (NEASC). Its objectives are not always benchmarked. Progress toward those objectives has not been routinely reviewed. Strategic planning has not been aligned systematically with budgeting. This spring a subcommittee of the UPBC met to review the Plan, and identify those objectives that readily align with your three stated goals (increased enrollment, expanded community engagement, and developing additional sources of funding). Simply put, the subcommittee affirmed your goals and suggested a fourth, maintaining academic excellence. This last goal has always been understood, but as CCSU seeks to increase enrollment, the UPBC believes it should be more visible. For each goal, the group identified supporting objectives from the current Plan. The full UPBC approved this approach.

Before proceeding, it is important to note two things. First, this is clearly a work in progress. The objectives should be further refined and benchmarked in the fall. Second, in focusing on these four goals, the UPBC does not wish to imply that the other goals identified in the original Plan are unimportant. Clearly, for example, global awareness, environmental sustainability, and respect for diversity remain essential.

GOAL: Increased Student Enrollment

Existing objectives that support this goal:

- 2.1 Improve retention rate for first-time, full-time students between their freshman, sophomore, and junior years.
- 2.10 Ensure course scheduling that facilitates students' academic programs.
- 2.11 Increase the total amount of financial aid awarded.

Comments: Increasing student enrollment will require a coordinated, intensive effort to recruit undergraduate and graduate students. That effort might begin by targeting recruitment efforts in New Britain, Hartford, Bristol, and West Hartford, and by advertising high quality/high demand programs more broadly. CCSU should develop a recruitment plan that identifies areas for growth, and sets enrollment benchmarks to supplement the ones above.

GOAL: Maintaining Academic Excellence

Existing objectives that support this goal:

- 2.2 Improve six-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time students.
- 2.3 Improve the graduation rate for full-time transfer students.
- 2.13 Increase the average entry-level SAT score and Class Percentile for first-time, full-time students.
- 4.3 Increase internal resources to support faculty scholarship and creative activity.

Comments: CCSU must maintain its record for academic excellence in order to recruit talented faculty and students. The forthcoming five-year academic plan will support this goal, and should increase enrollment by developing new, high-quality programs that attract students and faculty. To benchmark student academic success, CCSU should strongly consider the Multi-State Collaborative (MSC), an initiative developed by the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) and the American Association for Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). CCSU has collected data for the MSC in each of the past three years, but wider participation would be required.

GOAL: Expanding Community Engagement

Existing objectives that support this goal:

- 3.2 Promote and support increased community engagement by faculty, staff, and students.

Comments: Many CCSU faculty, staff and students participate in activities related to community engagement. Any assessment of that effort could begin by tabulating the number of participants, but for institutional purposes the University would have to identify a national or at least comparative standard for benchmarking purposes. Although many community engagement activities result from personal contacts and are conducted on an ad hoc basis, CCSU should think strategically about community engagement and support efforts to collaborate with the communities we serve, especially New Britain.

GOAL: Developing Additional Sources of Funding

Existing objectives that support this goal:

- 4.4 Increase external funding received through grants and contracts.
- 6.3 Increase the number and amount of annual gifts.
- 6.4 Increase the value of the endowment.

Comments: CCSU already tracks external funding, but should investigate what can be done to promote additional grants and contracts while continuing to pursue donations to increase levels of giving.